

# WHAT IS INTERGENERATIONAL MINISTRY?

INTERGENERATIONAL MINISTRY IS ABOUT BUILDING AND DEEPENING INTERGENERATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS.

Intergenerational ministry is characterized by people across the generations doing life together - sharing, learning, growing and serving in relationships. It is characterized by an emphasis on community and the building of deep, genuine relationships. Intergenerational connections can be with any generation of a different decade.

INTERGENERATIONALITY IS MARKED BY...

MUTUALITY

(we all participate and benefit)

RECIPROCITY

(we all give and receive)

EQUALITY

(we are all valued equally)

Being intergenerational is...

- Not just about children, it's about **people of all ages**
- Not just about what we do, it's about **who we are**
- Not something that just happens, it requires **intentionality**

Simply having multiple generations in the same space does not make the experience intergenerational. To be truly intergenerational requires the generations to be **genuinely interacting and engaging together**.

Intergenerational ministry seeks to **actively engage and equally value** the gifts and needs of every generation. We are most fully the people of God when we are gathered for worship, service, learning, and fellowship together with all ages. We learn, worship, serve, and build community best when we **honor the perspectives and gifts of all ages**.

## WHY INTERGENERATIONAL?

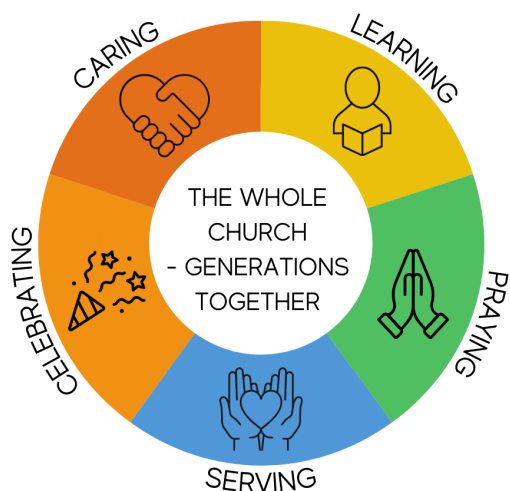
From John Roberto's article "Our Future is Intergenerational"

- Encourages greater faith in all generations
- Utilizes the strengths (wisdom, experience, and knowledge) of one generation to meet the needs of another generation
- Nurtures special relationships
- Fosters leadership regardless of age or stature
- Provides "up close and personal" formation in faith as all ages engage in sharing faith, teaching, learning, and praying for one another
- Provides role models
- Affirms each person's value in the total community (regardless of age)

AN INTENTIONALLY INTERGENERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT IS MORE LIKELY TO ENCOURAGE AND SUSTAIN LIFELONG DISCIPLESHIP FOR ALL AGES.

# CREATING AND SUSTAINING AN INTERGENERATIONAL CULTURE

Creating an intergenerational culture requires modeling and deliberate cultivation of the **values, attitudes, and behaviors** that enhance intergenerational engagement. It requires specific action from **leadership** that is intentional in developing its understanding and practice of intergenerational ministry.



"Generations Together" by Amedei, Merhaut, and Roberto

- How could each of these areas be more intergenerational?
- To what extent are multiple ages being engaged together and new relationships being created and developed?
- To what extent is there diverse and collaborative leadership?
- To what extent is the environment conducive to a variety of gifts, needs, and learning styles?

When it comes to being more intentionally intergenerational, a simple way forward is to be more proactive in **involving a number of different people from a range of generations** in...

- Shaping** what happens → Who decides? What generations are being listened to?
- Leading** what happens → Which generations are being seen/heard?
- Participating** in what happens → How is it intentionally inclusive of different generations?  
Are different generational needs being taken into account?

## BEST PRACTICES FOR INTERGENERATIONAL MINISTRY

- Make intentional decisions about when and where to be intergenerational.
- Use an intentional call process to involve a variety of generations as members of committees, planning teams, or short-term projects.
- When planning an event/program, consider how a variety of ages will interact with the content. What accommodations can be made to fully engage all?
- Schedule events at times when a variety of ages can be present.
- Incorporate the gifts and talents of young and old, as appropriate for ages and stage.
- Offer a variety of ways to connect/learn/worship - people of all ages enjoy creativity.
- Seek a balanced approach to ministry that nurtures the mind (learning), body (faith in action), and soul (experience the mystery of God).
- Plan ahead - coordinate with the church calendar, get more people involved.
- Publicize events and volunteer opportunities.
- Collaborate with other groups/committees - get out of our silos!
- Use language that is hospitable, invitational, inclusive, and understandable to those present.

## QUESTIONS TO ASK:

- What are we currently offering in our ministry area?
- To what extent is it already intergenerational?
- How could our ministry area be more intentionally intergenerational?