

# Appendix 3: Intergenerational approach



## Introduction

“Intergenerational” is a growing way of approaching all areas of church life, including ministry and mission. Intergenerational, or IG for short, is more than all ages being together in the same place, doing the same thing (great though that can be!). IG is about fostering interaction between the generations, enabling relationships to blossom that enrich everyone. Building friendships with people of different ages and at different stages to ourselves helps us to see the world and our faith from some very different perspectives. Sharing experiences, interests, skills and stories helps us grow each other up as we grow closer to each other. Being together binds us together. And having fun is one of the easiest places to start this habit!

**“As a church community we must learn to do only those things in separate age groups which we cannot in all conscience do together” - URC Charter for Children in the Church 1990.**

People are now used to the idea of a household bubble, a support bubble (for childcare or those living on their own) and joining bubbles together. You could draw on this idea. However, some people have spent too much time with their own household and will want to be with others, so think about how to create diverse and safe groups for everyone.

It is OK to have some time in age/peer groups but make this the exception rather than the norm.

Expect more chaos and embrace the randomness of who chooses to do what with whom. Expect things to take longer as people have to translate across the generations and negotiate more with each other. The benefit is the relationships being developed and the co-learning and forming of community.

## An Intergenerational Holiday Club

This could be offered as a ‘fun day’, a weekly get together (early evening; bring your picnic tea), or a holiday club over a few days.

## Principles

The aim is to enable people to build relationships with those of other ages and generations. To do this they need opportunities to spend time together doing things together and talking together.

## Groups

Organise into small groups that mix up the generations! Difference is an asset. You give groups things that not everyone in that group can do, but they can share out the tasks between them – like reading instructions, running to find things, drawing on previous knowledge, accessing new information, creating things from junk. Help them be a team – give points for how many

different things each person contributes to. Include things that draw on everyone's knowledge – eg a quiz that includes current culture, kids' TV shows, history, Bible knowledge, local information, your church etc. Picture rounds are good too.

Give specific tasks to the oldest, youngest, tallest, shortest, sportiest, most stylish, silliest, wisest member.

### **Pairs**

Challenge people to find a partner at least 15 years older or younger for a listening exercise, or to each share something about themselves (eg favourite thing to eat/place to go/person to travel with/thing to wear/way to be brave etc – link to the story).

### **Response styles**

Organise people by their preferred activity (rather than age) – construction, art/craft, discussion, drama – and ask each multi-generational group to prepare something to share with everyone else linked to the character/story. When you get to the sharing time, encourage people of all ages to share/present their group's work and to give feedback on the other groups.

### **Immerse in the story**

Grill the character – invite people of different ages to play the character and sit in the hot seat and be asked three questions about themselves, ensuring questions come from different ages – don't worry about biblical accuracy in the answers – the aim is for people to experience the stories from the inside imaginatively, to play with being the characters. Swap around to give a few people a go for each story, even different characters in that story.

### **Crafts and recipes**

Encourage different ages to work together and help each other, sharing skills.

### **Games/songs**

Invite different ages to choose and say briefly why they like their choice.

### **Prayers**

Invite different ages to work together to create and lead prayers; set up prayer stations and invite people to go with a partner at least 15 years older or younger.

### **Memory verses**

Encourage everyone to work on ways to remember the verse together – could the group think of actions or another way to help them remember the verse. Can they share tips on how to remember things? Encourage different ages to test each other on the verse from the day before.

### **Things to do together**

Telling the stories, watching videos etc; eating and drinking; playing games (*NB keeping score and being referee are key roles for the less mobile*); collective art projects; singing and dancing.

### **Time Travellers**

This theme provides lots of opportunities for intergenerational engagement.

Younger participants can use the opportunity to learn more about the lives of older participants and together travel back in time to when they were young. Build in a slot each day

when someone is asked about when they were X (pick an age under 18 – if possible the age of a child or young person present) – and invite everyone to ask them questions eg:

- When you were X what was your favourite thing to wear?
- When you were X what was your journey to school or work like?
- When you were X what was the best present you received?
- When you were X what did you want to be when you grew up?
- When you were X was church and faith part of your life?

Encourage IG play with the time machine that each group has built – let different members of the group each day pick the time they would most like to travel back to in history and then everyone act out a scene from that time (might be dinosaurs chasing you or being servants in a big house or fighting in a famous battle etc) – think Mr Benn’s adventures!

Encourage an IG conversation each day linked to the story – encourage everyone to be curious together – you could find some creative ways to record the group conversation on a large sheet of paper and display this:

- Exodus – have you ever felt that God was showing you the way to go? What different places has God led us as a group?
- Samuel – how do you hear God talking to you? How many different ways do we hear God in our group?
- Feeding 5,000 – have you ever known God provide something you need just at the right time? What different things has God provided for us as a group?
- Lydia’s baptism – has someone surprising every invited you to their house? What surprising invitations have we had in our group?
- Palm Sunday – have you ever wanted to shout and sing about something or someone? When have we ever joined in with a crowd celebrating something or someone in our group?

