



Welcome

Clubhouse appendix

Intergenerational church



Introduction

'Intergenerational' is a growing way of approaching all areas of church life, including ministry and mission. Intergenerational is more than all-ages being together in the same place, doing the same thing (great though that can be!). It 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 different perspectives. Sharing experiences, interests, skills, and stories helps us build 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.

It is OK to have time in age or 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 shared learning that is taking place.

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, talk, play, explore, create, experience, respond to each other and to God.

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 to be a team – give points for how many different things each person contributes to. Give specific tasks to the oldest, youngest, tallest, shortest, sportiest, most stylish, silliest, wisest member. Challenge people to find a partner at least 15 years older or younger than them. Organise people by their preferred activity (rather than age).

The Clubhouse

All Are Welcome – we are all invited into *The Clubhouse*, a place where everyone is welcome, no matter who they are, what age they are or where they come from and whether or not they know they already belong. Throughout the Bible, we find stories of where God welcomes all into the family, into fellowship together. We will explore some of these stories while thinking about how we welcome others and how God welcomes us. A great way of building relationships amongst and across the generations is to explore the theme of *All Are Welcome*. The main resource has lots of ideas for exploring, creating, playing, talking, and praying together. The wondering questions can be approached by any age. The great thing about wondering questions is that there are no right or wrong answers. Everyone, no matter what age, can explore together. You can mix and match whatever you feel will work for your group from the main resource.

Crafts

Have one large craft table and encourage different ages to work together and help each other, sharing skills – not just the adults helping the children, but all engaged in creating together. Ensure that you have lots of different mediums for people to use.

Games/songs

Consider the games and songs in the resource and choose those best suited to a wider range of people. If the game is a runaround game, how could you involve those with reduced mobility in that? (Maybe in shouting out instructions to their team-members, for example, or keeping score.) Could all ages share with each other their favourite games and songs and explain how to play them or how to do any actions to the song?

Prayers

Invite different ages to work together and pray together. Use the creative prayer activities from the resources and get different ages group to work together in small groups to create and lead prayers. An alternative would be to set up prayer stations and invite people to go with a partner from a different generation to engage with what is there.

Things to do together

Telling the stories, watching videos etc; eating and drinking; playing games, collective art projects; singing and dancing.

Volunteer reflections

Share these with older participants and invite them to discuss the questions that are relevant to them and to pray for everyone involved in the holiday club. Considering generational differences. Providing a balance and variety ensures all will find a point of access and relatability.

The theme of 'all are welcome' provides lots of opportunities for all ages to create explore, play, and talk together. Here are some ideas to use alongside the main resource that encourage the generations to have fun together.

Day one

Explore

Find someone older or younger than you and mime something that you like to do, for example a skill that you have or a hobby. Mime it to your partner and see if they can guess your mime. Find another pair and share your mimes with them.

Create

Make welcome bunting. Set up a craft table with a wide range of craft materials, paper, fabric, paint etc. Think about the different ways in which the bunting can be created, making it possible for all ages to work together on the same project using different materials. Eg, Painting, colouring, collage, sewing, printing.

Pray

Using the prayer activity from the main resource, stand next to someone who is older or younger than you and, using wool, make a web.

Talk

Discuss together the wondering questions, remembering that with wondering, there are no right or wrong answers, just wondering!

Day two

Explore

Find somebody who has a skill that you do not have and get them to demonstrate, for example, clicking fingers rolling tongue, whistling, winking etc. Walk around the room demonstrating your chosen skill. See if you can find anyone with the same skill. Identify something that you would like to be able to do and get the person to try and teach you the skill they have.

Create

Make sensory bags. Gather fabric remnants cut into circles with assorted ribbons, and string. For the filling, use sensory items like cotton wool with lavender oil or lemon oil, crinkly paper, or a bell to make a sound. You could also have some pre-made bags for smaller hands to fill. Calico bags work well, as they can be decorated with fabric pens. This activity encourages all ages to work together helping each other.

Pray

Find someone with a bigger or smaller hands than you and together do a five-finger prayer activity. Here is how you could pray together:

Thumb: those closest to your heart – family and friends

Pointer finger: for people giving direction – teachers, doctors

Index finger: those in leadership roles – world, business, church

Ring finger: those who are sad, tired, poorly, worried etc

Little finger: yourself.

Talk

Discuss together using the wondering questions, remembering that with wondering there are no right or wrong answers, just wondering!

Day three

Explore

Play a game where an item, such as a ball or a piece of fruit has to be passed from one end of the room to the other. Mix up the ages in the groups and pass the object, using only your non dominant hand, or standing on one leg, or sitting on a chair etc. See how challenging you can make it.

Create

Collect together lots of items for junk modelling and create a flat roofed house with a gap in the roof so that you can recreate the story.

Pray

Using a sheet of A4 paper, fold in the corners to create a house shape. Write prayers for family and friends in the main part of the house and under the flaps write prayers for more challenging situations that you might not want to share. Gather all the houses together and pray a blessing for all the prayers.

Talk

Discuss together using the wondering questions, remembering that with wondering there are no right or wrong answers, just wondering!

Day four

Explore

Create teams of mixed ability and ages. Give each team a number of balls of the same colour (ball pool balls work well). Each team has to get as many of the balls into the well in a set period of time. The winning team is the one with the most of their colour at the end of the game. For the well, you could use a bucket, paddling pool, hoop or marked area.

Create

Create banners with welcome in differing languages. Decorate the banners with coloured paper from magazines/comics, tissue paper, dabber pens, finger painting etc.

Pray

Using an inflatable globe, bounce it above your heads around the gathered group. When someone shouts stop, the person holding the ball at the time names the country that their right or left thumb is touching. Help each other with what the name of the country is. Pray for the people that live in that country.

Talk

Discuss together using the wondering questions, remembering that with wondering there are no right or wrong answers, just wondering!

Day five

Explore

Give everyone five cards with question marks on, then go to older/younger members of the group and ask them 'do you think I can do...?', seeking a yes or no answer. If the other person answers correctly, they take a card from you. If they answer incorrectly, you take a card from them. Continue playing the game until people are running out of cards, or you feel the game has gone on long enough. See who has the most cards at the end.

Create

Make a simple, small box or have some ready-made boxes and decorate it to form a treasure box. Have a variety of supplies for decorating, eg wrapping paper, stickers, pictures from magazines, decoupage paper or cover the box in plain paper and draw your own design. You can add a message inside the lid, eg Jesus knows me and loves me.

Pray

Have a bag with different items in it. As each person places their hand into the bag, they may feel rather anxious or have doubts, just like Thomas. When they pull out an item, they can pray for what it reminds them of.

For example:

Pine cone = creation.

Teaspoon = those who are hungry.

Sponge or flannel = those who do not have clean water to drink or wash in.

Toy = wild animals or animals who are in danger.

Flower = God's creation.

Smiley face = happy times.

Teddy = God's love, etc

Talk

Discuss together using the wondering questions, remembering that with wondering there are no right or wrong answers, just wondering!

