



## Spotlight on Mutual Interviews

A mutual interview is a tool to enable different generations to engage in a deep conversation together, listening and learning from each other. The process is very simple: two people who are part of the same church or community, of differing ages and experiences, take turns asking each other the same questions.

The discipline of turn-taking ensures both have an equal role in the conversation. The pre-prepared questions and structure releases them from having to think about what to ask next and facilitates a deeper listening experience.

You could use mutual interviews in many ways:

- At a church service or meeting, you could ask everyone to find a partner of a different generation to themselves and give them the interview scripts. Allow time for them to complete the interview together, then collect some feedback from the pairs.
- You could ask a particular group of people, for example the Elders or leadership team, to each conduct a mutual interview with someone from the church at least 20 years older or younger than them, and to share their learning at the next Elders Meeting.
- You could invite every child and young person confident about reading questions to find an older person at church to conduct a mutual interview with. Invite them to share their learning with the whole church.
- You could invite all the volunteers who help with children's and youth work to conduct a mutual interview with those they work with, choosing the interview most appropriate for the age-range.

There are some mutual interviews on the URC website to help explore the theme of Wise Words: <https://bit.ly/URC-all-age-themed-resource>. It is important to include the introduction to set the scene, and to invite people to share their reflections afterwards.

If you find this a helpful tool, why not create your own mutual interviews. A helpful pattern is to start with a couple of lighter questions to find out more about the other person; then a couple of questions about life at the moment ('What's a life-giving/not so life-giving thing that happened to you this week?'). Then move onto questions about their experience of an aspect of faith and church life. Offer a Bible verse for reflection on your chosen focus. Give individuals an opportunity to share a story from their experience. Enable them to offer each other feedback and pray for each other. End with mutual thanks.

Mutual interviews have been developed by Valerie Grissom of Intergenerate USA as part of the IYS research project collecting stories of youth participating intergenerationally in acts of service, justice and mission ([www.intergenerateconference.com/iys-project](http://www.intergenerateconference.com/iys-project)). We are grateful for permission to adapt this idea for the URC.

