

FOR LEADERS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRY

Things churches can do to link the generations

General

- Invite church leaders to **study** the characteristics of the **five generations** so they can help the generations understand each other.
- When **committees** or task groups are set up, make sure they have members of the four oldest generations.
- Encourage and allow Boomers and Busters to take **leadership**. Often, Builders (the oldest generation) are reluctant to give up this role.
- Organize a **new members** task force with all generations represented. The church can help new people become comfortable in the church.
- Create **linking programs** to increase cross-generational communication—*grandfriends*, mystery friends who write letters and meet later at a banquet.
- Host an all-ages art show with each generation exhibiting work.

Learning Together

- Plan for at least some **intergenerational study** during the year. A group of different generations may brainstorm topics they would like to study together or use a prepared intergenerational study resource. This may be done as a regular, on-going study or as an occasional elective.
- Host **storytelling events** where the four generations share stories of what was important to them growing up.

Worshipping Together

- Establish a **blended worship** or **alternative worship service**. (Make sure that there is an intergenerational planning team.)
- Combine the children, youth and adult choirs to form an **intergenerational choir** which may sing regularly or occasionally.

Serving Together

- Provide lots of opportunities for generations to **work and serve together in ordinary tasks**—ushering at church, stocking the food pantry, or volunteering at a shelter.
- Invite children and youth to be part of **church property clean up days**.
- **Expect more of children and youth**. Put them on all serving rosters and provide mentors to work alongside them until they are comfortable in the role.

A good resource: *One Church, Four Generations*, Gary L. McIntosh, 2002, Baker Books (\$26.50). Available from bookroom@presbyterian.ca.

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