



KidsNewsZone

CONNECTING THE GENERATIONS

Margaret Mead, renowned anthropologist, has said, "The continuity of all cultures depends on the living presence of at least three generations. One needs to learn how to be a child, a parent, and an elder in a particular cultural context." Intergenerational connections are important for adults as well as for children and youth. Unfortunately, today's family and community dynamics do not provide opportunities for these kinds of relationships.

Relationships that reach across generations bring richness and depth to character and have the power to influence the emotional and spiritual development of children and youth today. Hence, involving children, parents, and grandparents in intergenerational worships and activities within the church is invaluable. Mark DeVries, author of *Family-based Youth Ministry*, states, "Apart from the family...the church may be the only lifelong nurturing structure left. Only the church and the family can provide Christian nurture from birth to old age and even death." Yes, the church has the capacity to nurture people at each stage of life plus connect the generations to one another.

Why are intergenerational connections so vital to the health of the family and to the church?

- 1 **Intergenerational connections teach us how to care for one another.**
Older siblings spend time taking care of the younger ones; grandparents spending time with grandchildren sharing their knowledge and experience. In the church, the younger in faith may be nurtured and cared for by older members in the faith.
- 2 **Intergenerational connections provide role models for children and youth.**
Our children today are influenced more by

celebrities and peers than by adults outside of the family relationships. It is important to have children and youth to have the influence of life-changing relationships with older adults that impact their attitudes and behaviors. The church can provide these life-changing relationships through intergenerational connections.



3 **Intergenerational connections teach us to value older adults.**

Leviticus 19:32 states, "Rise in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly and revere your God." We should not segregate the elderly who can teach children a lot from their experiences. Connections to older adults provide us with a link to the past that can add richness and meaning to our lives.

4 **Intergenerational connections allow us to pass on the traditions of faith and family.**

Not only do older adults enrich our lives through their wisdom, they also pass on traditions and memories which cannot be obtained through schools and other institutions. These traditions draw everyone together with a sense of community.

Children's Ministries leaders need this new awareness of the importance of connections in the church community. Plan and implement more intergenerational activities so as to achieve the goal of building life-changing relationships.



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MISSION:
To nurture children into a loving, serving relationship with Jesus.