

A Process for Building and Strengthening an Intergenerational Church Culture

(From Chapter 4 in *Lifelong Faith: Formation for All Ages and Generations* by John Roberto)

Every church can build (or strengthen) an intergenerational culture. It's essential to have a multiyear vision for your church and practical strategies that give life to the vision. Here are a few practical steps for designing your plan.

1. Form an intergenerational task force representing the essential ministries of the church and be sure that all the generations are included from youth through older adults.
2. Develop a vision—with short descriptive sentences—of what an intergenerational church culture can look like in three years.
3. Explore the opportunities for building an intergenerational approach throughout church life.
 - Identify ministries, programs, and activities that are already intergenerational (with generations building relationships, learning, praying, worshipping, serving, and/or leading together); and develop strategies for strengthening and expanding intergenerational ministries, programs, and activities.
 - Identify ministries, programs, and activities that are multigenerational (with all ages present without the intergenerational connection and experiences) that can be transformed into more intentionally intergenerational experiences.
 - Identify age-specific ministries, programs, and activities that can be redesigned by including additional generations, building intergenerational relationships, engaging in intergenerational experiences, and more
 - Identify new opportunities for creating intergenerational experiences by intentionally designing programs, activities, and ministries to meet this objective.
4. Generate a variety of ideas and projects that the church can develop in each of the four categories: strengthening intergenerational opportunities, transforming multigenerational opportunities, redesigning age-specific opportunities, and designing new initiatives.
5. Create a three-year plan by selecting projects that fulfill the vision and provide practical ways to develop an intergenerational culture. A three-year plan allows you to identify projects that can be implemented in the short term (first year), and projects that need more time for design and implementation over the three years.

6. Present the plan to church leaders and the community. Make a solid case for the need to be intergenerational and the blessings and benefits that it will bring to the church community. Share the plan: your goals and short-term and long-term projects. Invite feedback, suggestions, and ideas.
7. Implement your plan. Short-term projects can launch quickly. Long-term projects may need to be piloted with a small group of your target audience (a version 1.0 of the project) to test its effectiveness, and then modify it for launching on a wider scale.
8. Continue to evaluate your efforts, but be patient. Each effort provides new learning that can be used to continue to move toward becoming a more intentionally intergenerational church.
9. Keep innovating! Introduce new projects and programs each year. Communicate the stories and examples of the benefits and blessings that are coming to the church community because of the intergenerational focus.