



SAINT MARK'S EPISCOPAL CATHEDRAL

How to Cultivate Intentionally Intergenerational Relationships: A Ministry Planning Guide

by Emily Meeks

1. **Find shared interests, activities, and themes to cultivate connections.** One of the easiest starting points is to find an activity or a theme that has commonality among groups or individuals. This creates points of connection for conversation to begin and to share ideas and updates. Spiritual practices can be shared across generations. Art and outdoor activities can be enjoyed by all ages. Encourage people to share their expertise or passion with others who may be new to it.
2. **Invite people into the planning process and intentionally share leadership.** If you want participation from a particular age group, ask for their input on what would make the offering meaningful for them – don't assume or expect attendance by invitation alone. When people feel heard in the planning, they will most likely champion the event or class or activity in their circles of friends. Consider the ways you will share leadership of an event, activity, or class with the demographic you wish to include.
3. **Be flexible.** Sometimes this means flexing preferences to accommodate different needs and preferences. For example, when coordinating a meeting with people who work during the day, add an evening or weekend option, or host a virtual "drop-in" session. Be open to doing something differently and look for ways to creatively include or adapt to the suggestions you receive.
4. **Consider and align on the goals of the event.** Does the event need to be age specific or can it be offered for all ages? One way to bridge interest of a particular group with an intergenerational offering is to have the age or interest cohort host the event and make clear in the invitation that all are welcome to join. The host group can coordinate details and lead the planning while creating space for all to gather and participate.
5. **Plan ways your event can be inclusive of different ages and abilities.** For example, when planning a hike, consider having two different pace groups, or alternate between the types of trails chosen. A program with reflection and activity stations allows people to choose how to engage with a theme based on their interests. Be explicit in how you invite people to sit if it's important that different generations will mix at tables.
6. **Be explicit in the name of the event.** Event naming and descriptions are the first clues as to who is invited. Making the information as clear as possible can make all the difference in someone feeling welcome. For example, try using "families with children" instead of "families" if children are welcome. A back-to-school picnic could become an "All Parish Picnic" to extend welcome to parishioners who may not have children or whose children are adults.
7. **Hold a debrief and feedback session following your event or program with the different generations involved.** Find an opportunity to report back to the wider community both the blessings and the learnings that the different generations experienced.