



VISIONING TOOL FOR INTERGENERATIONAL MINISTRY

For assistance with this tool, contact
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Who is GenOn Ministries?



GenOn Ministries has a long history of partnering with Christian churches to nurture children and youth into an abundant life-giving relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Efforts are focused on equipping adults of all ages to be actively engaged in leading the spiritual development of young people both within the faith community as well as those in the broader community. Weekly LOGOS ministry is GenOn's signature offering. We provide training, resources and support for LOGOS as well as other ways to foster intergenerational relationships in the church.

Our resources and training opportunities are available at www.GenOnMinistries.org.

What is LOGOS?



LOGOS is a weekly intergenerational experience for young people that creates an arena where all ages, together, can learn about, experience, and practice the art of Christian relationships, critical for developing life-long disciples.

LOGOS models the early church in Acts 2:42, "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers" by providing intentional time and space for generations to learn and grow together through Bible study, a shared meal, worship arts, and recreation.

In this setting, all ages live out the conviction that nurturing people, especially young people, into an abundant life-giving relationship with God through Jesus Christ is the most important thing the church ever does.

"LOGOS is where children see other adults intersecting with them--see them at worship and other church activities; LOGOS is like glue--it helps hold us together!" –First Presbyterian Church, Mooresville, NC

"LOGOS is authentic cross-generational relationships" – Maple Grove Church of God, Anderson, IN

"Because of LOGOS, our children feel a part of the life of the church because they participate in so many ways, from leading worship on Sundays to sponsoring mission projects and more!"

–First Christian Church, Des Moines, IA

"LOGOS is one of our best outreach tools to many who would otherwise not come to church. Many are hearing about the love of God and the forgiveness our Savior offers because they come to LOGOS." –Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church, Sunnyvale, CA

To find out more about LOGOS, go to www.GenOnMinistries.org/pages/logos-all-about-logos.

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INTRODUCTION

Intergenerational ministry, in various forms, has been around the church for a very long time. In *“Intergenerational Christian Formation: Bringing the Whole Church Together in Ministry, Community and Worship”* by Holly Catterton Allen and Christine Lawton Ross, we read “Throughout much of Christian history, the whole body of Christ – that is, all generations – met together for ministry and worship as well as most other gatherings; intergenerationality was the norm. However, in the last several decades, all but the smallest congregations have tended to separate the generations regularly for learning, frequently for fellowship and service, and sometimes (or always) for worship.”

Today, many ministry experts tell us that it is time to focus again on bringing all ages together again. Read their findings here <http://www.genonministries.org/pages/intergenerational-ministry-all-about-intergenerational-ministry>.

In an effort to help churches pursue intergenerational ministry, GenOn Ministries has developed this Visioning Tool. It is offered at no-cost in hopes that many churches will begin having conversations about the transformation that happens when generations learn and grow together.

DEFINING INTERGENERATIONAL MINISTRY

What? Intergenerational ministry develops disciples and energizes churches by bringing together any combination of at least two generations in planned and purposeful settings, empowering these generations to mutually invest in each other and in their faith community, and intentionally encouraging Christian relationships among the generations.

Why? GenOn Ministries believes that the ultimate statement of ministry effectiveness is an abundant life-giving relationship with God through Jesus Christ, thus ministry solutions are effective when they help people to become active disciples of Christ, living in that abundant life-giving relationship.

How? GenOn Ministries has identified and defined 19 factors to represent the tangible characteristics that underlie a church’s ability to consistently build disciples through intergenerational ministry. This tool uses these factors to 1) take a picture of a church’s current setting for intergenerational ministry and 2) create a plan for becoming an intergenerational church.

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Instructions for using the Visioning Tool for Intergenerational Ministry

Preparation

1. Designate a facilitator for the Visioning process. This facilitator will make arrangements for and lead the Visioning Gathering. This person may be responsible for follow-up after the gathering.
2. Schedule a 2-hour Visioning Gathering. Provide a light meal or refreshments. Meet in a space with plenty of light and adequate room for the number of people attending.
3. Invite adults (and youth, if desired) that represent all ages in the church. Be sure parents, empty nesters, older adults, young adults, teachers, and staff are included or represented.
4. Create a handout of pages 3 and 6-10 for each person.

The Visioning Gathering

1. Before participants arrive, post 4 large sheets of easel paper/blank bulletin board paper/newsprint where all can see (on the walls, on easel stands, etc.). Write one of the following titles on each piece of paper:
 - a. PURPOSEFUL NOTES
 - b. PRACTICAL RATINGS and number the page from 1 to 9 to represent the 9 PRACTICAL factors. You may want to include a phrase to summarize each factor next to the number.
 - c. PRACTICAL NOTES
 - d. IMPACTFUL NOTES
2. Distribute a handout to each person.
3. Review the definition of intergenerational ministry from page 1. Allow time to answer questions.
4. PURPOSEFUL
 - a. Share the purpose of the PURPOSEFUL factors (in the box at the top of page 4) with the whole group.
 - b. Review the PURPOSEFUL section, allowing participants to read through the information silently for a few minutes.
 - c. After adequate time to peruse this section, lead a discussion using the questions given. Note significant thoughts and questions on the PURPOSEFUL NOTES paper.
5. PRACTICAL
 - a. Share the purpose of the PRACTICAL factors (in the box at the top of page 5) with the whole group.
 - b. Divide the group into smaller groups of 3 or 4. Invite the smaller groups to work on question #1, agreeing on a rating for each factor using the scale given. Allow 10-20 minutes for this activity.
 - c. Bring the whole group together and ask for ratings from each group. Next to the appropriate number on the PRACTICAL RATINGS paper, record ratings from each small group. Ask for reflections on the ratings.
 - d. Discuss, as a whole group, the remaining 3 discussion questions. Note significant thoughts and questions on the PRACTICAL NOTES paper.
6. IMPACTFUL
 - a. Share the purpose of the IMPACTFUL factors (in the box at the top of page 7) with the whole group.
 - b. Review the IMPACTFUL section, allowing participants to read through the factors silently.
 - c. After adequate time to peruse this section, lead a discussion using the questions given. Note significant thoughts and questions on IMPACTFUL paper.

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7. Reflect on all the notes made using the following questions.
 - a. In looking at notes from PURPOSEFUL and PRACTICAL, what connections do you see?
 - b. How are those connections associated with notes from IMPACTFUL?
 - c. What 2 or 3 areas does the church need to address in order to begin/sustain/improve intergenerational ministry?
 - d. How and when will a timeline be created for addressing these areas? Who will be involved in future discussions? Who will take on specific tasks?
8. Set a date for a follow-up gathering to revisit any plans made.

Throughout this model, our intent is for “intergenerational ministry” to refer to the overall approach to ministry, and for “intergenerational ministries” to refer to the programs/events/activities for multiple ages.

NEXT STEPS

Coaching

For an objective Visioning Gathering resulting in a step-by-step action plan, invite GenOn Ministries to lead your gathering, write the visioning plan and provide step-by-step assistance in working through the plan. Coaching prices vary depending on number of hours requested.

Intergenerational Ministry Workshop

Invite GenOn Ministries to lead *Generations Growing in Faith Together* at your church. In this workshop, participants untangle the definition of intergenerational ministry and learn why gathering multiple generations together to learn, worship, serve and build relationships is important for faith development. And, participants explore being an intergenerational church and discover best practices to get there. Workshop price varies with length of workshop and travel costs.

Find our host of training options for your church [here](http://www.genonministries.org/pages/intergenerational-ministry-training)

<http://www.genonministries.org/pages/intergenerational-ministry-training>.

We're happy to help you figure out which one is best for you.

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PURPOSEFUL

***PURPOSEFUL factors** describe a church's intention to be intergenerational. Intergenerational churches seek to practice all four factors, and evaluate themselves annually to ensure their commitment and intentionality. Each factor is explained in the dot points under the factor.*

- 1. The church's ministry is based upon a strong foundation of healthy Christian relationships among people of all ages.**
 - *People of all generations feel valued and important in the life of the congregation.*
 - *Congregation-wide policies with clear rules and boundaries exist to protect and empower people of all ages.*
 - *Experiences include purposeful opportunities to form healthy friendships guided by Christ's example, promoting respect for all.*
- 2. People of all ages are committed to faith formation and growing in their relationship to God through Jesus Christ.**
 - *Adults and young people have multiple opportunities to engage in Christian nurture on a regular basis.*
 - *Opportunities for spiritual growth are led by mature Christian adults who are called to lead.*
 - *Leaders seek out ways to demonstrate the foundational principle for effective ministry that relationships are everything to God.*
- 3. The church is dedicated to all ages worshipping together.**
 - *Children and youth are an essential part of the worshipping congregation.*
 - *Worship leadership seeks ways to engage all ages.*
 - *Those who plan worship for the congregation find ways to incorporate the gifts and talents of young and old, as appropriate for age and stage.*
- 4. The church places a high priority on intergenerational mission and service.**
 - *All ages in service together reflect the true nature of the church in ministry.*
 - *Leadership seeks out projects that promote reconciliation and healing in a variety of settings and are appropriate for multiple ages of participants working together.*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What benefits and challenges for your church do you see for each of the four factors?
2. Create a list of ways your church is intergenerational now.
3. How engaged is your clergy in the church's intergenerational ministries? How can church leaders be supportive and helpful to clergy in promoting an intergenerational approach to ministry?
4. In what ways are children involved in corporate worship? Brainstorm 3 ways your church can be more intergenerational in worship.

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PRACTICAL

PRACTICAL factors describe functional practices that allow a church to implement and sustain intergenerational ministry. Intergenerational churches intend to observe most of the PRACTICAL factors, and realize that effective intergenerational ministry is more attainable when all factors are practiced. Each factor is explained in the dot points under the factor.

1. The church makes intentional decisions about when and where to be intergenerational.

- *"Intergenerational" is recognized as combining at least two generations that mutually invest in each other.*
- *Leadership seeks ways to be intentionally intergenerational throughout church.*
- *Adequate funding for intergenerational programming is in the church budget.*
- *Within a given intergenerational event/activity/program, there may be short experiences where generations are separated.*

2. Clergy visibly support the integration of all ages into the life of the church.

- *Clergy hold up the importance of being intergenerational and lead the way.*
- *Preaching reflects the priority of inclusion of all ages.*
- *Clergy are supportive of lots of adults serving in children's and youth ministries.*

3. The church uses an intentional call process to involve adults in ministry leadership.

- *There is a regular process of prayer and discernment by which members of the congregation can discover their spiritual gifts and talents and use those gifts in ministry.*
- *The church avoids "asking for volunteers" and "recruiting bodies to fill jobs."*
- *Ministry leaders/volunteers understand that they have been called by God.*

4. A person or persons are called to advocate for intergenerational ministry throughout the church.

- *Advocates, paid and/or volunteer, are called and given a position description.*
- *Using position descriptions and term limits for volunteers is seen as part of a healthy process that encourages new ideas and prevents burnout.*
- *Advocates ensure intergenerational offerings collaborate with other ministries of the church.*

5. Where children and youth are included, many adults with a variety of gifts are involved.

- *The congregation understands that the need for high ratios of adult: children/youth goes beyond safety and provides more opportunities for relationship-building among the generations.*
- *Generations mutually invest in each other by giving and receiving in a shared environment.*
- *Leadership, regardless of age, is invited to serve through the call process.*

6. Leaders regularly evaluate best practices of intergenerational ministry and make adjustments as needed.

- *Opportunities are provided for networking and sharing of intergenerational experiences, both within the church and with other faith communities.*
- *The church provides training and resources for those who lead intergenerational events/programs/activities.*

7. The church supports a balanced approach to intergenerational ministry that nurtures the mind, body, and soul.

- *The Christian faith is taught through cognitive learning, practical opportunities for putting that faith into action, and experiences of the mystery of God.*
- *Teaching methods address different ways people of all ages learn.*

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_____ **8. Resources for intergenerational ministries are chosen and used in a purposeful manner supporting stated objectives.**

- *Resources reflect the beliefs and practices of the congregation and/or denomination.*
- *Curriculum and activities are appropriate to the ages and stages of participants.*
- *Resources complement other learning opportunities in the church so that each builds on the other.*
- *Children, youth and adults are trained and mentored in the art of building and maintaining relationships.*

_____ **9. The church offers opportunities to equip and support parents in their role as primary spiritual guide for their family.**

- *Church staff and leadership recognize families as the primary setting of intergenerational relationships.*
- *Parenting classes are offered regularly.*
- *Effective parenting skills are encouraged and affirmed.*
- *The church provides resources and support for at-home spiritual guidance for families.*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In small groups, review and discuss each factor, paying attention to the dot points for each factor. Score each factor using this scale, writing the appropriate score in the blank provided:
1 = We are currently doing this very well.
2 = We do this factor with some success.
3 = We do this factor, but could give it some attention.
4 = This is a new concept for us, and is not currently being practiced.
 - a. For factors rated 1 or 2, what can your church do to ensure these continue to be practiced?
 - b. For factors rated 3, what can your church do to change the rating to 1 or 2?
 - c. For factors rated 4, brainstorm ways to work towards implementing these factors.

The remaining questions will be discussed with the whole group.

2. How does your church equip and support parents in their role as spiritual guide for their children and youth? What resources are provided for parents to have faith conversations at home?
3. What are the steps of your church's Call process? Are leadership positions for intergenerational ministries formally defined? If not, brainstorm names of people who can work on writing these position descriptions.
4. What are the best practices used for intergenerational ministry at your church?

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IMPACTFUL

IMPACTFUL factors describe the positive effects of being an intergenerational church. When churches focus on all PURPOSEFUL and PRACTICAL factors, often all six IMPACTFUL factors are witnessed. Each factor is explained in the dot points under the factor.

1. Healthy and active intergenerational relationships based on Christ's example are observable.

- *People of all ages openly, informally and regularly demonstrate a genuine concern for and interest in each other and often know each other's names.*
- *Visitors report observing these healthy and active relationships.*
- *Systems and support are in place to build intergenerational relationships and resolve conflict.*

2. Intergenerational ministry contributes to individuals demonstrating observable spiritual growth in their commitment to Christ.

- *Adults and young people know who they are and whose they are, and convey the joy of a relationship with God through Jesus Christ in what they do and say.*
- *The behavior of all demonstrates a growing relationship with God through Jesus Christ.*
- *Leaders seek out ways to demonstrate the foundational principle for effective ministry that relationships are everything to God.*

3. Intergenerational worship engages people of all ages to participate and provide leadership.

- *Children and youth are seen as an essential part of the worshipping congregation.*
- *Worship leadership seeks ways to engage all ages.*
- *Those who plan worship for the congregation find ways to incorporate the gifts and talents of young and old, as appropriate for age and stage.*
- *Church seeks to offer worship leadership that combines multiple generations (for example, choirs, drama/speaking groups, instrumental groups).*

4. People regularly participate in intergenerational mission and service opportunities.

- *Through a variety of learning opportunities, all ages are taught the importance of service to others.*
- *Projects and events are planned and implemented that involve multiple generations in service to others.*

5. The number of people involved in intergenerational ministries grows over time.

- *More relationships are built because the intergenerational program/event/activity has meaning for those currently involved as well as for newcomers.*
- *Unchurched people are made to feel welcome and return because of the nurturing, healthy Christian relationships they experience.*
- *All ages become more engaged in the church as a whole because of relationships formed in intergenerational ministries.*

6. Being intergenerational is sustainable, maintaining its vitality through significant organizational and people changes.

- *The purpose, goal and success of any intergenerational program/event/activity in the church has more impact than any specific personality or leader.*
- *There are simple and effective plans for maintaining leadership and programs/events/activities during times of transition.*

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. List several specific settings in which healthy and interactive relationships have been observed in your church. What are some ways to increase opportunities for these types of intergenerational relationships to grow?
2. Brainstorm at least 3 ways that leaders can demonstrate and encourage a relationship with God through Jesus Christ.
3. How are intergenerational programs, events and activities organized and promoted? What plans could be made to ensure that intergenerational ministries are sustainable?

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