

## CROSS-GENERATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

### ENGAGING ALL GENERATIONS – FOR A GLOCAL CONNECTION

#### Who is This Workshop For?

This workshop is designed for those in our congregations who relate to children, youth, adults and elders – the life-long learning ministry team, Sunday school teachers, youth director, children’s ministry coordinator, older adult ministry director as well as the local and global mission team. This is for all who want to discover how faith formation is about “accompanying” one another right where we are, in our congregations, in our households and how involvement in “mission” cannot be separated from faith formation for every age and stage of life.

This workshop is experiential and interactive – we practice what we teach. It is important then that teenager, young adults, adults and older adults, singles, couples, parents, sponsors and grandparents participate in the workshop. This workshop is most fun and most beneficial when all ages and generations sign up and show up.

Based on comments from past participants, the time we spend together in this workshop will have far reaching influence in one’s ministry and that of the congregation. Participants do not leave with a curriculum, but a new lens and personal experience in which to approach every aspect of congregational and household ministry.

#### Your Workshop Leaders

The Cross-Generational Engagement workshop is led foremost by practitioners, people who are experienced Christian education leaders, knowledgeable in faith formation and who have a passion for bringing all generations together for God’s mission at home, in congregations, across the street and around the world.

Linda Staats, curriculum designer and consultant for the Cross-Generational Engagement workshop, serves as Assistant to the Bishop for Youth & Household Ministry in the Rocky Mountain Synod-ELCA. She has a master’s degree in human devel-

opment and the family, which serves as a foundation for her life-span approach to ministry. Linda is known for her knowledge of resources and for her ability to combine research, theology and people’s own holy stories to engage and empower all generations for serving at home and in the world.

Co-facilitators are experienced leaders in youth and children’s ministry in congregational settings. They are people who believe one can only lead effective youth ministry when we are also engaged in effective older adult ministry. They “get” cross-generational ministry and can’t imagine doing ministry any other way. Our co-facilitators bring personal stories, practical ideas for what works and what doesn’t and a belief that everyone is “gifted” to serve, regardless of age. They are passionate about what God is up to in this world through you and me.

#### Why is This Workshop for You?

The Global Mission Unit of the ELCA has a long history of valuing cross-generational ministry. The Global Mission Unit is committed to building on this tradition with the intent of integrating the gifts of the generations with every aspect of its work. The Cross-Generational Engagement track at the Global Mission Gatherings is based on the belief that when a congregation practices cross-generational ministry locally, the core values and action steps that form the foundation for accompaniment and mission are present and active.

The phrase “Cross-Generational Engagement” is used intentionally. It creates an image of all ages gathering around the cross and journeying together. A cross-generational approach embedded within a community of faith meaningfully engages children, youth, young adults, adults and elders into the planning, life and witness of that congregation.

The goal for this workshop and for the ministry of a congregation is for accompaniment to be embodied and practiced locally, right where you are. As the



generations journey together locally, our congregations and the ELCA will be infused with a new perspective and sense of identity and mission.

The desired outcome is an authentic community representing the gifts, experiences, faith stories and cultures of diverse ages and multiple generations for the purpose of reconciliation first in our own households and congregations, then within the community and the world. Our hope is that the Cross-Generational Engagement track will equip you to discover, experience and celebrate the wondrous moments as the generations break bread together at the Lord's table, on the kitchen table and walk along side one another, locally and globally. As we view one another through God's eyes, accompaniment becomes a way of life for every age, through Christ.

The Rev. Bill Bixby, campus pastor at Thiel College, wrote in the Summer 2010 edition of the YMNet "Connect Journal," "Cross-generational ministry is nothing more, and nothing less, than a commitment to be God's many gifts/no walls Church! That is, to claim and to live out the *mutual blessing, mutual up-building and mutual challenge* that youth and elders can offer each other, centered in "... *one Lord, one faith, one baptism ...*" (Ephesians 4:5).

### **When and Where Will It Be Held?**

The Cross-Generational Engagement workshop is one of several topics offered during the Glocal Mission Gatherings. Participants attend an entire workshop or track, which is typically divided into two sessions, each about two hours in length for a total of four hours interaction.

The space for our time together is large enough to allow us to sit knee-to-knee for caring conversation as well as move around and interact in fun and simple ways that demonstrate how all ages can laugh, pray and talk together. At least one rocking chair will be provided, small chairs waiting for the youngest among us, and pillows for those who prefer the floor.

The environment where we meet is designed to appeal to visual learners as well as those who learn

best by doing. A "Centering Table" with candles and a selection of Bibles for all ages will remind us of the holy spaces in our congregations and in our homes.

Our time together is well paced with a blend of lecture, personal and group sharing, and cross-generational experiences that demonstrate the topic. Each person's comfort level for sharing and interaction is always honoured.

### **By the End of The Cross-Generational Engagement Workshop You Will Have:**

1. Identified the generations present in our world today, in one's congregation and in the workshop itself, synthesizing information about each generation's beliefs, values, world-view and gifts.
2. Engaged in multi-age, multi-generational, small group genuine conversation; analyzed one's experience and applied it to one's life in the congregation and daily life.
3. Explored cross-generational ministry through the lens of Accompaniment Values and Actions and practiced applying the concepts to one's ministry setting.
4. Developed a network with peers and shared questions and expertise.
5. Reviewed and evaluated resources for supporting a ministry of accompaniment and faith formation that includes all ages and generations.
6. Integrated the multiple aspects of the Glocal Mission Gathering experience and created next steps for developing a comprehensive cross-generational lens for ministry.

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## WELCOME AND OVERVIEW

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We are so glad you have selected the Cross-Generational Engagement workshop. We look forward to getting to know you and interacting with you during our time together.

Notice that you were immediately engaged with the theme. When you walked into the room, you were invited to add a “dot” to your nametag, one that matched the color or code next to the generation/year you were born on the Gifts of the Generations handout. If you have not had an opportunity to do this, you may do so now.

When you have a break between our two sessions or when you return home, you are invited to read the supplemental information, “Cross-Generational Engagement, Ministry and Mission,” found in the Resource Section for this workshop. Here you will find references to Scripture and research that provides the foundation for forming community, accompanying one another and practicing our Christian faith. In this track, we will begin to tap the vast potential for bringing the generations together to accompany one another through life’s milestones, challenges and celebrations as we share the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Our time at the Glocal Mission Gathering is like a three-ring circus, with our time divided between plenary sessions, worship, learning tracks and meals that are planned as intentional times for the sharing of local stories about accompaniment and mission. Additionally, there are many displays.

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## TOPIC #1. HOW MANY GENERATIONS ARE THERE? WHO IS IN WHAT GENERATION?

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### Learning Objective

*By the end of this section, participants will have:*

- Developed an awareness of the seven generational categories and impact on ministry.
- Explored the uniqueness and gifts of each generation.

### A. Introductions: Warm-up Activity

Scripture is filled with references to the generations. Pages of biblical text list the genealogy of families and connection from generation to generation. Would someone please volunteer to read Matthew 1:1-17.

Each person in the circle is invited to introduce himself/herself in the following manner: *“My name is and I am the son of “ \_\_\_\_\_” Or “My name is and I am the daughter of “ \_\_\_\_\_” giving the first name of ones father or mother and then continue naming ones maternal or paternal lineage as far back as one knows the names of one’s grandfather/grandmother /great grandfather/grandmother etc. (Anyone has permission to simply say “pass” on any activity.)*

1. What, if any, new connections did you make between the genealogy you just heard read from the Bible and our own naming of those who have come before us?
2. As we go around the circle again, you are invited to share your name, role in your congregation and why you selected this learning track.
3. What do you want to gain and walk away with at the end of this time together? We will list your expectations on a white board or newsprint. We will come back to this list at the end of the workshop.

### B. Information: Gifts of the Generations

Our newspapers are filled with articles about generational characteristics and the challenges and benefits of working together. Scripture is also filled with references to the “generations.” Our faith language refers to “passing on our faith to the next generation.” Yet, seldom are people able to name all the generations or each generation’s uniqueness. Many ask, “What is meant by cross-generational ministry?”

For our purposes, it is not so important to know the names of each generation or even the specific age span. It is important to recognize that each generation’s beliefs and values are shaped by its time in history. Each generation has a unique worldview.



Each generation offers a gift to the other generations. The body of Christ is not complete when the views, skills, faith narratives and perspectives of a generation are absent in the ministry and life of a congregation and community.

Generation specialists typically refer to five or six generations in our society. The actual dates may vary by a few years depending on whose research you consider. If we include those few still living that are 105 and older, or even over age 100, there are seven generations present on our planet and in our communities:

<b>Gen Z</b> (Born after 2004)	Ages 8 and younger
<b>Millennial</b> (1983-2003)	Ages 9-29
<b>Survivors</b> (1965-1982)	Ages 30-47
<b>Boomers</b> (1946-1964)	Ages 48-66
<b>Silents</b> (1926-1945)	Ages 67-86
<b>Builders</b> (1906-1925)	Ages 87-104
<b>Lost</b> (1907 and before)	Ages 105 and older

**Q:** How many generations or different color dots do we have represented in our group today? For effective cross-generational ministry, the goal is to have at least three generations represented. How did this group do?

**Take out “The Gifts of the Generations” resource.**

1. Do we have someone present who is 87 or older? If not, who has a grandparent or parent in that category that would be willing to read the description for the Builder and Silent Generations?
2. Would a Booster, a Boomer and a Buster each volunteer to read the description for your generation?
3. If we have one or more from the Millennial Generation with us, would someone read the description for your generation?
4. And finally, would the person present with the

youngest child or grandchild in their household please read the description for the Adaptive Generation.

**Q:** Do you think these characteristics accurately describe your generation?

**Q:** What else would you add to the descriptions for each generation?

**To summarize:**

- There are seven generations in our society and in our congregations. Each generation’s beliefs, stories, values, faith and giving practices are shaped by one’s time and place in history.
- Each generation offers a gift and unique perspective to the faith community.
- A faith community’s significant role is to bring all generations together to “accompany” one another.
- Meaningful and intentional interaction between the generations is essential for recognizing generational expertise and knowledge, decision making, equipping leaders, sharing gifts and resources, networking, mentoring and storytelling, which leads to shaping and passing on values and faith.

**C. Age-specific vs. Cross-Generational Ministry**

Most often when all ages are gathered on the church campus, separate programs are offered for each specific age group. This approach is typically labeled “cross-generational” ministry, but it is not. It is not enough to provide childcare for the little ones and parallel opportunities for the older children, youth and “OWLS,” the Older Wiser LutheranS. It is not sufficient to have all generations simply share a common space as often happens in fellowship halls for a meal or on a patio for “coffee” time following worship. This ineffective approach to ministry is well summarized in the book, “Almost Christian”: “To treat adolescents as a separate species instead of as less experienced members of our own was one of the twentieth century’s largest category errors.”



**In groups of three, please share:**

1. What is the generational make up of your congregation? Your neighborhood?
2. Name the times, places or events when all generations are actively engaged with one another on your church campus? Off campus? In your household?

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## THE GIFTS OF THE GENERATIONS

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### ***A Foundation for Accompaniment in One's Home, Congregation & World***

*Recognizing Generational Expertise & Knowledge, Decision Making, Sharing Gifts & Resources, Networking, Mentoring and Storytelling*

**1907 The Lost Generation:** We are losing or have lost their stories. (105 and older.)

**1906 -1925 Builders / Civic / G.I.:** Faith based on knowledge and experience. Have heroes. "We will do whatever it takes to get the job done." Believe every generation will be better off. Live a life of sacrifice for the good of others. Want respect. (Ages 87-104+)

**1926-1945 Boosters / Silents / Adaptive:** Faith based on knowledge and involvement. Deeply committed to common good. Know hymns by heart. Hard work will get the job done. You can count on my word and a handshake! Save and pay cash. Shaped by the Depression, WWII, industrial revolution. Rooted in tradition, loyalty and conservation of resources. Grew up listening to radio, comfortable with sermons and traditional music. Trust institutions, leaders. May care for elderly parents, children and grandchildren. Account for 39 percent of charitable giving. (Ages 67-86)

**1946-1964 Boomers / Idealist:** Post WWII. Dabble in church. Taught that institutional church will pass on the faith (forgot Deut. 6). Credit oriented. Buy now, pay later. Shaped by TV and incredible social-political change. Experienced assassinations of religious and political leaders, space exploration, civil rights, Vietnam, women's

movement, Watergate. Suspicious of institutions, hierarchy and authority. Live to work and play. Creative, high standards. Value their achievements. (Ages 48-66)

**1965-1982 Busters / Survivors / Gen X/Reactors:** (13th generation of immigrants to American soil). Searching for meaning and spiritual connection rather than a church connection. No loyalty to a denomination. Reached by non-denominational churches. Live in shadows of three generations. No fear – just do it! Concerned about making ends meet. Shaped by computers, collapse of Berlin Wall, AIDS crisis, divorce. Accept diversity. Environmentally conscious. Visual and entertainment oriented. Relationships important. (Ages 30-47)

**1983-2003 Millennium Generation / Gen Next / Gen Y / Net Gen or Gen @:** New civic generation. Community minded, public servants. Faith responsive to nurturing. Looking for heroes. Experience a frantic pace of life, formative years spent in child-care, short attention spans, less respect for authority. The Internet has always been a part of their life. Capable of networking and mass collaborations using the Internet without knowing anyone personally. Need close bonds with caring adults for balance in world. (Ages 9-29)

**2004-2020 Adaptive / Gen Z / Homeland:** (Ages birth through age 8)

**NO ONE IS TOO OLD OR TOO YOUNG TO BE THE CHURCH – ALL ARE THE CHURCH OF TODAY**

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## TOPIC #2. THE CIRCLE OF BLESSING: BEING THE BODY OF CHRIST

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### Learning Objective

*By the end of this section, participants will have:*

- Engaged in cross-generational conversation.
- Practiced inclusivity, storytelling, recognition of people's gifts and being vulnerable while having fun and building community.
- Become equipped to create and lead effective, faith-forming, cross-generational ministry in one's congregation and home.

### A. The Circle of Blessing

In forming a Circle of Blessing, we will do the following:

- Identify and honor the oldest one in our midst. Not only will this person be our eldest, but also receive the title of "wisest" and will serve as our honored elder for our time together. This person will be asked to share a bit about his/her past with us.
- Identify the youngest and have him/her stand next to the "eldest."
- Everyone else will take a place in the circle based on one's age or the year born. The circle flows from the "wise elder" followed by each age, decade and generation until the youth and children present fill in the circle and are standing next to the youngest one first identified. Provide chairs for those who cannot comfortably stand for the next few minutes.
- Consider the following:
  1. The number of decades and generations present in our circle. What generations are missing? Where are they? If not here, how do we go there?
  2. No one is too old or too young to be the church – we are all the church of today. One cannot do youth ministry without our elders and one cannot do older adult ministry without our youth.
  3. We owe a debt of gratitude to those of

the Silent and Builder generations for their gifts and contributions to our society and our institutions of faith.

4. A congregation is the only institution in our society that is able to bring all the generations together to accompany one another through all the ages, stages and milestones of life. Our congregations are an untapped potential for generational ministry.
  5. To pass on our faith and values, we need to spend meaningful time together.
- Now hear the words from Psalm 78:1-7 from The Message:

*1-4 Listen, dear friends, to God's truth, bend your ears to what I tell you. I'm chewing on the morsel of a proverb; I'll let you in on the sweet old truths, Stories we heard from our fathers, counsel we learned at our mother's knee. We're not keeping this to ourselves, we're passing it along to the next generation —God's fame and fortune, the marvelous things God has done. 5-8 God planted a witness in Jacob, set the Word firmly in Israel, Then commanded our parents to teach it to their children So the next generation would know, and all the generations to come — Know the truth and tell the stories so their children can trust in God,*

### B. Learning Names, Engaging the Body, Building Community Around a Common Experience.

- Let's become further acquainted while still in our circle. I am going to throw (name object) to someone in the circle. As I do so, I will call out your name. You will then throw the object to another person until each person has received the object and has had their name called out. The last person will throw the object back to me. Questions? Let's begin...
- Good job! OK, we are going to do this again, only faster. Throw the object to the same person as last time. (Begin again, but after about the third or fourth toss, introduce a second object. Throw to the same person as before and continue in the previous order. After another three-four tosses, introduce a third object.)

- What did you notice about this game that made it a helpful cross-generational experience?
  1. We laughed!
  2. Any age or ability could participate. All were included. If we had small children or if we were all sitting in chairs we could have used larger objects or rolled large balls to one another.
  3. We were vulnerable.
  4. Community was built through a common experience and shared laughter.
  5. New group identity was created and a sense of belonging.
  6. Power was shared through the simple act of each one selecting the next person to receive the object.

*not at large round or oblong tables. If a large group (more than 50 people or 10 small groups) prepare numbered sheets before hand, one number per sheet for each small group leader to have a number to hold up for others to see.*

Once you have found your group, each person within your cross-generational small group is invited to share his/her name and either who you are named after or the meaning of your name.

Select questions from the Cross-Generational Engagement Questions handout. Please begin with the first question. When you complete your sharing, move to the next question on the list.

One person in each group is invited to read the question and then allow a few moments for everyone to reflect on it before sharing responses. This allows time to think about what it is you want to share and frees you to listen to others when sharing begins.

Each person is encouraged to respond to the specific question before going on to additional questions. And remember, you may say “Pass” at anytime while still giving the gift of listening. You will have 10-12 minutes for this first conversation.

**Facilitators tips:** *Most people, especially children, are able to sit comfortably and engage in direct conversation for about 10-12 minutes. Watch your group for restlessness or waning attention and be ready for group energizers that are simple and fun that engage all the generations and people of all abilities and mobility. See the resource: Suggestions for Cross-Generational Energizers, Mixers and Games.*

### **Cross-Generational Engagement Questions**

*Notice how the responses to the questions connect us to the Principles of Accompaniment.*

**Questions to Consider:** Please discuss questions in the order listed. The goal is not to complete as many questions as possible. The goal is for authentic sharing.

1. What is the best thing about being my age? The most challenging? (*Mutuality, Vulnerability, Storytelling, Empathy*)
2. Name someone of an older or younger generation who has influenced my life of faith. (*Storytelling, Sustainability*)

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## **TOPIC #3. CROSS-GENERATIONAL CONVERSATION**

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### **Learning Objective**

*By the end of this section, participants will have:*

- Shared faith talk and caring conversation in multi-age/generational groups.
- Recognized and named the accompaniment values and actions as part of the sharing process.
- Applied the “iceberg model” of understanding culture while conversing about generations.

### **A. Cross-Generational Small Group Conversation and Engagement**

Count off around the Circle of Blessing created earlier. The result is small groups of five with a mix of generations in each. The first person of each number will select a space in the room and hold up fingers to match his/her assigned number. Those following with the same assigned number will then be able to locate his/her group.

**Facilitators tips:** *No less than three and no more than five people in each small group! Preference is to sit in chairs pulled together in small clusters,*

3. What is my earliest memory of being invited to have a significant role in my faith community? (*Empowerment, Asset Building*)
4. Do the youth in my congregation, my neighborhood, my household have at least five caring adults in their lives? (*Mutuality, Network Building, Inclusivity, Empowerment*)
5. Do the elders in our congregation have at least five from a younger generation who interact with them? (*Mutuality, Network Building, Inclusivity, Empowerment*)
6. What are the gifts each generation contributes to the ministry of my congregation? What difference does this make? In my community? In the world? (*Mutuality, Inclusivity, Sustainability, Empowerment, Resource Sharing, Decision Making, Network Building, Expertise Recognition, Asset Building*)
7. How does my congregation assist people of every age to discover and use their gifts in Christ's service? (*Empowerment, Resource Sharing, Mutuality, Expertise Recognition, Scripture*)

**Optional Questions for Extended Time Together or for Discussion on Gifts-Based Ministry:**

Within the large group, ask each person to respond to the following questions. Call out answers popcorn style. Responses will be recorded under one of two headings: **TEACH/SHARE** and **LEARN**

- A. Something I know how to do or have knowledge about that I can teach or share with someone else. (Ex: "I can teach someone how to make an angel food cake from scratch, not from a box.)
- B. Something I want to learn about or learn how to do. (Ex: I want to learn how to speak Spanish.)

**Q:** What do you notice about these two lists? How could this "teach and learn" approach bridge the generations in one's congregation? Neighborhood? What new multi-age small groups could be created? Is being a teacher or a learner based on one's age?

**Q:** Which principles of accompaniment are expressed in these two questions? (*Resource Sharing, Expertise Recognition, Network Building, Asset Building*)

**B. Applying the "Iceberg Model" of Culture to Generations**

**Introduction:** Listen to this brief presentation of the "iceberg model" of culture and its application to generations. As you hear this description, what sounds familiar to you?

Sometimes we believe and act as if the "other" has to become like me/us in order to belong to the community, even the community of faith. We not only do this across cultures, but across generations. There is a tendency to want to impose the habits or beliefs of one generation on the other. We tend to look at the world primarily through the lens of our own culture or generation. How we engage "the other" is core to the practice of accompaniment locally. The iceberg concept is a great analogy for understanding generational differences and deepening our understanding of where other people are coming from and what brings meaning to another's behavior. Like an iceberg, each generation has observable aspects that are "above the waterline" and larger, invisible aspects "below the waterline" that can only be imagined or intuited. The more generationally competent we become, the more we can engage authentically with one another locally and globally.

**Continued Small Group Conversation: Draw Your Generation's Iceberg**

In your cross-generational small groups, in the same manner as the earlier discussions, engage in conversation around the questions provided. Using a large piece of newsprint and markers draw an iceberg and document your responses to those things "above the water" and those things "below the water" for each generation represented in your small group.

**Application: Gallery Walk**

When your group has completed this exercise, you are invited to post your work on a nearby wall. Take a walk around the room and review others' work. Talk with your peers about what you observe. How would you summarize the stereotypes and characteristics of each generation?



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## The “Iceberg Model” of Culture and Generations

### Those things above the water:

1. What style of “dress” is associated with your generation? Music? Food? Entertainment? Dating habits?
2. What are symbols associated with your generation?
3. What images or stereotypes are associated with your generation?
4. Name the heroes/heroines, “idols” for each generation.

### Those things below the water:

1. Name the historic events that have shaped your generation.
2. How do people of your generation express their faith?
3. What are the gifts you believe your generation has to offer the other generations?
4. What do you believe are the core values of your generation?
5. How has the time in history and place you were born shaped you and your life experience?

Other Questions you would like to ask. List your questions here. Identify each question as “above the water” or “below the water.”

(An additional handout, “Immigration – a World Café Approach,” is included in the resource section for groups who want to engage in further cross-generational conversation on the topic of immigration. This is an effective approach and technique for engaging diverse opinions on any topic.)

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## TOPIC #4. ACCOMPANIMENT PRACTICES ACROSS GENERATIONS

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### Learning Objective

*By the end of this section, participants will have:*

- Become more familiar with accompaniment values and actions, examined them and applied them to one’s own ministry settings.

For this exercise, we will divide into groups of three, with similar colored dots in each group.

**Facilitators tip:** *If a small number of participants, ask people to be in pairs, based on common ages. Each working group will be assigned one Accompaniment Value and one Accompaniment Action. [See “Engaging All Generations in the Practices of Accompaniment” Resource]*

Each group will read the descriptions and then discuss the questions that follow. When each group has completed their discussion, two groups will join together to make one larger group. You are invited to share and exchange your insights for your assigned topics.

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## TOPIC #5. SUSTAINING GENERATIONAL MINISTRY

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### Learning Objective

*By the end of this section, participants will have:*

- Reviewed and evaluated the resources available for cross-generational ministry.
- Exchanged personal expertise, experiences and resources with one another.
- Strengthened networking and sustainability of local relationships and learning.

Examples and copies of various resources have been displayed in our workshop room for your exploration during the learning sessions. Now please turn to the resource pages in your binder. Survey the various resources, describing and highlighting specific ones.



1. Who is already familiar with the various resources and utilizes them in your ministry?  
Say more.
2. What other cross-generational resources do you utilize in your settings.
3. Would someone from this locale please volunteer to gather participants' emails and later distribute them for those who would like to continue networking following the event?

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## **TOPIC #6. MAKING IT MY OWN – TAKING IT HOME**

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### **Learning Objective**

*By the end of this section, participants will have:*

- Evaluated one's learning and deepened reflection, leading to an internalization of one's experiences.
- Prepared to take this experience back home and share with other congregational team members what one has learned.
- Created next steps for developing a comprehensive cross-generational lens for ministry.

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## ENGAGING ALL GENERATIONS IN THE PRACTICES OF ACCOMPANIMENT

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### Accompaniment in Action

St. Augustine wrote, “It is solved by walking.” Accompaniment bears fruit when we truly walk the road together. When we *make decisions, share resources, recognize expertise, tell stories and build networks* we engage in God’s mission. We have the opportunity to serve one another and to practice accompaniment right where we are, here and now – through intentional cross-generational ministry within the everyday life of the congregation and in our households. (To learn more about accompaniment, review the material in your Glocal Mission Gathering binder.)

In each category below, reflect on your ministry setting at church and at home. Consider what you are already doing that you can **celebrate**. *What existing ministry can you simply tweak to make it stronger? Is there a new action or approach you need to add to practice accompaniment across the generations?*

### Resource Sharing

A faith community is made up of people of all generations. To truly be the body of Christ one needs to think carefully about how to share resources and to receive resources, in a way that respects every age and doesn’t lead to undermining relationships or limiting the contributions of a specific generation. Resources include opportunities, access to decision-makers, education, family connections, property and building facilities, time and money.

*What are the resources and gifts that each generation has to share in the life of your faith community? How do the various generations and age-related ministries share space in your church building?*

### Expertise Recognition

Expertise recognition across generations can be as simple as asking individuals of every age, 3-103, “What is something you can do or you know about that you can teach me/us?” And “What is something you want to learn how to do or learn more about?” Regardless of age, everyone is a teacher and

learner. Everyone is gifted by virtue of their baptism and being one of God’s creations. We are fellow workers and servants in the Kingdom!

*How can you practice “expertise recognition” across generations – in your household? Youth ministry? Older Adult Ministry? Congregation? Complete a survey of your congregation and ask each person what he/she can teach another and what he/she wants to learn. Create new mutual interest groups.*

### Story Telling

Story telling means sharing and listening to one another’s stories. Story telling is recognizing that each individual’s story is shaped by their life experience in addition to being shaped by his or her time and place in history. Story telling in accompaniment happens when we share stories recognizing and asking questions about what has shaped our perceptions and stereotypes about the other. Story telling is giving voice and recognition to individuals in another generation.

*When in the life of your faith community or within your household do you plan intentional time to hear the life-stories and daily stories of those of another generation? How do the stories and faith of another generation shape the story of your congregation? In your family? Your personal story? How does our larger Christian narrative shape your personal story about how you welcome and serve the “other”? Begin a “life story” project. Utilize Bible Storybooks for all ages.*

### Network Building

Network building is creating trusted relationships across generations. This is critical if we are to nurture and pass on our faith and build a sustainable faith community. Network building is about breaking down age-segregation and division by generations in the congregation and in the immediate neighborhood.

*Give examples of “networking” across generations in your congregation or the neighborhood surrounding your place of worship. What are some*



*examples of mentoring one another across the life span? Is there an age group that is excluded and lacks voice and influence in your congregation? In your neighborhood? How can one age group be an advocate for another?*

### **Decision Making**

Decision making is something we do every day, at home, in school, in our youth groups, congregations and community. In making decisions, ask, “Who is involved in the decision-making process?” Are your congregation’s boards and teams made up of only one or two generations? Are some groups of people often considered “too old to” or “too young to”? Are decisions made without involving the age group that will be affected? We practice decision making when we take seriously the needs and suggestions of all who will be affected and when we work to hear all voices, paying special attention to the voices of those who are frail, vulnerable or unable to be “at” church but may be homebound, in college, at work, in prison, or committed care-givers to another generation.

*How many generations are represented in each of your congregation’s decision-making groups or teams/boards? A goal is to have at least three generations serve together. How can your congregation live into a commitment to have youth and young adults (ages 18-30) on council, teams and boards? (See ELCA Resolution 2009.) How can your congregation be open to people’s gifts, ideas and opportunities that are not listed on the time and talent sheet?*

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## **THE CORE VALUES OF ACCOMPANIMENT**

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The story of Jesus and the disciples traveling to Emmaus reminds us that mission is a journey and that it has a goal – living out Christ’s reconciliation and breaking bread together.

When we are walking down the road together, we need to be able to talk honestly, to share with one another, to get to know one another – to undo the boundary of strangeness or suspicion between

generations. It takes time, thought and commitment to learn to see how we create boundaries, to perceive the asymmetries of power, and to respond to them from Christ’s reconciling mission.

The mission journey begins with understanding accompaniment values. These are the five intertwined values that assist us in living out God’s mission of reconciliation. Recognizing and committing to empowerment in our relationships is an important part of being vulnerable and living out the values of sustainability, mutuality and inclusivity.

In each category below, reflect on your ministry setting at church and at home. Consider what you are already doing that you can **celebrate**. *What existing ministry can you simply **tweak** to make it stronger? Is there a new action or approach you need to **add** to incorporate the accompaniment values across the generations?*

### **Vulnerability**

Vulnerability is the driving force in opening ourselves to relationship and God’s reconciliation in mission. In our culture, vulnerability often seems to be a weakness. But Jesus shows us that vulnerability – openness to relationship and giving up power – is God’s way of redemption, just as Jesus became vulnerable to us and with us.

*Give examples of “being vulnerable” with people of another generation. Under what circumstance does this happen best? How can being vulnerable open one up to a deepening relationship with people of another generation? In the pew, across the street or across the globe? How does being a “safe haven” relate to the value of vulnerability?*

### **Mutuality**

Together, we work to build up our capacities to proclaim and live out the gospel of Christ. We offer thoughtful care for one another, working toward deeper relationship, because we value one another’s wellbeing just as we value our own. Mutuality is built upon trust in and from one another. This requires time and patience as we make plans and decisions together.



*Give an example of a “mutual” relationship with someone of another age that you had to work diligently at establishing. How is this value reflected in your congregation’s ministry?*

### **Inclusivity**

All communities exclude someone. In accompanying one another, we look to see who is excluded, and why, and by whom. We commit to intentionally including those who are being left out. Inclusivity requires self-reflection and honesty about our own communities and relationships. As we live out reconciling mission, we often must ask ourselves “Who is part of our community? Who is absent? Why?”

*Think of a time when you were excluded because you were “too old” to or “too young” to. How did you feel? When have you intentionally or un-intentionally excluded someone or a group of people because of age? What needs to change in the physical environment at your church for all to feel included? Is your entire ministry “in here” or do you go “out there” to reach other populations?*

### **Sustainability**

Relationships are not simple. They are complex and require much attention over time to sustain them. The accompaniment value of sustainability means we recognize that any given relationship will require an intentional commitment of attention and time to build up all those who are involved. In cross-generational ministry, sustainability means establishing long term relationships between individuals of different generations or ages that will continue over time.

*Share how you most often hear the word “sustainability” used in our society and world today. How does your congregation continue to sustain relationships with the frail that are immobile or cannot travel to church? Those away in college? Those serving in the military? Young adults?*

### **Empowerment**

When we recognize that relationships often have an imbalance of power, and when we struggle to balance and correct those asymmetries, then we

are engaging in empowerment. Sometimes empowerment will mean that the more powerful partner steps back so that the less powerful partner has a chance to shine, or that the more powerful partner will work to increase the power of the less powerful. Sometimes empowerment will mean that the less powerful partner will step up to take power.

*Share a time when you felt “empowered” by someone older than you. Younger than you? Share a time when you deliberately let go of your authority and equipped and encouraged someone else to lead.*



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## “MAKING IT MY OWN – TAKING IT HOME”

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We now turn our attention to a time for reflection on all we have experienced during the Glocal Mission Gathering and specifically during this track on Cross-Generational Engagement. We want to spend time organizing what and how we will take this experience and information back home.

- Based on your experience in this track, name what you now believe are the critical ingredients for effective cross-generational ministry. As you name them, we will list each one for all to view. There is a space also provided on the “Making It My Own” worksheet for you to record this summary. Refer to this foundational checklist as you complete the CTA scan.
- You are invited to spend five minutes answering the additional questions on the “Making It My Own” worksheet. This process is called a CTA scan: Celebrate, Tweak and Add. Record one response to each question. This is practice for when you return home and gather with your team members to share perspectives from each of the tracks you attended.
- You are invited to share your responses to the CTA scan with one other participant in our workshop today. (If time allows)
- Finally, we return to the list of expectations we created at the beginning of our session. You are invited to come up and write a word, phrase or image on this sheet that captures how you imagine your church being different as a result of your engagement in the Cross-Generational Engagement workshop and the Glocal Mission Gathering.

Based on the information given in the Global Mission binder, the plenary speakers and this workshop, list the ***effective components of Cross-Generational Engagement through the lens of accompaniment***. Be specific:

1. **Celebrate** those areas where your congregation already practices and carries out God’s reconciling mission through an effective cross-generational ministry. Be specific:



2. In what areas of ministry, with some slight **Tweaks** or adjustments, could you become more intentional and effective in bringing generations together and thus increasing your congregation's capacity to participate in God's mission, proclamation and service? In your household?

3. What new ideas, concepts or resources were you introduced to in this track? What are one or two new practices or approaches you would like to **Add** to your ministry that will increase your congregation's capacity to be cross-generational and in mission and relationship with God and one another:

4. Based on what you have experienced in this track, is there anything you believe needs to be **Removed** from your congregation's practices, as it does not fit an effective Cross-Generational Engagement model?

5. How do you imagine your church being different as a result of your participation in this workshop about Cross-Generational Engagement and the Glocal Mission Gathering?



6. Practice your response to the question you are certain to be asked, “What did you learn in the Cross-Generational Engagement workshop?”

To grow our congregation’s capacity for cross-generational ministry I need to talk to or involve ... list names of people and organizations:

Participants in the Glocal Mission Gathering will meet (date) \_\_\_\_\_ to share and answer these same questions for each of the workshops we experienced.

Other:





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## CROSS-GENERATIONAL ENGAGEMENT CLOSING RITUAL

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- Each person please take a paper plate. With the markers provided, draw on the plate symbols or words that represent the gifts and blessings you receive from generations other than your own.
- Place the plates on the Centering Table. Name out loud the gifts represented on the plates.

### **Blessing**

*Thank you for participating in this workshop. As we gather around this table, we give thanks for the gifts of all the generations and the opportunity to use those gifts to accompany one another in God's mission in our homes, congregations, community and into the world. We are truly the body of Christ when all generations gather at the Lord's Table and one another's tables. All are welcomed!*

### **Sending Prayer**

(Ask someone to lead the group in a closing prayer or say the Lord's Prayer.)

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## SUPPLEMENTAL READING

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### **Cross-Generational Engagement, Ministry and Mission**

*May people of every age and stage in life become believers, and believers become disciples; and may our disciples discover their gifts for serving. May each generation receive encouragement from one another to use their gifts, as well as receive the gifts of others, in Christ's name for all the world.*

At a recent GMG, the youth who were present were invited to participate in the Cross-Generational Engagement track for a brief 45 minutes of planned interaction with the participating adults. When the adults reflected upon the experience of their encounter and conversation with the youth, there were tears – tears of appreciation and tears at the new-found understanding of the potential power of face-to-face exchanges between youth and adults. This, the result of a mere 45 minutes!

It is critical that environments are created that encourage the intentional working, playing, talking and worshipping along side one another both on and off a church campus. The building of sustainable, trusted, authentic relationships through meaningful conversation, shared rituals and traditions is essential. Congregations are a vast, untapped potential for bringing the generations together to accompany one another through life's milestones, challenges and celebrations and in the mission of sharing the good news of Jesus Christ.

### **Why Connect Global Mission with ALL the Generations?**

- Scripture is filled with references to the generations. Pages of biblical text list the genealogy of families and connection from generation to generation. The meaningful interaction of the generations is critical for nurturing and passing on faith. (Psalm 78:1-7)
- At baptism the faith community welcomes the individual into the Lord's family and makes a promise to work together in God's world.

Global Mission ministry is incomplete without children and youth. Intentionally including all generations in ministry is about keeping our promises. It is all about growing, shaping and developing leaders.

- A healthy ministry includes children, youth and young adults and elders. One is not too young to serve nor too old to serve. One cannot do youth ministry without including elders. And one cannot do ministry with elders if not engaged in ministry with children and youth. We are all the church of today. One does not earn the right to be involved in global ministry or to serve on a Global Mission team or board. The opportunity to accompany one another is a gift to be received and offered by each generation.
- Like the biblical story of the 99 sheep and the one lost – the body of Christ is not complete when a generation and its gifts are missing. (Luke 15:3-7)
- In the story of David and Goliath we have a powerful text that defines the qualities of a young leader. We learn from King Saul's attempt to be supportive of this young person that God has already given David everything he needs to answer God's call and fulfill God's mission. (1 Samuel 17)
- Timothy was still a young person, possibly a teenager when Paul trusted him enough to ask him to lead. Timothy learned by experience and with guidance from a wise elder who empowered him and mentored him. It was accompaniment at its best. (1 Timothy 4:7b-8)
- The ELCA at the 2009 Churchwide Assembly passed a resolution that allows for and encourages the expanded role of youth and young adults in the governance of all expressions of this church. This means from the local church council and ministry teams to the ministries of the synod and churchwide offices. "Amendments and additions to the Constitution, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions S6.04.B09"



- (Research your own church body or congregation's policies about involvement of youth and young adults.)
- Too many of our youth today do not have enough caring adults in their lives. And our adults do not have enough kids in their lives. Often the relatives and grandparents who love them live miles away and are unable to be actively involved in daily interactions. Creating an interactive cross-generational community creates disciples who want to be like Jesus. Discipleship happens through personal, trusted relationships where the God story is articulated, freely shared and connected to one's daily life.
- No one, due to age, gets a pass from being involved in God's mission. Having raised one's own children or never having children are also not acceptable excuses. Moses, Aaron, Sarah and Abraham, Simeon and Hanna, Zachariah and Elizabeth, and Paul are just a few of the examples of God's call to lead and serve into their 70s, 80s, 90s and well beyond.
- Our children and youth live in a complex world. They are connected 24/7. As Christians who want our children to live like Jesus, we cannot wait until our children become a certain age or are able to travel away from home. They are part of a global community NOW, even in their own homes and community. The congregation has a duty to equip households as centers for local and global mission. It increases the faith maturity of a congregation and prepares people of every age to be apostles into all the world.
- Diversity is everywhere – not just “over there.” Diversity of ages, generations, abilities, personality, race, gender, customs, rituals and traditions exist in one's family, community and congregation. Uniqueness is to be claimed and celebrated as it shapes one's identity and one's story.
- Research has shown that involvement in service projects or cross-cultural experiences by themselves do not nurture faith or character. It is involvement in meaningful service and

interactive experiences along side people who are both younger and older than one's self that is transformational. Meaningful cross-generational interaction creates responsible citizens and forms faith. It is about building character and equipping citizens to live responsibly in the world.

- Like in the story of the Wizard of Oz – we are simply better when we journey together, than apart.
- The foundation for Global Mission is respect for another, finding God's story in my story and your story, accepting the gifts of another, walking together and interdependence. We practice all this through effective cross-generational ministry in our own congregations and homes. In the end, it is all about nurturing faith and a purposeful life in Jesus Christ that brings redemption and healing to the world.

### **A Circle of Blessing**

Through engagement of all the generations, our congregations have an opportunity to practice accompaniment and to introduce individuals and households to a healthy, local and global perspective. Mission is strengthened at all levels when the gifts of every generation are woven into the very fabric of the faith community.

In her book “Almost Christian,” Kenda Creasy Dean states that, “A generative faith, one where faith is viewed as God's gift and our identities are of a people who follow Jesus Christ and enact his love upon the world, requires a missional imagination. Our missional principles describe not only the way we ferry faith across borders but across generations.” She writes: “Peer groups have their place in ministry, but when churches mimic the age-stratification created by a market-driven culture, discipleship formation suffers ... . Teenagers reporting high degrees of religious devotion did not get that way on their own: their faith is the legacy of communities that have invested time, energy, and love in them, and where the faith of adults inspires the faith of their children.”



## Summary

A keynote speaker at a GMG said this, *“Accompaniment has become for us a word that overflows with meaning – what we believe about God and about our cross-formed local and global community. Accompaniment is a word that contains our joy-filled wonder at moments and at relationships that shine with God’s grace.”*

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## IMMIGRATION – UTILIZING A WORLD CAFÉ APPROACH

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The following questions relate to the topic of immigration and may be incorporated into the small group, cross-generational discussions.

To add variety, introduce a world café approach. This approach works best at tables, one table for each small group of four to five people. Cover each table with newsprint for recording verbal and artistic responses. Other additions to the table might include a candle, beverages and bowls of snacks.

After each set of questions, ask two or three people from each small group to move to another table, each person joining a different group/table of people.

Display each group of questions so all participants can read them or prepare handouts, one per table, with the questions listed:

### ROUND ONE

Where have you traveled?  
Where would you like to travel?  
What is your background – your ancestral heritage?  
What are your family’s traditions or rituals that give you a sense of belonging?  
(PEOPLE MOVE)

### ROUND TWO

Have you met people from other countries – what are they like? (Color, dress, height, etc.)  
Should we be allowed to travel to other countries?  
Should others be allowed to travel to our country?  
(PEOPLE MOVE)

### ROUND THREE

Should we be able to live in another country?  
Should others be able to live in our country?  
Why do people move to another country?  
Who are the immigrants today?  
Why are there so many issues around immigration?

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## CROSS-GENERATIONAL ENERGIZERS AND MIXERS

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**Facilitators tip:** *Most people, especially children, are able to sit comfortably and engage in direct conversation for about 10-12 minutes. When the facilitator notices people’s attention waning or increased restlessness, be prepared with a group energizer that is simple and fun and engages all the generations and people of all abilities and mobility. These are just a few ideas. Contact outdoor ministry leaders for more ideas.*

**Scream’n shoes:** Ask everyone to quickly get into small groups of about 8-10 people and stand shoulder to shoulder. (Provide chairs in each circle for those who need to sit.) Instruct each person to look down and stare at someone’s shoes or feet within the circle. On the count of three each person is to look up and into the eyes of the person whose shoes they were staring at. If two people make eye contact (meaning they were looking at one another’s shoes) they scream and step back from the circle. Continue until only one or two are left in the circle. Lead this in a rapid pace.

**I see the face of God in you:** Ask people to stand and find a partner. As you slowly give the following instructions, ask people to move per instructed:

Stand hip to hip. Shoulder to shoulder (OK if partners are facing opposite directions). Face one another and touch toes of one shoe to the other person’s shoe. Stand back to back. Face one another and “high five” one another with your hands.

“OK, now we are going to do this faster.” The instructions above are called out in any order.



After three to four of the movements, say, “Switch – Find a new partner.” Again, call out movements in random order. “Switch.” Repeat several times. The last time, after a “high five,” ask partners to look one another in the eyes and say, “I see the face of God in you!”

**Note:** *People may participate with baby in arms. Or an adult may link arms with a very young child and they play the game as one person. A person with limited mobility may play from a sitting position and others come to that person. All ages and abilities are easily engaged in this energizer.*

**Moving circles:** Divide the large group into two smaller, but equal numbered groups. You may choose to have the oldest participants in one group and youngest in another. One group forms an inner circle facing out. The other forms a circle facing inward. Each person is facing one other. Questions are called out. Each person in the pair shares his/her name and answers the question. Questions are ones that any age could easily answer, such as: favorite TV show, favorite food, favorite song etc. After each question, the facilitator gives instructions for one group to move: “Inner circle move two people to the left.” Or “Outer circle move four people to the right.” Or, “Both circles move two people to the left.”

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## BIBLIOGRAPHY AND RESOURCES

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### DVD or downloadable/streaming Resource:

#### **Service and Learning** ([www.selectlearning.org/](http://www.selectlearning.org/))

This resource offers approaches to Service and Learning as a way of life based on our call to serve our neighbor as Christ loved and served us. Six sessions, each designed for 50-60 minutes of interaction, presentation of the subject, group conversation and reflection. Each session includes:

- A 20-25 minute video hosted and narrated by Linda Staats
- Comprehensive Study Guide for the Facilitator and Participant
- Extensive bibliography
- Session 1. "Who is My Neighbor? Accompaniment Locally and Globally" with Sunitha Mortha
- Session 2. "Cultivating Lives of Service and Compassion in the Home" with Marcia Bunge
- Session 3. "Engaging All Generations for Service and Learning" with Linda Staats
- Session 4. "Serve to Learn. Learn to Serve" with Dave Ellingson and Mark Jackson
- Session 5. "Mission: More than a Trip" with Peggy Hahn
- FREE: Session 6. "What Does the Research Tell Us about Service and Learning?" Conversations with Eugene Roehlkepartain, Search Institute.

#### **General Research and Information on Generations**

[www.fourthturning.com](http://www.fourthturning.com) - Links to the work of Strauss & Howe, generational experts, and a current blog.

[www.faithformationlearningexchange.net/lifelong--multigenerational](http://www.faithformationlearningexchange.net/lifelong--multigenerational) - Faith Formation Learning Exchange – a one-stop site for all things related to intergenerational ministry. Current and relevant.

[www.girlscouts.org](http://www.girlscouts.org) - Click on "Research." Current. Excellent.

[www.link2lead.com](http://www.link2lead.com) - Generational data/demographics based on congregation's ZIP code.

[www.pointsofviewinc.com/](http://www.pointsofviewinc.com/) - Points Of View is a company dedicated to bringing the five living generations together.

[rmselca.org/ministries/stewardship/generosity\\_project/generosity.htm](http://rmselca.org/ministries/stewardship/generosity_project/generosity.htm) - The Generosity Project, a cross-generational approach to stewardship and sharing.

[www.search-institute.org/congregations](http://www.search-institute.org/congregations) - Many resources, specifically: "Creating Intergenerational Community: 75 Ideas for Building Relationships Between Youth and Adults."

[wikipedia.org/wiki/Generation\\_Y](http://wikipedia.org/wiki/Generation_Y) - Explanation of the generations and related Web sites.



## Resources and Ideas for Bringing the Generations Together

“Across the Generations, Incorporating All Ages in Ministry: The Why and How,” Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 2001.

“Ganboni, James. All Are Welcome: A Primer for Intergenerational Ministry and Dialog,” 1998.  
[www.pointsofviewinc.com](http://www.pointsofviewinc.com)

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Eeman, Carl. “Generations of Faith,” Alban Institute, 2003. [alban.org/bookstore](http://alban.org/bookstore)

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Hardel, Dick and Merton Strommen. “Passing on the Faith,” Winona, Minn.: Saint Mary’s Press, 2008.

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Martinson, Roland, “The Spirit and Culture of Youth Ministry,” St Paul, Minn.: EYM Publishing, 2010.

Vollbracht, James. “Stopping at Every Lemonade Stand,” New York: Penguin Books, 2001.



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### **Resources for A Gifts Based, Cross-Generational Approach to Ministry**

Kise, Jane and Stark and Hirsh. "Lifekeys," Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1996.

Kise, Jane and Kevin Johnson. "Find Your Fit," Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1998.

ELCA on-line resource for three types of Spiritual Gifts Inventories – one for adults, youth and children.  
<http://archive.elca.org/christianeducation/programplanners/2005CEProgramPlanner/spiritualgifts.html>

[www.shapediscovery.com/yourshape.php](http://www.shapediscovery.com/yourshape.php) - The SHAPE approach to gifts from Rick Warren's Ministry

[www.newlifeministries-nlm.org/online/gifts.htm](http://www.newlifeministries-nlm.org/online/gifts.htm) - Beyond "Time, Talent, and Treasure" "Discovering Our Gifts and Callings," Jean Morris Trumbauer.

For more information on cross-generational ministry or to schedule a consultation or a workshop, contact: Linda Staats by email at [linda@homegrownfaith.net](mailto:linda@homegrownfaith.net) or by phone at 602-740-3752.