

Top 10 Ways to Make Your Church Intergenerational

Presented by:

The International Next Generation of Unity Team
at People's Convention 2007

10. Provide Opportunities to Serve the Community

- Have service-oriented volunteer opportunities.
- Invite young adults to head up teams to perform services in the community.
- Get buy-in from different generations on the type of service to perform in the community.
- Do service in the church and in the wider community (i.e. community run/walk for a charity, service trips, environmental cleanups).

9. Incorporate Diversity

- Studies show what's on the platform is what's in the congregation. Have a goal to have a variety of backgrounds and ages represented on the platform and all publicity forms.
- Invite many different types of musicians to perform at church, or have different types of music.
- Invite a diverse group of guest speakers and workshops, stay consistent with the Unity message, and presentation style becomes less of an issue.
- Be open to providing worship service in different ways (i.e. styles, content, techniques, and times).
- Teach to various learning styles (visual, aural, verbal, physical, logical, social, and solitary) using techniques such as PowerPoint, visual aids, movement, ritual, and experiential.

8. Music

- Bring in local musicians (look in jazz clubs, open mic's, colleges, etc). Be sure to check for Unity appropriateness of song content.
- Use live music vs. hymnals.
- Use more contemporary arrangements of hymns.
- Use technology to help people know the words to sing; this frees up hands to clap.
- Connect with other churches to become aware of great music and musicians.
- Have the music support message.
- Great music helps draw people in.
- Start small, add one instrument at a time.
- Energy is as important as content.
- People are looking for an emotional connection.
- Subscribe to the Sound Connections E-newsletter (unity.org).

7. Offer Spiritual Education

- Offer a variety of classes and workshops.
- Have a calendar on your website with up-to-date info.
- Work with other churches in your area to create a community calendar.
- Invite young adults and teens to participate in classes and prayer chaplain training.
- Invite young adults to lead classes (or co-lead).
- Offer scholarship opportunities for young adults to attend conferences and Spiritual Education and Enrichment (SEE).
- Support young adults in their spiritual growth with encouragement and financial support.
- Try something you've always done in a new way.

6. Offer Small Group Ministries (Sometimes called Magnet Ministries)

- Many young adults like the intimacy of small groups and the ability to interact in a group setting. Local Connections can serve this niche.
- Invite young adults to lead small group ministries.
- Provide spiritual parenting groups.

5. Provide Support During Times of Transition

- Find out where congregants are moving and call ahead to the new community so they can be welcomed in their new environment.
- Simply have a meal with those in transition.
- Conduct rites of passage ceremonies during:
 - high school graduation
 - puberty
 - college graduation
- Offer spiritual counseling for:
 - couples/marriage preparation
 - military families
 - family planning
 - spiritual parenting

4. Attract Young Families Through a Great Children's Ministry

- Refer to the Association's Youth and Family Ministry Guide for detailed help
- Build it, and they will come.
 - Have a nursery with trained child care providers. If a parent does not feel comfortable leaving their child in the nursery, they won't come back.
 - Have (hire) a qualified Youth and Family Director.
- Use a Unity-based curriculum.
- Have a strong, vibrant, passionate and well-trained youth ministry staff.
- Provide continuing training.

3. Don't Believe the Myths. While any of these statements might be true to any individual, they are not true for the whole of young adults. Keep an open mind and open heart.

Myth #1: Young adults are a financial drain on a church.

Myth #2: Young adults must go to the “wilderness” (go away from the church for a while when they are young).

Myth #3: Young adults are unreliable.

Myth #4: Young adults are ineffectual leaders.

Myth #5: All young adults are well-suited, and have a desire, to volunteer in the youth education department.

2. Use Current Technology

- Podcast your service.
- Go green! E-newsletter, E-vite for events, classes.
- Maintain a current website including:
 - calendar of events and classes
 - minister's blog, be real, what are you learning today?
 - live stream of the service, archived services
 - a forum
- Consider a MySpace or Facebook group for your church.

1. Teach by Doing

- Be Authentic - your life lessons/challenges are very important.
- Be passionate, be engaging.
- Have a dialog with the congregation, instead of talking at them.
- Be present; teach through your actions in the church.
- There is a need to see the fullness of life experiences. It's ok to talk about the “bad” stuff that has happened in your life, and follow it up with what you learned, share practical tools on what to do.
- It's OK to not know all the answers. Ask questions about what's important to the people in your community.
- Offer young adults the opportunity to teach by doing as well through:
 - platforming
 - being a board member
 - volunteering
 - facilitating a small group ministry