

*Teaching the Bible with  
Children, Youth and Families*

**UNIT 2:  
Service and  
Learning**

-Session 3-

**Engaging All Generations  
for Service and Learning**

**Select Learning**

## **FACILITATOR GUIDE**

### **Engaging All Generations for Service and Learning**

#### **Gathering Table**

Prepare the meeting space with the following: a Bible opened to Psalm 78, your congregation's pictorial directory or pictures from magazines of people of all ages and stages.

#### **1. Welcome, Introduction, and Opening Prayer**

Invite each person to introduce himself or 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 one's maternal or paternal lineage as far back as one know the names: grandfather/grandmother, great grandfather/grandmother etc. (If time allows before the Introductions, read Matthew 1:1-17).*

#### **2. Introduce the Video** – guest Linda Staats, Assistant to the Bishop, Rocky Mountain Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Prepare participants to watch the video by inviting them to share their response to one of the following questions. If the group is large, invite people to share with one other individual.

- Name someone who is at least ten years older or younger than yourself whom you admire for his or her character and faith.
- Name someone who has influenced your life of faith or accompanied you on your faith journey.

Introduce the video saying something like:

*We have become a very age segregated society. And too many of our congregations have followed this unhealthy trend. Congregations are a vast untapped potential for bringing all the generations together. In doing so, we have an opportunity to practice accompaniment. This session will provide examples of how all the ages can accompany one another and serve together and truly be the Body of Christ.*

#### **3. Watch the video**

#### **4. Activities and Discussion: Circle of Blessing**

*Following the video ask everyone to stand, if able, and as was demonstrated in the video, make a circle from oldest to youngest. (Oldest and youngest will be standing or sitting next to one another.) Now count off around the circle so the result is small groups with a minimum of three in a group to a maximum of five. (The less time you have or if few number of total participants, the smaller the group size.) Ask each small group to place their chairs into a circle so almost sitting knee to knee. The following conversations will take place within these small, multi-age groups.*

- A.** Invite each person within their small groups to share their name followed by a response to the following questions. Each person answer the same question before going on to the next question:
- Share the best thing about being your age.
  - What is the most challenging aspect of being your age?
  - What is an Ah! Ha! or affirmation you gained from the video presentation? Explain.
- B.** As a large group review the Hand Out “Gifts of the Generations.” Invite each small group to discuss the following:
- How many generations do you think are present in your congregation?
  - For worship? For service projects or mission trips? Represented on the church council? Finance team?
  - When or where in your congregation’s ministry or household activities are at least three or more generations actively engaged with one another?
  - Do you believe that your generation’s gifts are recognized and utilized in the ministry of your congregation? What is the evidence, or lack of, to support your thoughts?

## **5. Making it My Own—Take it Home**

*There are three questions we are using throughout this series to focus and deepen our reflection and help us internalize an active learning, faith centered experience. “What?” brings focus to the experience of the session. “So What?” goes a step deeper and promotes re-evaluation and gives direction to possible change and next steps. “Now What?” is the potential impact from this session. Share your responses to the following, as time allows, in your small groups.*

### **a. What?**

What from today’s presentations, conversation and activities did you find particularly meaningful? Why? Celebrate those areas where your congregation already practices and carries out God's reconciling mission through an effective cross+generational ministry. Be specific.

### **b. So What?**

In what ways has this session challenged or affirmed your thinking about the relationship between service and learning and cross+generational ministry? In what areas of ministry, with some slight tweaks or adjustments, could you increase your congregation's capacity to participate in God's mission, proclamation and service, by becoming more cross+generational?

### **c. Now What?**

What new ideas, concepts or resources were you introduced to in this track that might impact how you accompany one another and engage in service and learning across the age span – at church, serving in the neighborhood and world or in your household?

What are one or two new practices or approaches you would like to Add to your ministry that will increase your congregation's or youth group's or household's capacity to be cross+generational and in mission and relationship with God and one another:

## 6. Closing

- Read Psalm 78:1-7.
- Ask everyone to join hands in their small group and close with a prayer of thanks for the gifts of all the ages.
- You may also choose to use the Litany included in the attachments for this session.

## 7. Extend the Conversation:

If you are multi-age group gathered for this session and time permits, then continue your conversation with some of the following questions:

*Something I can teach another? • Something I want to learn about or how to do. • How has my own character, faith and values been shaped by those in my own family tree? • Name someone of an older or younger generation who has influenced my life of faith. • What are the distribution and percentages of the generation in your congregation and neighborhood? • Do all the youth in your congregation and neighborhood have at least five caring adults in their lives? • Do all the elders have at least five from a younger generation who interact with them? • What are the gifts God has given each generation in your congregation to shape its ministry and make a difference in the world? Past? Present? Future?*

## Additional Sessions:

Congregations and households are encouraged to use the following resources for further interaction or to extend the sessions:

- If you haven't already, view Session 1. Then continue the discussion using the handout *Accompaniment in Action*.
- What Does the Bible Say About the Generations? An Exploration of the Texts. (See additional handout.)

## Accompanying this Session

- Gifts of the Generations
- Bibliography and Resources
- Accompaniment in Action
- What Does the Bible Say? An Exploration of Biblical Texts

## **PARTICIPANT GUIDE**

### **Engaging All Generations for Service and Learning**

#### **1. Welcome, Introduction, and Opening Prayer**

*Introduce yourself in the following manner: If you are a male, say, “My name is and I am the son of . . . “ If you are female, say, “My name is and I am the daughter of . . . “ and then give the first name of ones mother if female/father if male and then continue naming one’s maternal or paternal lineage as far back as one know the names: grandmother/grandfather, great grandmother/grandfather etc.*

#### **2. Introduce the Video** – guest Linda Staats, Assistant to the Bishop, Rocky Mountain Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

Prepare to watch the video by sharing your response to one of the following questions:

- Name someone who is at least ten years older or younger than yourself whom you admire for his/her character or faith.
- Name someone who has influenced your life of faith or accompanied you on your faith journey.

*We have become a very age segregated society. And too many of our congregations have followed this unhealthy trend. Congregations are a vast untapped potential for bringing all the generations together. In doing so, we have an opportunity to practice accompaniment. This session will provide examples of how all the ages can accompany one another and truly be the Body of Christ.*

#### **3. Watch the video**

#### **4. Activities and Discussion**

You will receive instructions to form a Circle of Blessing followed by small group discussion:

- Share your name followed by your response to “What is the best thing about being your age? ” What is the most challenging aspect of being your age?”
- What is an Ah! Ha! or affirmation you gained from the video presentation? Explain.

Utilizing the “Gifts of the Generations” handout, discuss the following in your small group:

- How many generations do you think are present in your congregation? For worship? For service projects or mission trips? On the church council? Finance team?
- When or where in your congregation’s ministry or household activities are at least three or more generations actively engaged with one another?

- Do you believe that your generation's gifts are recognized and utilized in the ministry of your congregation? What is the evidence to support your thoughts?

## 5. Making it My Own—Take it Home

There are three questions used throughout this series to focus and deepen one's reflection and help internalize an active-learning, faith-centered experience. "What?" brings focus to the experience of the session. "So What?" goes a step deeper and promotes re-evaluation and gives direction to possible next steps. "Now What?" is the potential impact from this session.

**a. What?** What from today's presentations, conversation and activities did you find particularly meaningful? Why? Celebrate those areas where your congregation already practices and carries out God's reconciling mission through an effective cross+generational ministry. Be specific.

**b. So What?** In what ways has this session challenged or affirmed your thinking about the relationship between service and learning and cross+generational ministry? In what areas of ministry, with some slight tweaks or adjustments, could you increase your congregation's capacity to participate in God's mission, proclamation and service, by becoming more cross+generational.

**c. Now What?** What new ideas, concepts or resources were you introduced to in this track that might impact how you accompany one another and engage in service and learning across the age span – at church, serving in the neighborhood and world or in your household?

What are one or two new practices or approaches you would like to Add to your ministry that will increase your congregation's or youth group's or household's capacity to be cross+generational and in mission and relationship with God and one another.

## 6. Closing

### Extend the Conversation:

If you are multi-age group gathered for this session and time permits, then continue your conversation with questions provided in the Facilitator's Guide.

Congregations and households are encouraged to use the following handouts for further interaction:

- Accompanying One Another Across the Generations
- What Does the Bible Say About the Generations? Exploration of the Texts

### Accompanying this Session

- Gifts of the Generations
- The above Handouts
- Bibliography and Resources

## BIBLIOGRAPHY and RESOURCES

### General Research & 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.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.

<http://www.pointsofviewinc.com/>

Points Of View is a company dedicated to bringing the five living generations together.

### Resources and Ideas for Bringing the Generations Together

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

*Ganboni, James. All Are Welcome: A Primer for Intergenerational Ministry and Dialog*. 1998.

[www.pointsofviewinc.com](http://www.pointsofviewinc.com)

*Faith Family Style: Generations Growing Together*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 2001.

Kurt, Bickel. *Funtastic Family Nights*. St Louis, MO: CPH, 1998.

*Lifelong Faith Journal - the Theory and Practice of Lifelong Faith Formation. Volumes 1.1, 1.3/4, 3.1.* [www.lifelongfaith.com/journal.htm](http://www.lifelongfaith.com/journal.htm)

*Milestones Ministry for Home & Congregation*. Vibrant Faith Ministry. Bloomington, MN. [store.vibrantfaith.org/product\\_p/mmm.htm](http://store.vibrantfaith.org/product_p/mmm.htm)

*Safeguarding God's Children*. Church Publishing, 2003. Creating a safe space and place for intergenerational interaction. [www.safeguardingonline.org/](http://www.safeguardingonline.org/)

Seasons of the Spirit [www.spiritseasons.com](http://www.spiritseasons.com)

Vogt, Susan (editor). *Just Family Nights*. Elgin, IL. Brethern Press. 1994.

### **Basic Reading List with a Generational Lens**

Benson, Peter. *All Kids Are Our Kids*. San Francisco, CA: Josey-Bass, 1997.

Dean Creasy, Kenda. *Almost Christian*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Wiebe Funk, Katie. *Bridging the Generations*. Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 2001.

Thompson, Marjorie, *Family the Forming Center*. Marjorie Thompson, Nashville, TN: Upper Room, 1996.

Milton, Ralph, *The Family Story Bible*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996.

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

Dean Creasy, Kenda and Ron Foster. *The Godbearing Life*. Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 1998.

No More Us & Them, 100 Ways to Bring Your Youth & Church Together. Loveland, CO: Group Pub. 1999

Hardel, Dick and Merton Strommen. *Passing on the Faith*. Winona, MN: Saint Mary's Press, 2008.

Lloyd-Jones, Sally. *The Jesus Storybook Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007.

Martinson, Roland, Wes Black and John Roberto. *The Spirit and Culture of Youth Ministry*, St Paul, MN: EYM Publishing, 2010.

Vollbracht, James. *Stopping at Every Lemonade Stand*, New York, NY: Penquin Books, 2001.



## PRESENTER'S PROFILE

**Linda Staats** holds a MS degree in Human Development and the Family. She combines research, theology and people's own holy stories to engage and empower all generations for serving at home and in the world. She is passionate about congregations bringing generations together to nurture faith and accompany one another in daily life. Her career reflects her joy of teaching, equipping and supporting others. Linda serves half time as Assistant to the Bishop for Youth & Household Ministry in the Rocky Mountain Synod-ELCA, is a member of the ELCA Book of Faith Leadership Team and a Track Leader for the ELCA Global Gatherings. [linda@homegrownfaith.net](mailto:linda@homegrownfaith.net)

**The CIRCLE of GENERATIONS –  
A Foundation for Accompaniment in One's Home, Congregation & World**

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

**? - 1911 Lost Generation** –we are losing their stories. (101 and older)

**1912 -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. Prefer letters and one-on-one relationships. (87-100)

**1926-1945 Boosters/Silents/Adaptive/Traditionalists/Veterans:** 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. (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, Viet Nam, women's movement, Watergate. Suspicious of institutions, hierarchy, and authority. Live to work and play. Competitive. Want recognition. Creative, high standards. (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 3 generations. Confident, No fear - just do it! Concerned about making ends meet. Shaped by computers, collapse of Berlin Wall, AIDS crisis, divorce. Accept diversity. Independent. Environmentally conscious. Visual & entertainment oriented. Relationships important. Prefer email. (30-47)

**1983-2003 Millennials/ Y Generation/Echo Boomers:** New civic generation. Community minded, public servants. Faith responsive to nurturing. Looking for heroes. Experience a frantic pace of life, formative years spent in childcare, shorter attention spans, live in moment, less respect for authority or the way it has always been done. The Internet has always been a part of their life. Are the “natives” of the technical world. Multi-task. Capable of networking and mass collaborations using the internet without knowing anyone personally. Need close bonds with caring adults for reflection and balance in world. (9-29)

**2004-2020 Adaptive/Gen Z/Homeland (<8)**

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

## **What Does the Bible Say About the Generations? An Exploration of the Texts**

“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. *Rev. Bill Bixby*

- The scriptures are 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 faith, the sharing of stories and the process of reflection as we work and serve along side one another. *Read Psalm 78:1-7, 2 Timothy 1:5, 1 Kings 2:1-4.*
- Intentionally including all generations in ministry is about keeping our promises! Promise to work together in God's world. It is also about growing, shaping and developing servant leaders! *What promises does your faith community make to children and youth? At baptism? At confirmation or when someone makes a commitment to be a part of your faith community?*
- Like the Biblical story of the 99 sheep and the one – the body of Christ is not complete when a generation and its gifts are missing. *Read Luke 15:3-7, Matthew 19:14. Name the ministries in your congregation that are cross+generational. Who is missing?*
- 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 that God has already given David everything he needs to answer God's call and fulfill God's mission. *Read 1 Samuel 17. What are the characteristics of a leader? How are the gifts of youth in your congregation and community recognized and utilized?*
- 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. *Read 1 Timothy, Luke 1:35-50.*
- No one, due to age, gets a pass from being involved in being God's hands in the world today. Having raised one's own children or never having children are also not acceptable excuses. *Read Acts 2:17. Read the Biblical stories about Moses, Aaron, Sarah & Abraham, Simeon & Hanna, Zachariah & Elizabeth, and Paul. These are just a few of the examples of God's call to people to lead and serve into their 70's, 80's, 90's and well beyond.*
- Christ is in our midst 24-7. How and where do we recognize him? Where and when do we practice our faith in daily life? *Read Deuteronomy 6:7, Deuteronomy 6:20-21, Luke 24:28b-32.*

## Engaging All Generations in Service and Learning 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 every day life of the congregation and in our households. (To learn more about Accompaniment, View Session 1.)

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? Or is there a ministry or practice you need to remove because it is ineffective or does not fit an accompaniment model?*

### 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?*

### Expertise Recognition

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! Expertise recognition across generations can be as simple as asking individuals of every age, 3-103, “What is something you can do that you can teach me/us? What is knowledge you have that you can share with others?” And “What is something you want to learn how to do or learn more about?”

*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/share with another and what he/she wants to learn.*

### 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? Of your family? Your personal story? How does our larger Christian story shape your personal story about how you welcome and serve the “other?”*

## **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 who 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?” Whose voice is missing? Are your congregation’s boards and teams made up of only one or two generations? Are some groups of people often considered be “too old to” or “too young to?” Are decision made without involving the age group who will be effected? 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 home-bound, 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 18-32) on council, teams and boards? How can your congregation be open to new people’s gifts, ideas and opportunities that are not listed on the time and talent sheet?*

Thank you to the Global Mission Unit of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America for providing the language and descriptions in which to understand the concept of Accompaniment. More information may be found at <http://www.elca.org/Who-We-Are/Our-Three-Expressions/Churchwide-Organization/Global-Mission/How-We-Work.aspx>