

Reaching Every Generation Assessment Pack



CONGREGATION & VISITORS



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This Assessment Pack from BuildingChurchLeaders.com is a collection of tools to use with your leadership team. Each tool has been designed to help you and your team measure some dimension of ministry.

Here's how to use your Building Church Leaders assessments with your board, committees, or staff:

- ◆ Print and photocopy the assessment tool you'd like to use (you have permission to photocopy for church or educational use)
- ◆ Hand it to your team to complete
- ◆ Lead a discussion based on the team's answers

For more assessment packs, complete training themes, or other training tools for church leadership, see our website at www.BuildingChurchLeaders.com.

Connecting the Generations

How intentional is our church at conducting ministry activities to build bridges?

Ephesians 2:22

In some churches, the attempt to support the unity of the church and unity in families has given birth to a ministry paradigm called intergenerational ministry.

This paradigm integrates whole households—mothers, fathers, widows, singles, and children of all ages—into the same activities. An intergenerational ministry (also called inter-gen, multi-gen, or age-integrated) brings diverse ages together in the same place, with the same materials, for the same purpose. The goal: to build cross-generational relationships that strengthen faith formation in the community and at home.

How well does your church (and its leaders) understand and practice the major principles of intergenerational ministry?

Age-integration. Rather than separating into groups by age or grade level, we purposely team people from different age groups.

How well do we understand this?	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
How often do we practice this?	Always		Sometimes			Never				

Generational understanding. Relationships are fostered that reduce intergenerational conflict and misunderstanding.

How well do we understand this?	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
How often do we practice this?	Always		Sometimes			Never				

Integration of “households.” While not all inter-gen ministries use the same terminology, singles, widows, and other heads-of-household are validated as family units and are often mainstreamed with nuclear families.

How well do we understand this?	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
How often do we practice this?	Always		Sometimes			Never				

Parental responsibility for faith development. Parents are encouraged and equipped to take the primary role in their children’s faith education, to “impress” upon their own children the truths of God (Deut. 6:6–9).

How well do we understand this?	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
How often do we practice this?	Always		Sometimes			Never				

—LEADERSHIP Journal; copyright © 2002 Christianity Today. Originally appeared in LEADERSHIP.

Discuss

1. What are the advantages and disadvantages of activities aimed at a segmented age group?
2. Which criteria do we use to determine the success rate of intergenerational activities?
3. Think about some of the best intergenerational relationships presently in our church. Why are they special and what could the entire church learn from them?

Reaching Multiple Generations

Flexibility and adaptability are crucial to connect with the widest audience.

Psalm 49:1–3

Can a multigenerational, multipurposed, and diversely preferred congregation grow and adapt to a constantly changing culture? That kind of flexibility requires a special creativity to manage. Use this tool to assess the moves our church is making to become relevant to each generation.

	excellent	good	fair	poor
We make changes at the proper speed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We communicate change to long-time members.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We balance activities for long-time members and seekers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We preserve activities most crucial to the identity of long-time members.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We blend worship styles to appeal to all generations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We communicate that sacrifice of personal preferences is a mark of maturity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We worship enthusiastically in styles that are not our favorites.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We provide multiple options whenever possible.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We match seekers with believers by generational orientation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We avoid actions or statements that communicate, “take it or leave it.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We use variety to reach people in our surrounding community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We make every effort to listen to people with concerns about a new ministry.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

—MICHAEL LEWIS; copyright © 1995 Christianity Today. Adapted from *Empowering Your Church Through Creativity and Change*.

Discuss

1. Which motivation ranks highest in our planning: to appeal to the widest range of people, or to avoid giving offense to the largest number of people?
2. How intensely are generational preferences expressed?
3. In what areas of our ministry can we show more flexibility to reach all generations?

Still Willing to Build

Our oldest church members stand ready to contribute to the Kingdom of God.

Joshua 13:1

In church leadership, boomers and busters receive a lot of attention. But what about the generation that preceded both of them? Here are several commonly held beliefs about ministry to senior adults. Think about each of the statements and pick the one that most closely matches your church's belief. Then, reflect on the author's insights into ministry to senior adults.

Retired means retiring from ministry.

Senior adults are motivated by the chance to invest in meaningful ministry.

- Emphasize the assets senior adults have to invest. These assets include productivity, self-confidence, motivation, and patience. Many of them have grown up with a biblical value system instilled in childhood. They are more in charge of their time than they've ever been. They have no need to impress anyone, so they're not afraid to share their failures.

Senior adults need to be entertained.

Senior adults are not looking for just anything to fill their calendars.

- Most retirees have discretionary time, but not "free" time. They want a reason for being that's bigger than golf or gardening or sightseeing.

Senior adults want distance from the young.

Senior adults seek to actively influence the young.

- Grandparents often have to travel great distances to spend time with their grandchildren, but most make the effort. Why? Because they believe in the biblical model of elders teaching the younger generation, and want to influence their grandchildren for Christ. Something important is lost when interaction between older and younger is cut off.

Senior adults have spirituality figured out.

Senior adults are hungry to learn about the Lord.

- There is a thirst for Bible study among senior adults. They want to grow intellectually. And senior adults who do not know Christ need him just as keenly as any other age group. Senior adults who are believers need opportunities for evangelism.

—ROBERT WARREN, JARED GERIG, AND JOHN COTTONE; copyright © 1997 Christianity Today. Originally appeared in LEADERSHIP.

Discuss

1. Which ministries in our church give senior adults the opportunity to interact with younger people?
2. What percentage of our senior adult ministries can be classified as primarily social? Educational? Service-oriented?
3. Who are the most active senior adults in your congregation? What is the potential to enlist them to motivate other senior adults for ministry?

Young People, Tough Questions

Dealing with their real concerns gives our message more credibility.

Colossians 2:5

How is our church addressing the big questions of today's young people? We need to understand their concerns in order to best make a strong connection with them. How adept are we at answering the questions and suspicions described below?

	We know what to say	We sometimes know what to say	We are at a loss for words
<p>1. Questions of power and motive. Truth is defined as “whatever rings true to your experience, whatever feels real to you.” Any attempt to claim that one has the truth for everybody is heard as an arrogant attempt at domination and control.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>2. Questions of identity. Who am I? Who will I listen to for help in developing my identity and sense of self? How can Christians think we can tell other people who they are?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>3. Questions of pain and suffering. Why do I hurt? Why is there so much hatred and violence in the world? People are crying out not so much for philosophical answers as for a way to give meaning and purpose to personal and corporate suffering.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>4. Questions of character, trust and attractiveness. Intolerance and narrow hate seem to mark our institutions. I can trust you just as much as I can trust other leaders in our society—which is hardly at all.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>5. Questions of love and meaning. How can you say you love people when you reject how they define their very identity? How can you be rule-oriented in your ethics when the situation has to determine what is really loving?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>6. Questions of interpretation. Isn't the way you see the world completely dependent on your community and place of birth? Can't you interpret Scriptures any way you want, and haven't you?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>7. Questions of relevance and relativism. Does your belief change lives? If it works for you, why should it work for me? What does it matter what you believe as long as it works and helps you?</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

—RICK RICHARDSON; Adapted from *Evangelism Outside the Box* by Rick Richardson. Used by permission of InterVarsity Press, P.O. Box 1400, Downers Grove, IL 60515. From LEADERSHIP journal, 2001.

Discuss

1. Which of these questions evoke the most intensity and concern among our young people?
2. Who in our congregation is best able to dialogue with young men and women about these questions?
3. How can being able to speak to these questions help with evangelism and outreach to our community's youth?

Welcoming Young Leaders

The next generation does not see leadership the same way as the older generation.

Philemon 8–11

Baby Boomers have spent the past three decades dismantling and reassembling the church structures created by their parents. Starting in the mid-1990s, some of their successors began making their own contribution to American Christianity. They are the newest youth pastors, college ministers, and seminary students. As with earlier generations, new styles of leadership and organizational expectations will develop.

How are we welcoming these new leaders into our ministry teams? Evaluate how well our older leaders embrace these values that matter most to younger leaders.

	agree	disagree	not sure
A team works with, not for, the leader.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A team focuses on cooperation more than competition.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Leadership is inclusive and patient.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Older leaders should mentor younger leaders.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Younger leaders should be encouraged to take safe risks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reflecting our mission and values is more important than getting results.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Problems can be solved in a variety of ways.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ministry success should be celebrated.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fun activities are part of ministry team gatherings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Extended, relaxed conversations help ministry planning.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

—JIM SCHMOTZER; copyright © 2006 Christianity Today. Originally appeared in LEADERSHIP.

Discuss

1. If you were to give this assessment to senior leaders and younger leaders, would the answers be similar or different? Why?
2. How many young leaders are stepping up in our church's various ministries? Are there any ministries where they seem to be in short supply?
3. What are some of the societal factors that affect why younger people see leadership in a different way than older people?

Women of All Ages

Designing effective ministry means reaching younger, older, and in-between

Psalm 28:8

The status of women has changed rapidly over the past 50 years. But one thing has not changed: the need for the church to reach out with effective ministry to all its women, and across generational lines. Rate the effectiveness of your church's women's ministry as it reaches out in the following ways:

	Very effective	Somewhat Effective	Ineffective
Our activities fit the schedules of women who work outside the home.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We offer meaningful programs, more than just fun or entertainment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We offer ministry for mothers of pre-schoolers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We offer ministry for mothers of school-age children.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We offer ministry for mothers of adult children and for grandmothers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our activities help build friendship among women.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our activities help women build their relationships with Christ.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
We offer spiritual growth activities, such as Bible studies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our women are encouraged to evangelize unchurched women.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our women's groups and ministries cross generational lines.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Members of our women's groups and ministries serve each other.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Members of our women's groups and ministries serve the community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

—NAOMI GAEDE-PENNER; copyright © 1991 Christianity Today. Originally appeared in LEADERSHIP.

Discuss

1. How many of our women's groups and ministries cross generational lines? How many are age-specific?
2. List the benefits of a group with at least two generations of women.
3. How has the increase in the percentage of women working outside the home affected our church's programming?

Pipe Organs, Guitars, or Gregorian Chants?

Approach issues other than generational preference in picking worship music styles.

Psalm 98:4–6

Many times worship music preferences are drawn among generational lines: Senior adults hang on to traditional hymns. Baby boomers thrive on praise songs based on pop music. The youngest believers crave authenticity over polish and flashiness. Leaders need to discuss the many issues that surround worship-style choices. Use this tool to determine the conversations that your team needs to have.

	Already discussed	Under consideration	Have not discussed	Needs another look
Is our worship for churchgoers or the unchurched?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
What is the ideal instrumentation for our musicians?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do we sing hymns, praise songs, or a mixture of both?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do we focus on the theological or the relational?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do we focus on the intellectual or the emotional?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do we use hymnals, overhead projection, or both?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Where does drama fit in?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Must age boundaries prevent some from enjoying others' music?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are we intentional about worship style rather than being reactionary?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have we asked our people which type of worship music they prefer?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do we know how closely musical preference is tied to age groupings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are we imitating other churches, or is our worship unique for our setting?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are our choices based on principle rather than personal preference?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is musical diversity a strength or a weakness for our congregation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Do we plan to meet the physical needs of older worshippers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

—GARTH BOLINDER; copyright © 1997 Christianity Today. Adapted from *Changing Lives Through Preaching and Worship*.

Discuss

1. Who makes decisions about worship style and content for our church?
2. In our church, which makes most sense to reach every generation: blended worship, or offering separate services featuring specific worship styles? Why?
3. How can we deal with passionate people who threaten to leave if we change—or don't change—the music?

Many Generations, One Classroom

Intergenerational learning offers great opportunities for families to grow.

Psalm 145:4

Can dads, moms, and children learn together in one classroom? Must families always be split the minute they enter the church, only to meet again two hours later in the parking lot? The idea of intergenerational learning has tantalized many a Christian educator.

Are our Christian education offerings set up in a way that encourages multiple generations to attend? Many churches explore intergenerational ministry with a family- or intergenerational-class. Ask these questions of the class that you want to set up, and use the tips provided to guide your thinking.

How many of our classes invite multiple generations? _____
Make the family class a special feature at first, then see if more classes can be offered this way.

How many weeks, on average, do our classes meet? _____
Don't try to run a family class indefinitely. One quarter is long enough; then let people get back to their regular classes.

How many people attend our classes? _____
Limit the class to no more than 20 or 25. The youngest should be at least primary age.

What curriculum do we use for our classes? _____
Since intergenerational curriculum is scarce, build the lessons around a section of Scripture that has both graphic stories for the kids and great truths for the adults to apply.

What teaching methods are used? _____
Use lots of discovery techniques; don't try to talk the whole hour. Give families things to do together as units. Try activities such as role-playing, Bible stories, memorizing, and crafts.

How are classroom tables and chairs set up? _____
Use an informal setting—chairs in a circle, coffee for the adults, enough space to spread out during project work.

—DOUGLAS BARTZ; copyright © 1984 Christianity Today. Adapted from *Fresh Ideas for Family, Youth, and Children*.

Discuss

1. How many classes have been or are being offered to multiple generations in our church?
2. What are the obstacles to using this approach? How have we met them?
3. What are the benefits of offering intergenerational classes to our church?

Further Resources

Books, downloads, and resources to enhance the multigenerational reach of your church.

BuildingChurchLeaders.com. Leadership training resources from Christianity Today.

- “Ministry to Seniors” Practical Ministry Skills
- “Church Health” Training Theme and PowerPoint
- “Core Values” Training Theme and PowerPoint
- “Creating Community” Training Theme and PowerPoint
- “Reaching People” Training Theme and PowerPoint

LeadershipJournal.net. This website offers practical advice and articles for church leaders.

PreachingToday.com. This website offers sample sermons, sermon outlines, teaching and preaching illustrations, and images you can use to reach all generations.

National Association of Family Ministries: <http://www.familymin.org>. Includes information, contacts, and articles on intergenerational ministry.

Heritage Builders: <http://www.heritagebuilders.com>. A Focus on the Family website for equipping families to pass on their spiritual heritage to children. Includes tips, tools, articles, and resources.

The Family Friendly Church by *Ben Freudenburg and Rick Lawrence*. Profiles churches that are successfully integrating entire families into their ministries. (Group, 1998; ISBN 978-0764420481)

Family-Integrated Church by *J. Mark Fox*. How one church intentionally moved in the direction of bringing families back together in worship and ministry. (Salem Communications, 2006; ISBN 978-1600343148).

Together Through Tomorrow: Building Community Through Intergenerational Dialogue by *James V. Gambone*. A primer on intergenerational movements for a variety of organizations. (Elder Eye Press, 1997; ISBN 978-0965880800)

Uniting Church and Home: A Blueprint for Rebuilding Church Community by *Eric Wallace*. How church and home can work in step to communicate faith to the next generation. (Solutions for Integrating Church and Home, 1999; ISBN 978-0966731101)