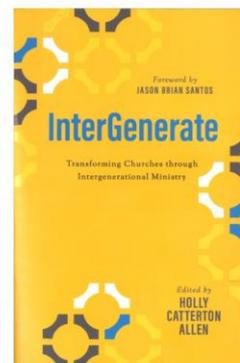


InterGenerate

Transforming Churches through Intergenerational Ministry



Building on the foundation laid by [Intergenerational Christian Formation](#), *InterGenerate: Transforming Churches through Intergenerational Ministry* is an invaluable resource that will assist your church in the development of a more intergenerational culture. This handout is part of a series that seeks to encourage you to dig deeper into [InterGenerate](#).

Ch. 15 Engaging the Elders among Us

Diane E. Shallue

“As a result of research and my twenty-five years of experience serving in congregations, I have come to the conclusion that more interactions between older adults and children need to be intentionally fostered for the sake of the mental and spiritual health of older adults.” p.195

“Older adults possess a foundation of faith with deep connections to God and a strong sense of spirituality. They can teach others about the finality of life, the value of contemplation, and the joy of relationships. Yet, many congregations struggle to create respectful intergenerational interactions with their aging members.” p.200

“The benefits go both ways—to the elders and back to younger adults. Elders can teach how to experience loss in a compassionate way. Losses come gradually or suddenly, but are usually unanticipated and difficult to deal with. Elders can teach younger generations how to (a) accept loss, (b) maintain one’s sense of identity in the face of loss, (c) create a caring community that can support a person in the midst of loss, and (d) show compassionate care for others.” p.200

“Engaging older adults in conversation with younger members can be a beneficial process... Through discussion and willingness to listen, younger and older people can define their values to help each other find meaning and purpose.” p.201

“In addition to listening, congregations can create rituals to affirm and connect older adults to the community...Rituals could be created for transitions such as retirement, becoming a grandparent, or moving to assisted living. Active older adults could participate in the ritual of baptism, become mentors and encouragers for younger families, and help congregations integrate all generations.” p.202

“Congregations who are intentional about connecting the generations will find the lives of their elders enhanced, helping them create a sense of meaning and purpose through visits, conversations, rituals, and life review. Tapping into the wisdom of older adults regarding how to deal with loss and how to create meaning from memories creates elders who can witness to the work of God, building a stronger faith community.” p.202

Intrigued? Challenged? Want to find out more? Read the full chapter in [InterGenerate](#).

Chris Barnett July 2020



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA



equipping Leadership for Mission