



**USER'S GUIDE**

TO THE INTERGENERATIONAL CHURCH

*Toolkit*



Christian Reformed Church  
**Faith Formation  
Ministries**

[crcna.org/FaithFormation/toolkits](https://crcna.org/FaithFormation/toolkits)



“RELATIONSHIPS  
HAVE A MORE  
LASTING IMPACT  
THAN PROGRAMS.”

—ROBERT J. KEELEY



The brochure you're holding is a user's guide to the online Intergenerational Church toolkit.

Open the toolkit at [crcna.org/FaithFormation/toolkits](http://crcna.org/FaithFormation/toolkits) to access a collection of tools for cultivating a culture in which faith in God is nurtured and relationships are fostered as all ages learn, serve, and worship together.

In the online toolkit you'll find guidance about

- \* inspiring videos
- \* foundational books
- \* informative webinars
- \* thought-provoking articles
- \* easy-to-use assessment tools
- \* practical ideas
- \* outstanding websites
- \* and more

## About Our Toolkits

The Intergenerational Church toolkit is one of several topical toolkits created and designed by the Faith Formation Ministries team in collaboration *with* CRC church leaders *for* CRC church leaders. Our toolkit resources are gathered from real-life church practices, from online sources, and from published materials.

As new tools become available, we'll be adding them. If there's a tool you need but don't see, we'll try to find it. Contact us at [faithformation@crcna.org](mailto:faithformation@crcna.org).

**WE'RE HERE TO HELP!** For assistance with faith formation challenges in your church, contact one of our Regional Catalyzers at [crcna.org/FaithFormation/coaching](http://crcna.org/FaithFormation/coaching).



Bookmark our toolkit page for easy reference:  
[crcna.org/FaithFormation/toolkits](http://crcna.org/FaithFormation/toolkits)

**“INTERGENERATIONAL IS NOT  
SOMETHING CHURCHES DO—IT’S  
SOMETHING THEY BECOME.”**

—BRAD M. GRIFFIN, *Intergenerational Ministry*  
*Beyond the Rhetoric*, [fullerinstitute.org](http://fullerinstitute.org)

# BELONGING

Being an intergenerational church isn’t about adding another program or putting an end to age-segregated ministries.

It’s about **belonging**.

If you lived in Old Testament Israel, you knew what it meant to belong. Daphne Kirk describes it this way:

*“When God set his people Israel in order, he placed each individual within a family, each family within a tribe, and each tribe within the nation. No generation was excluded, no child left out, no older person put aside. Within each tribe were the components of family; they were community.”*

—*Heirs Together: Establishing Intergenerational Church*, p. 17

**Being an intergenerational church is about living as God’s family in a way that values, equips, and includes all ages.**

God planned it that way.

# BECOMING

**LOOK AROUND.** Are there two or more generations in your congregation? You're an intergenerational family!

**LOOK IN.** Just as it's possible for people to share a dwelling but never really know each other, it's possible for people to attend the same church without developing relationships with one another.

## **Being an intergenerational church requires intentionality.**

Allen and Ross describe an intentionally intergenerational community this way:

*“Truly intergenerational communities welcome children, emerging adults, recovering addicts, single adults, widows, single parents, teens whose parents are not around, the elderly, those in crisis, empty nesters, and struggling parents of young children into a safe but challenging place to be formed into the image of Christ.”*

—*The Benefits of Intergenerationality*, p. 22

Micah, a child from First CRC in Denver, Colorado, describes it like this:

*“[It’s] when I teach the old people and the old people teach me.”*

—*All Ages Enter God’s Story*

## **Being an intergenerational church involves cultivating a church culture in which faith is nurtured and relationships are fostered as all ages learn, serve, and worship together.**

The Intergenerational Church toolkit will support you in doing all of the above.

# LEARNING AND GROWING

Inside the  
Intergenerational  
Church toolkit you'll  
find tools for...

*“At every baptism, we vow to love, pray for, instruct, encourage, and sustain another member of our church family. But it takes more than just worshiping together to complete this checklist of baptismal vows. Fulfilling these vows requires relationships. Fulfilling these vows requires us to put ourselves in a position where we can know and be known by the children and youth of [our church].”*

*—Annette Ediger, Minister of Faith Formation, Church of the Servant,  
Casting a Vision for Intergenerational Ministry, [network.crcna.org](http://network.crcna.org)*

## **What opportunities exist in your congregation for all ages to “know and be known” by each other?**

The Learning and Growing section includes tools for Small Group Gatherings and Large Group Events:

- \* real-life stories of intergenerational small groups
- \* a sample format for small group gatherings
- \* tools for casting a vision for intergenerational small groups in your congregation
- \* ideas for integrating intergenerational learning into what you're already doing
- \* conversation starters for mixed-age groups
- \* curriculum for large groups—including free intergenerational events on the Lord's Supper and the Lord's Prayer



Click the Learning and Growing tab of the Intergenerational Church toolkit at [crcna.org/FaithFormation/toolkits](http://crcna.org/FaithFormation/toolkits) to access all of the above and more.

# SERVING

Wonderful things happen when multiple ages serve together:

- \* Faith is formed as people pray together, encourage each other, and share experiences.
- \* People of all ages are called and equipped by God to serve others and to seek justice.
- \* Families have quality time together while living out their faith.
- \* Relationships are built, generation gaps are narrowed, and a sense of teamwork is fostered.

**How might you build an intergenerational approach into the serving opportunities your congregation already offers?**

**In what other ways might two or more generations be invited to serve together?**



Access ideas for intergenerational service in the Serving section of the Intergenerational Church toolkit.

# WORSHIPING

Worship gatherings are the family reunions of God's people. It's where we gather as one body to praise God, find rest in God, be reminded of our hope in God, hear our call from God, and leave equipped by God.

Picture your congregation during its weekly worship gathering.

- \* **Which generations are there?**
- \* **Which generations are not there?**
- \* **Which generations are equally important participants?**
- \* **What message do your answers convey to your congregation and to your community?**

Worshiping in a way that says to all ages, "You belong here," requires intentionality. So does worship that provides equal opportunities for everyone to engage in meaningful participation. It can be challenging. But, as Theresa Cho points out, it's also faith nurturing:

*Worshiping as an intergenerational community pushes and challenges us to be aware of how all in worship experience God's presence; opens us up to the spontaneity of the Holy Spirit; gives us permission to not claim to know it all; and exercises grace, forgiveness, and unconditional love to those that we deem different from ourselves.*

—The What and How of Intergenerational Worship,  
*theresacho.com*



In the Worshiping section of the Intergenerational Church toolkit you'll find practical ideas for worship planners and pastors, tools for children and youth ministry leaders, encouragement for families, and more. Access it all at [crcna.org/FaithFormation/toolkits](http://crcna.org/FaithFormation/toolkits).

# 10 WAYS TO BE A MORE INTER-GENERATIONAL CHURCH

- 1** Build relationships and nurture faith by providing opportunities for people to **share faith stories** with each other. (Find ideas in the Faith Storytelling toolkit at [crcna.org/FaithFormation/toolkits](http://crcna.org/FaithFormation/toolkits).)
- 2** **Honor faith in all its variety**, celebrating how each person has been uniquely created by God, acknowledging that each person is in a different season of life, appreciating the contributions of all.
- 3** **Cultivate leadership development** by helping people of all ages discern and develop leadership gifts.
- 4** **Foster meaningful conversations** through mentoring relationships, intergenerational prayer partnerships, cross-generational interview projects, and more.
- 5** **Strengthen faith formation practices for all ages.** (The Building Blocks of Faith toolkit can help: see [crcna.org/FaithFormation/toolkits](http://crcna.org/FaithFormation/toolkits).)
- 6** **Plan worship with all ages in mind.** Access ideas in the Intergenerational Church toolkit.
- 7** **Model an intergenerational heart** by encouraging leaders to visibly interact with people of all ages after worship services and at church events.
- 8** Nurture both faith and relationships as multiple ages **serve together**.
- 9** **Experiment wisely.** Take time to strategize before trying something new. Need help? Contact one of our Regional Catalyzers at [crcna.org/FaithFormation/coaching](http://crcna.org/FaithFormation/coaching).
- 10** **Appoint an Intergenerational Advocate** within your congregation. Equip, empower, and support them as they help your community live out this priority.

## Learn More in the Intergenerational Church Toolkit

The Intergenerational Church toolkit is an online resource designed to help your congregation cultivate a culture in which faith in God is nurtured and relationships are fostered as all ages learn, serve, and worship together. You can access this toolkit and others at [crcna.org/FaithFormation/toolkits](http://crcna.org/FaithFormation/toolkits).

For more information on how to incorporate intergenerational values in your church, contact one of Faith Formation Ministries' Regional Catalyzers ([crcna.org/FaithFormation/Coaching](http://crcna.org/FaithFormation/Coaching)).



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