



INTENTIONALLY INTERGENERATIONAL

INTRODUCTION

From 'Baby Boomers' to 'Gen X, Y and Z', we all know that families can be made up of a mix of all ages and generations. The same goes for God's wonderful family. This month, we're looking at being intentionally intergenerational in our own homes.

In the Bible there are several examples of how God brought together different generations for different Kingdom purposes. There was Moses and Joshua leading the Israelites to the Promise Land, David and his son Solomon building God's Temple in Jerusalem, and Paul who trained up young Timothy to share the gospel.



Age differences can often be seen as a barrier, but interaction and harmony between the generations is so important when it comes to serving God together as a family. Whilst tensions may sometimes rise, there's so much potential for the young to learn from the old, and for the old to learn from the young too.

PREPARATION

✦ Make sure you have been given the *Lord is Good Paperchain* sheet. You will need a sheet for each person doing the challenge.

BIBLE READING/THOUGHT

Why should we be intentional about being intergenerational?

'For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations'

PSALM 100:5

Because God is a God of all the generations!

He instructs those who are older to humbly lead, train and mentor those who are younger by godly example (see Psalm 72:2-8 and Proverbs 22:6). Whether you're a (great-) grandparent, parent/guardian or older sibling, you hold valuable pearls of wisdom to pass on to those who are younger, based on your learnings and experiences of life and faith.

Younger family members have so much to contribute to the world in which we live. Young children in particular have a real fascination in the way they discover the world around them; they are good reminders to have 'childlike' faith in God. The more energetic, youthful teens have the knowledge on the latest tech and forward-thinking trends, which they could teach to their elders.

The old start off by caring for the young, and then the roles reverse over time. The young grow up to eventually take care of older family members (see 1 Timothy 5:3-4).

Think of it as an intergenerational relay race. Each team member has an important role to play, which is to pass on the baton of faith. The race is still not over. Let's all work together to not drop the baton and keep on advancing God's Kingdom. May it reach and raise the next generation and encourage generations to come to keep on running towards the finish line, who is Jesus.

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

It's important to prioritise and carve out time to gather the family together on a regular basis. Why not dedicate some of this time to exploring ways to bridge the generational gap and seek to unite all ages?

Get ready to put all techy screens aside... (Unless you're planning to video-call relatives who aren't able to attend the family gathering in person!) Participation is needed from all members of the family. Here are some activities that are simply great fun, no matter how old or young you are...

Family Tree

A family tree is a good way to remind everyone where they have come from and to see the bigger picture of what it means to be part of a family. However, if this a delicate issue, the tree can be adapted to a friends and family (framily) tree.

This could be an excellent opportunity for everyone to get crafty and creative. Some examples include using a variety of old and recent family photographs to hang off loose branches placed in a vase, or you could take on the challenge of drawing one another etc. See how many generations the family can trace back.

Family Timeline

Map out major key family dates (births, deaths, relocations, marriages, coming to faith etc). It's up to the entire family to agree and decide how it will look. It can go across horizontally or could be done as a list. You can find templates and examples online for some inspiration. It may be helpful to do a rough version first to ensure all the information is correct.

The following activities require teams made up of a combination of the generations within the family. Providing small prizes for the winners is optional.

Heads Up

Download the game app on to a smartphone (free for Android users on Google Play or 99p for iPhone users on the App Store). It's sure to get the whole family laughing.

Cook a Family Meal Together

Assign a dish for different family members/teams to prepare. This is another great opportunity to exercise 'passing on the baton' of cooking skills and recipes. Ensure that there's adult supervision if any children are getting involved in and around the kitchen. You could all vote for the best dish at the end of the meal.

Bible Charades/Pictionary

One to test everyone's knowledge of the Bible, as well as their acting/artistic skills. Recreate popular Bible stories or biblical characters by acting out or drawing clues for team members to guess.

Family Talk

It would be really helpful for family members to learn a language to express their faith. Spend time discussing together:

- * When do you feel close to God?
- * When are you aware of God's presence?
- * What song/movie helps you to understand God?
- * If God was an animal, what would he be?
- * Where can you see God?

Treasure Hunt

Organise a fun indoor or outdoor treasure hunt – make it as adventurous as possible!

Story Time

This activity can be done in different ways. Those who are some of the eldest in the family can share and tell the family how they came to faith or any key lessons they've learned over the years. This could turn into a Q&A session. Another option is for grandparents and grandkids or siblings to take it in turns to read through Bible stories together or to each other.

The Lord is Good

Do this activity together. Each person decorates the four paper bands on their sheets and then cuts them out. Make a paperchain of the Bible phrase, making sure that the links are a mix of everyone's chains. Decorate a space with the chains. While you are doing this activity, listen to some worship music and reflect on the Bible phrase.

SONG TIME

Spend time listening to, reflecting with, or singing along to...

- ♪ 'Guardian of My Soul' by Darren Shaw
- ♪ 'Everywhere' by John Gowans/Andrew Maycock
- ♪ 'Rejoice!' by Mark Porter

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REFLECT

How are the older family members passing on the baton of faith to the next generation? How are younger members exploring their faith and sharing their discoveries? God does not intend us to journey in our faith alone, we need the support of all around us if we wish to run a good race. As Paul wrote to Timothy, *'This is the only race worth running. I've run hard right to the finish, believed all the way'* (2 Timothy 4:7 MSG).

SHARE

Share the family trees and timelines with each other and the person who gave your family the Faith@Home Challenge and ask them any questions you have.

