

Small Group Ministry
Group Session Plan

Welcoming All Ages: The Multigenerational Congregation

Opening Words:

Here we have gathered, called to celebrate
days of our lifetime, matters small and great;
we of all ages, women, children, men;
infants and sages, sharing what we can.
Sing now together this, our hearts' own song.

— Alicia S. Carpenter, "Here We Have Gathered" from *Singing the Living Tradition #360*

Check-In/Sharing: How is it with you today?

Topic/Activity:

When I first attended a UU church, I was a young, single person working in an office at a Maine college. My family lived hundreds of miles away, so church was the only place where I regularly saw people of all ages, including children and elders. After spending several years as a student or employee in institutions of higher education, I was very glad to find a place where all ages were welcomed.

In a society in which many activities are segregated by age, a church is one of the few places other than the family where multiple generations come together. Unitarian Universalists have long valued the "intergenerational" aspects of our life together — those opportunities for all ages to enjoy a shared experience. Now the word "multigenerational" is being used to point us toward a broader vision that embraces both intergenerational activities and programming for similar-age groups that addresses the unique needs of each stage of life. UUA Curriculum Director Judith A. Frediani has these thoughts:

"What would a truly multigenerational congregation look like? It would be the ultimate, committee of the whole: a community in which everyone is seen as teacher and learner; in which every age and stage of life is equally valued and equally supported by whatever tangible and intangible resources the community has to offer; in which every age and stage of life is allowed to contribute whatever tangible and intangible resources it has to offer; a community in which no decision is made about the life of the community—whether in the area of worship, physical plant, fundraising, budgeting, social action., the arts, education, or any other—without consideration of its impact on and opportunities for every member of the community."

Adapted from "Multigenerational Congregations"

<http://www.uua.org/reimultigenerational/108231.shtml>

1. How is our congregation multigenerational? What do we do to make people of all ages feel welcome?
2. How important is it to you that our church life be multigenerational? What has been your experience with other generations at church?
3. What is the place within a multigenerational church for similar-age groups and activities?
4. What more might we do to become "a truly multigenerational congregation"?

Check-Out/Likes and Wishes: How was the session for you?

Closing Words

Every individual has a place to fill in the world and is important in some respect whether he chooses to be so or not. —Nathaniel Hawthorne

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