

Principles of Intergenerational Faith Formation

(Drawn from *Intergenerational Christian Formation, Generations Together, Intergenerational Faith Formation, and Becoming a Church of Lifelong Learners*)

Throughout Scripture there is a pervasive sense that all generations were typically present when faith communities gathered for worship, for celebration, for feasting, for praise, for encouragement, for reading of Scripture, in times of danger, and for support and service. . . . To experience authentic Christian community and reap the unique blessings of intergenerationality, the generations must be together regularly and often – infants to octogenarians.
(Allen and Ross, 84)

(IFF = intergenerational faith formation)

1. Through IFF Christian commitment is formed and strengthened as persons develop relationships and actively participate in intergenerational faith communities that teach, model, and live out the communities' beliefs.
2. Through IFF people learn the ways of the community of practice as they participate authentically and relationally with more experienced members of the culture; people learn Christian ways from more experienced members of the culture through intergenerational Christian communities.
3. Through IFF people identify with their community of practice as they are allowed to participate legitimately in the activities to be learned – as children and new believers (and others) participate in relational community doing “Christian” things with those further down the road, they come to identify with the believing community.
4. IFF strengthens and creates new relationships among people of all ages, enhances their sense of belonging in the faith community, and increases participation in church life.
5. IFF promotes a community where generational differences can be transcended rather than reinforced, where generational understanding and positive intergenerational relationships can be experienced.
6. IFF affirms each person's value in the total community (regardless of age), and promote understanding of shared values and respect for individuals in all stages and ages of life.
7. IFF fosters a climate that includes valuing, nurturing, and employing the gifts of every person from young to old.
8. IFF creates a welcoming and safe environment – of warmth, trust, emotional safety, acceptance, and care – conducive to promoting faith sharing, group participation, mutual support, and care for one another in the congregation and in the community.
9. IFF addresses the social and developmental needs of age groups, and speaks to the relevant concerns and challenges people face today within the context of intergenerational community and experiences.
10. IFF addresses the variety of faith styles and religious experiences of people in the congregation by engaging people of all ages in a variety of activities that are developmentally-appropriate, experiential, multi-sensory, interactive, and participatory.

11. IFF settings are authentic, complex learning environments, made up of individuals at various stages in their faith journeys, teaching some and learning from others as they participate in their community of believers.
12. IFF encourages faith growth and practice in all generations and provide “up close and personal” formation in faith as children, teens, young adults, middle-aged adults, and older adults engage in sharing faith, teaching, learning, serving, celebrating, and praying for one another.
13. IFF has a positive effect on both the older and young populations involved by creating intentional opportunities for young and old to meet together, to share stories, to create something together or merely to talk which can be mutually beneficial and bless the whole body of Christ.
14. IFF supports families by surrounding them with a community of faith and engaging the whole family in caring, celebrating, learning, praying, and serving together; and providing parents with opportunities to learn from Christians who are practicing their faith and raising faithful children.
15. IFF equips people to live their faith in daily life, and engages them in service to others, locally and globally.
16. IFF is led by congregational leaders who embrace a collaborative, team-based, and empowering style of leadership; and have a shared vision of an intergenerational church.
17. IFF ministries and programming is facilitated by teams who work collaboratively in designing and conducting programming, and are well-prepared and supported in their ministry.