



# Cross+Generational Faith Community Planning Team Resource

*By David W. Anderson  
Presenter, Coach and Author*

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## Planning Team

Gather together a cross+generational planning team (approximately eight participants ranging in age from 15-90) to explore the congregation's expansion of cross+generational faith formation activities. At least one of the participants needs to be from the board/council/presbytery/vestry. A program staff member also needs to be part of the planning team. The planning tool is to be used by a cross+generational planning team that will meet at least four times. Two co-chairs are needed to gather together the necessary resources and read them in advance of the first meeting.

## Desired Outcomes for Planning Group

1. Develop an awareness of the value and delight in cross+generational congregational life
2. Plan cross+generational experiences for the congregation that help people enjoy and benefit from the presence of other generations in their lives
3. Help various congregational groups and teams understand and use cross+generational possibilities for their own ministry efforts
4. Promote activities in the congregation that help individuals and households celebrate and benefit from the presence of other generations in their lives

## Resources Needed

This planning tool is to be used in conjunction with the following resources:

- a. "The Power of Cross+generational Faith Community" by David W. Anderson
- b. Three Decades of Research
- c. *From the Great Omission to Vibrant Faith: the Role of the Home in Renewing the Church* (primarily chapter one)
- d. Gift of Generations (one-page handout)

The above resources are available at [www.vibrantfaith.org](http://www.vibrantfaith.org). The intent of the resources and the broader efforts of the planning team is to promote and help develop a vibrant cross+generational congregational life.

## Four Cross+generational Planning Team Meetings

The planning team will conduct at least four meetings to accomplish the following goals.

1. First meeting goal: Get acquainted with planning team members, the topic of cross+generational life, resources that help, and the larger agenda for the subsequent three meetings.
2. Second Meeting goal: support congregational ministry groups in ways to be more cross+generational in their ministry activities



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3. Third Meeting goal: plan and execute 1-3 cross+generational events so that people can experience the delight and benefits of cross+generational life
4. Fourth Meeting goal: Evaluate efforts from the three prior meetings and make recommendations to staff and council in order to further develop cross+generational life in the congregation.

### First Cross+generational Planning Meeting

Goal: Get acquainted with planning team members, the topic of cross+generational life, resources that help, and the larger agenda for the subsequent three meetings.

1. First Meeting:
  - a. Welcome participants and have everyone introduce himself or herself by name.
  - b. Begin with Bible reading from 2 Timothy 1:4-5 and opening prayer, something like the following:

Dear loving and gracious God, we give you thanks for people like Paul, Timothy, Lois, and Eunice and for the gift of generations to pass on the Christian faith one to another. Guide our conversations, ideas, commitments and actions so that the work of this planning team may please you and serve the needs of all generations. In the name of Christ we pray, amen.
  - c. Introduce focus of planning team (review desired outcomes and goals of the four scheduled meetings)
  - d. Participants re-introduce themselves using the following topics:
    - Name
    - Generational group (see “Gift of Generations” to identify the various categories: Builder/G.I., Silent/Booster, Baby Boomer, Gen X, Millennial)
    - A favorite person or book from the Bible
    - The last meaningful conversation you had with someone from a different generation.
  - e. Continue with the following conversation questions to help the group jell as a group as well as enter more deeply into the world of cross+generational life and faith. Ask the individual participants to respond to the following questions:
    - Besides the honor and sense of responsibility by being asked, what motivated you to be part of this planning team?
    - What do you hope happens through this planning team?
    - What cross+generational events in the congregation have had a positive influence on you?
    - What cross+generational events outside the congregation have had a positive influence on you?
    - Identify someone from another generation who has positively influenced your life of faith? What was it about that person that was so influential?
    - The article “The Power of Cross+generational Faith Community” notes that the United States is the most age-segregated culture in human history. How does that impact the church?



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- What people or experiences most influence teenagers in their faith lives?
  - What does “The Power of Cross+generational Faith Community” point out as people’s typical answer to the previous question?
  - How can the cross+generational planning team help the larger congregation be aware of the research on factors in faith formation from recent decades and operate more on those factors?
- f. Explore information presented in the following materials:
- “The Power of Cross+generational Faith Community
  - Three Decades of Research
  - Gift of Generations
  - *From the Great Omission to Vibrant Faith*, chapter one
- g. Address the focus of the next three meetings and assignments
- h. Summarize the benefits of the following conversations and topics
- Getting to know one another from various generations
  - General awareness of the value of cross+generational life for congregational life and faith formation
  - Learning information from various resources on the importance of cross+generational life, including the life of our own homes and family relationships
  - Motivation to help the larger congregation appreciate and experience the benefits of cross+generational life
- i. Identify and create action steps for assignments that need to be accomplished prior to the next meeting
- contacting various ministry teams and other groups in the congregation to inform them of the planning team’s efforts and how other teams and groups in the congregation will receive the information and recommendations that emerge from the efforts of the planning team
  - outline key information from resources introduced at the meeting
  - get list of various ministry teams in the congregation
- j. Select or restate schedule for second, third, and fourth meeting dates.
- k. Close with prayer.

Gracious and every-present God, you have called us by name as your chosen, holy, and loved people. Help us to be aware of our life together as a cross+generational experience that enriches our lives with understanding and sensitivity from all ages of Christians. Come Holy Spirit, grant to us, as your people, what we need to know, to believe, to do, to love, and to hope in the name of Christ our Lord, amen.



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## Second Meeting

Goal: Support congregational ministry groups in ways to be more cross+generational in their ministry activities

- a. Open with Luke 2:41-52 and a prayer for the efforts of the group and for the benefits of cross+generational life in homes and congregations
- b. Review summary of last meeting
- c. Identify various ministry groups in congregation
  - leadership council/board
  - task forces
  - committees or teams
  - study groups
  - service and outreach teams
  - fellowship groups
- d. Identify key information from resources discussed at the last meeting (see assignment to outline of key information from resources introduced at the last meeting)
- e. List possible cross+generational resources that can be used by various ministry groups including the following:
  - *FaithTalk® Cards*
  - *FaithTalk® Cards with Children*
  - *FaithTalk® FOUR KEY*
  - *Scripture Talk*
  - *Can I Have the Keys to the Car?*
  - Other resources from *Vibrant Faith Ministries Faith Formation Catalog*
  - Other resources identified by the planning team
- f. Develop plan to inform the various ministry groups of the benefits and delight in cross+generational faith formation (including information from the resources discussed at the last meeting and a list of cross+generational resources).
  - who will inform the various ministry groups?
  - what information will be distributed to those groups (e.g., information from planning team resources, list of possible cross+generational resources available, VFM Faith Formation Catalogs, etc.)?
  - when will the contacts be made with the various ministry groups?
- g. Develop a schedule to contact the various ministry groups before the third meeting of the planning team (if not prior to the third meeting, then identify the preferred timeline)
- h. Develop a list of examples of cross+generational possibilities that can be applied to each ministry group



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- i. Establish a feedback loop to learn how the information was received and used by the various groups.
- j. What other decisions or information needs to be discussed prior to the end of the meeting?
- k. Review action steps the planning team members are committed to accomplish
- l. Close with the Lord's Prayer and/or another prayer

### Third Meeting

Goal: plan and execute 1-3 cross+generational events so that people can experience the delight and benefits of cross+generational life

- a. Open with Psalm 133 and a prayer for the unity of the generations
- b. Review information and action steps from last meeting
- c. Discuss results of contacting various ministry teams
- d. Plan a cross+generational congregational events
  - Schedule date and time for the event (e.g., a Sunday school hour)
  - Identify theme (e.g., "The Joy of Cross+generational Conversations)
  - Identify forms of communication and how various generations will get the invitation to come
  - Plan to give a brief history of the work of the planning team, identifying the benefits and joy of cross+generational life
  - Develop a plan to break the larger group into small groups of about four people, representing at least three different generations
  - Use a simple conversation tool like FaithTalk Cards for small group conversations
  - Check in after each FaithTalk question to sample the small group conversations with the larger group (have a microphone and speaker system available for audibility throughout the larger group)
  - Plan to get oral and/or written feedback on people's experience of the cross+generational event
  - Plan to close the event with prayer
- e. Develop a review process to evaluate the successes and improvement areas identified from the cross+generational events.
- f. Commit to getting evaluation results prior to the fourth meeting



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- g. Consider planning a second or third cross+generational event (e.g. around the theme of planning for Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, or Easter in the home; planning a vacation that includes living out the Four Keys of caring conversation, devotions, service, and rituals and traditions)
- h. Close with the Lord's Prayer and/or another prayer.

### Fourth Meeting

Goal: Evaluate efforts from the three prior meetings and make recommendations to staff and council in order to further develop cross+generational life in the congregation.

- a. Open with Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and a prayer that seeks God's help to pass on the Christian faith between the generations
- b. Review summary of last meeting
- c. Discuss evaluation of one or more of the cross+generational events.
- d. Summarize evaluations and make a plan to present the summary to staff and council
- e. Make recommendations to staff and council to promote an ongoing climate of cross+generational life in the congregation.
  - What can staff do to emphasize the cross+generational nature of Christian discipleship and outreach?
  - What can the council do to emphasize the cross+generational nature of Christian discipleship and outreach?
  - What can other ministry and fellowship groups do?
  - How can the entire congregation continue to emphasize the power, importance, and delight of cross+generational life in home, congregation, and community?
- f. Close with the Lord's Prayer and/or the following prayer

Dear God, you have called us to a life of faith, hope, and love that reconciles the world in Christ. Help us to continue to be reconciled to one another and to grow in faith with one another, especially with those of all generations. Bless the ministry of our homes, congregation, and community to your glory and to the needs of our neighbor and all creation. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, amen.