

Introduction to Faith Stories™
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Intergenerational ministry is a goal of many thriving congregations. A cross-age ministry is characterized by a spiritual element shared through intentional interaction across age groups. As a result, a relational community develops among the participants.

Intergenerational themes run through the Bible. For example, the Old Testament prophet, Joel, reminds us that the Lord's invitation is for young and old: "Gather all the people—the elders, the children, and even the babies. Call the bridegroom from his quarters and the bride from her private room." (Joel 2:16)

In the New Testament, we read that the jailer took Paul and Silas to a home where the entire household was baptized. What a great example of a Christian community!

Congregations generally segment activities and groups by age to develop effective ministries. That works well, because people at similar lifestages share common interests and needs.

Implications of the Age Wave

However, the age wave has arrived: 10,000 people turn 65 today. (*That's ten thousand!*) That will continue to happen, every single day, for the next twenty years. To serve effectively, congregations will need to also intentionally develop relational faith communities across generations. Age-specific and intergenerational ministries complement, not compete, with each other.

To help meet the growing need for cross-age resources, intergenerational ministry is one of five areas of discipleship, which will be highlighted by ALOA during the next five years.

A pilot project

ALOA partnered with Prince of Peace, Carrollton, TX, in an intergenerational pilot project that began in 2018. This initiative tapped into the strengths of older adults and teens. Researchers tell us that as we age, we become increasingly aware of the need to "Tell the next generation about the Lord's Power and His great deeds and the wonderful things he has done." (Psalm 78:2-4) We don't need data to tell us that teens are tech savvy! The project, titled Faith Stories™, has been a blessing to all who participated in the initial effort.

Although the pilot involved only a few teens and older adults, the concept has been enthusiastically embraced. As a result, we've had many questions about how to take Faith Stories™ into other congregations. In response, ALOA offers practical resources generated from this initial effort.

Content presented here is a "work in progress" and intended to offer starting points for congregational implementation. A congregation might choose to have senior adults both in front of and behind the camera. *Faith Stories™* might be sponsored by individual groups or ministries within a congregation, instead of using the intergenerational model adopted during the ALOA pilot project.

Additional content will be added to this site as *Faith Stories™* grows.

Resources

1. For an "inside" look at the project development and impact, view an [informal FacebookLive! event](#):

2. This is a [ten minute excerpt from one of the Faith Stories™](#) taped during our pilot. You'll get ideas for the physical setting and background, plus watch a "real" person telling his Faith Story.

3. Three print documents authored by Nick Weiss, our resident tech expert and project manager. Nick was the class instructor for the high school students, who did the actual taping/editing during the pilot project:

Basic Steps, a seven step broad outline which identifies key action points during the pilot project.

Equipment Lists, offers both a minimalistic approach and a high tech list of what's needed for Faith Stories™. This handout is specifically for the teen behind the camera.

Faith Story Ideas for Those Closest to Heaven, is an "idea list in progress." Patients in hospice or people with a limited expected life expectancy might want to tape messages specially targeted to friends of loved ones to be viewed at future dates. This handout can be referenced by Stephen ministers or those in other care ministries.

4. *Top 10 Questions (and answers) about Faith Stories™*

5. *Legalities*. Faith Stories™ is trademarked. You have permission to produce your own local videos and use them and reproduce them as you see fit. If you use the Faith Stories™ trademark you cannot sell them for a profit. We'd welcome the opportunity to see some of what you produced.

6. *Faith Stories™ Nuts and Bolts*. During the pilot, this handout was given to older adults prior to their taping. Although this echoes some of the content from *Top 10 Questions*, participants found this handout helpful.

7. *Questions for Faith Stories™ guests*. During the pilot, our interviewer used these questions to keep the interview flowing forward.

8. *A pastor's perspective* by Rev. Ken Holdorf. The senior adult pastor at Prince of Peace and "champion" of Faith Stories™ during the pilot project, offers his perspective on the initiative.