**GenOn Ministries**

**LIFT Experience Workbook**

**From the Experts**

Without interaction between and among the generations, each making its own unique contribution, Christian community is difficult to maintain. -John Westerhoff

For intergenerational Christian formation to happen, the generations must be together; they must know each other; and they must experience life in the body of Christ together.

-Holly Allen and Christine Lawton

When “intergenerational” becomes a lens and not a tool, it permeates and is sustainable.

-Jim Merhaut

**Benefits to a church with focus on Intergenerational Ministry**

Here’s a sampling from GenOn board member John Roberto, in his work with Lifelong Faith Associates, found in *Generations Together:*

* Enhances the sense of **belonging** to counter isolation
* Creates a welcoming **environment** conducive to promoting faith sharing and mutual support
* Shares the **wisdom, experience**, and **knowledge** of one generation to meet the needs of another
* Increases opportunities for children/youth to have Christian **role models** outside of their families
* Develops a **shared vision** among leaders and teams

**GenOn’s Definition of Intergenerational Ministry**

Intergenerational ministry nurtures **Christ-centered relationships**

by bringing together **two or more generations**

in **planned and purposeful settings**

where all are **mutually invested.**

LIFT Session - Living in Faith Together

**JESUS FEEDS US WHAT WE NEED**

Matthew 14:13-21

**Before you begin:** Be sure to read the *Introduction*.

**Session goal:**

To understand what Jesus provides for us

**Materials:**

Table decorations, per table:

* Construction paper fish to cut out and spread on table
* A basket full of bread at each table

Breaking Bread Together suggestions:

* Almond cookies
* Different kinds of kugel

Gathering Together materials, per table:

 Paper fish template, colored paper, scissors

Playing Together materials, per table:

Activity 1: Fish Chain decorating supplies

Activity 2: Newspaper Basket weaving supplies

Studying God’s Word Together materials, per table:

At least one Bible

Copies of discussion questions

LIFT Session – Living in Faith Together

**Gathering Together**

Suggestion for activity to do while participants are arriving:

Using colored paper, fish template and scissors, invite participants to cut out fish to decorate their tables.

**Breaking Bread Together**

**Leader welcomes everyone**.

**Offer a blessing for your snack or meal.**

This is a Jewish mealtime prayer that Jesus probably prayed, and it may have been what he said when he blessed the loaves in today’s Bible story*.*

*Blessed art thou, Jehovah, Our God, King of the Universe,
Who brings forth bread from the earth. Amen.*

**Picking the server:** The server is the person who has most recently gone fishing…or most recently eaten sushi.

**Serve the food**

**Conversation starters around the table:**

1. What’s the largest fish you have ever caught or seen?
2. What memories do you have about the aroma of baking bread.

**Studying God’s Word Together**

**Introduce Scripture.** Jesus was very popular with huge crowds. They often followed him around while he was teaching and preaching. One day, when he needed some time by himself, Jesus slipped away by boat to the other side of the lake. Someone saw him and soon the crowd followed along the shore. Jesus was overcome with love for them and healed their sick. It began to get late in the day and the disciples suggested Jesus send the people away to get their own food. But Jesus told the disciples to feed them. The disciples were confused by Jesus’ request because the crowd numbered 5,000 men, plus women and children. They were not sure where they could find enough food to feed such a large crowd!

**Read Scripture together:** At each table, ask volunteers to be Narrator, Jesus, Disciple 1, Disciple 2. Read Matthew 14:13-21 below.

**Dramatic Scripture Reading: “Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand” – Matthew 14:13-21**

**Narrator:** When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns.When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick. As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said,

**Disciple 1:** “This is a remote place, and it’s already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food.”

**Jesus:** “They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat.”

**Disciple 2:** “We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish.”

**Jesus:** “Bring them here to me.”

**Narrator:** And Jesus directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

**Reflect together on the scripture passage at your table:**

I wonder how Jesus showed his love for the people?

Imagine how the disciples might have provided enough food and share your thoughts.

Describe a time when God gave you more than you needed?
I wonder what Jesus might have had the disciples do with the leftovers?
I wonder what we could learn from this story?

LIFT Session – Living in Faith Together

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| **Playing Together**Chose the activities that will work for your group in the time allotted. Do one activity or a combination of activities. Your choices may depend on the age range and ability of your group. | Icon  Description automatically generated |

**Activity 1:** Fish Chains

**Materials:** Fish from table decorations, markers and crayons, other craft items to decorate the

fish, string to hang fish, tape

Invite participants to decorate a fish or two from the table in their own way. Tape the fish onto

the string and then hang the string of fish in your space.

**Activity 2:** Newspaper Baskets

**Materials:** Newspapers, scissors, stapler, double-sided tape

1. Cut newspaper on folded edge.
2. Cut in half again lengthwise.
3. Fold each page in halves lengthwise until you have strips.
4. Line 10-12 strips up horizontally and then attach them to one vertical strip at the top with staples.
5. Begin weaving.
6. Fold up and staple sides into place.



LIFT Session – Living in Faith Together

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| **Praying Together**As groups are cleaning up from Playing Together, create a worshipful space in the front of your room. Consider using candles, opened Bible, and other items that may be seen in your regular worship space. | Icon  Description automatically generated |

**Share joys and concerns:** Invite each table to share their joys and concerns with each other. If your whole group is small, you may want to just have joys and concerns shared as a large group.

**Offer closing scripture reading:**

Today we learned that God loves us so much, that we are met in our places of need,

whenever we call on God. David often called on God. Here is one of his prayers from

Psalm 17:6-8.

Psalm 17:6-8.

**6**I call on you, my God, for you will answer me;
    turn your ear to me and hear my prayer.
**7**Show me the wonders of your great love,
    you who save by your right hand
    those who take refuge in you from their foes.
**8**Keep me as the apple of your eye;
    hide me in the shadow of your wings.

**Sing together:** *A closing song or chorus of your choosing (optional)*

**Scripture references supportive of Intergenerational Ministry (CEB)**

Israel, listen! Our God is the Lord! Only the Lord! Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your being, and all your strength. These words that I am commanding you today must always be on your minds. Recite them to your children. Talk about them when you are sitting around your house and when you are out and about, when you are lying down and when you are getting up. Deuteronomy 6:4-7

There wasn’t a single word of all that Moses had commanded that Joshua failed to read aloud in the presence of the entire assembly of Israel. This assembly included the women and small children, along with the immigrants who lived among them.

Joshua 8:35

“Brothers, what should we do?” Peter replied, “Change your hearts and lives. Each of you must be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This promise is for you, your children, and for all who are far away—as many as the Lord our God invites.” Acts 2:38-39

Glory to God, who is able to do far beyond all that we could ask or imagine by his power at work within us; glory to him in the church and in Christ Jesus for all generations, forever and always. Amen.

Ephesians 3:20-21