Intergenerational Connections

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1. **DISCIPLESHP WHEEL** - The call for intergenerational connectedness is at its core about relationships. In the Christian faith, those relationships are in every case some form of discipleship; one Christian helping another person move closer to Christ, move closer to becoming a completely committed follower of Christ. A Discipleship Wheel is a picture of how we progress toward that goal. It would become a guide when interacting with anyone else in our faith community, a reminder that we are all on journeys toward Christian Discipleship and we all need relationships with each other. In this model, participants move from outside the circle towards the center, possibly skipping steps, but always with forward momentum.

   a. Definition of discipleship for our purposes: Discipleship is the process of learning about the teachings of Jesus, internalizing them and then acting upon them.

      It is fulfilled by:

      • Fellowship
      • Accountability
      • Evangelism
      • Bible study
      • Training seminars
      • Listening to the Word
      • Hanging out with older believers

   b. In this illustration, a person's location within the Discipleship Wheel is not based solely on age. A generation can also be defined by a person's situation on their faith journey. Someone new to Christ might be years older than a seasoned Christian in the inner parts of the wheel who came to Christ at a young age. This wheel encourages intergenerational interaction based not solely on the age of the physical body, but on the development of the Christian life.
c. This illustration provides the framework from which ministry within the church can be measured. The Discipleship Wheel will be highlighted with stories of discipleship in *First Light*, and included on the agenda for all Church Council meetings.

d.

e. Consider how Saul (Paul), an early enemy of Christians was brought to the faith by an interaction with God along the Damascus Road. God led Annanias to heal and baptized Saul in Acts 9. When the story picks up in Acts 11, Barnabas sought out Paul and together they taught and grew in the spirit of the Lord. Eventually, in Acts 13, the church was led to send Paul and Barnabas out into the world as missionaries to disciple those who had yet to know Christ. The story continues with Saul eventually teaming up with Silas and mentoring a young man, Timothy, in Acts 16. With each other and the Lord as their guide, they changed the face of the Roman Empire by sharing Christ.

i. To apply Paul’s journey to being a disciple to our lives, imagine a modern day Not Yet Churched person observing our church from the outside. Not Yet Churched / Observers need an invitation. They watch us on television; they walk by on the street, or buy a cup of coffee from Mead’s Corner. To disciple someone in this circle:
Invite people to worship, Mead’s Corner, or an Organ Concert or support the television ministry.

ii. Once someone has crossed our threshold, they are no longer observing from the outside, but are now observing from the inside. They have become a Casual attender. Still observing, they may not even share their name with the hostess. Casual attendees have met a few people and they are ‘shopping’ for a way to interact with the congregation and God. To help someone in this circle: introduce yourself, invite them to Sunday School, to a Mission Lunch, to sign up for an educational class (See item # 4 in intergenerational proposal). Keep yourself apprised of what’s happening in the life of the church and help open the door for their participation, or assist someone to getting to Mead’s Parlor (see item #7 in intergenerational proposal).

iii. After they have served or learned with a group the Casual attender may join a Sunday School or Life Group, advancing into the Discipleship Wheel as a Participant. Participants have made a few friends and may have tried a few activities. They may be in a Financial Peace University class, or gone on a mission trip. To disciple a Participant, consider taking the Stephen Ministry class, organize a group of friends to ‘sponsor’ an educational class, assist with Discovery Island (Children’s church) or be a servant leader for CORE Student Life Ministries.

iv. Once Participants meet people and experience God in this place, becoming a committed member of the congregation makes them more fully part of the church. They have stepped out and joined the church, a Sunday School or a Life Group. To assist those in this circle, be the hands and feet of Christ to each other. Endorse their choice of group, even if it isn’t yours. Make hospitality something done for each person that walks in the door host, teach, or work together.

v. If the mission of First Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, then Disciple Makers form the core of the Discipleship Wheel. Not only is a Disciple Maker committed to God and the church, but they are committed to helping others achieve such commitment in their lives. Disciple Makers stand in the middle of the wheel, and look back for ways to help others move one step closer to being a completely committed follower of Jesus Christ. They also help each other, homebound visitation, and Life Group or Sunday School participation.

f. One example of this wheel could be a focus on newlyweds. Each couple that uses our church facilities for a wedding would be given a special voucher and invitation to attend
Financial Peace University (FPU) in the first year after their wedding. Ideally, there would be a group of experienced married folk to cast invitations, pray over these newlyweds, and teach as well as sponsor this FPU. Through the class the newlyweds get to know each other. At the end of FPU, the mentor group would then intentionally invite the participants to continue their journey by forming a Life Group together (See #5 of the intergenerational connections proposal); thus stepping from outer circles of the wheel towards inner circles.

2. **CELEBRATE AND COMMIT SUPPORT TO YOUTH AND CHILDREN** of our congregation.
   a. The current program of prayer partners, where an adult Sunday school class ‘adopts’ a class of children through their elementary school years should be expanded to support and interact with young Christians throughout middle and high school. This will be facilitated by the Adult Council (See Item #3 of the intergenerational proposal).
   b. There will be a heavy emphasis by the finance committee when budgeting for 2014 and beyond on children and youth programming.
   c. CORE Student Life Ministries (student ministries) will become a staple in downtown (3 mile radius of First Church). CORE will network and partner with smaller churches within the urban core to unify students in Wichita and to become a more cohesive group with the influence of Christ. CORE will provide resources for curriculum, videos, branding, etc. for these smaller youth groups in hopes to become a cohesive downtown youth group. CORE will also use their facilities to host and welcome students Monday-Thursday after school providing a safe haven for urban core students to engage each other and receive tutoring and mentoring if needed.

3. **FORM ADULT COUNCIL** wherein representatives of each adult Sunday School class and Life Group (see Item # 5 of intergenerational proposal) are commissioned to arrange and encourage interactions between the groups, facilitated by a staff member charged with intergenerational connectedness.
   a. Will intentionally recruit one existing adult Sunday School class a year to sponsor the formation of a new Sunday School class.
   b. Will sponsor a 5th Sunday each spring and fall, inviting adult classes and small groups to an event to be determined by the Adult Council.
   c. Intentionally encourage classes to interact with each other, the youth and children, by scheduling combined lessons and/or socials.
d. The Intergenerational Recalculating Team has provided a “toolbox” of ideas shared through the Recalculating process to the Adult Council for activities this group and it’s participants can use. (See Appendix A.)

4. **EDUCATION COURSES**
   a. Educational courses lend themselves to intergenerational interaction because they group people based on a common desire to learn about a specific topic or skill. Courses such as these can be entry points for not yet churched persons to gain entry into the Discipleship Wheel.
   b. A coordinator of life education could be either staff or laity dedicated to organizing and publicizing education courses.
   c. Each course would be sponsored by a group of 3-5 people who intentionally plan, recruit, teach and mentor the class. They would also be intent on building relationships with the participants and helping participants find their next step in their relationship with the congregation and God. (See Item #1 of Intergenerational Proposal.)
   d. Additional education groups could be: photography, archery, painting, drama, cooking, Disciple Bible Study, topical biblical study, or Financial Peace University, as suggested by Recalculating input.
   e. Class location, cost and times would vary with the topic and the teacher and be determined by the sponsoring group.

5. **LIFE GROUPS** (known as small groups or cell groups in some faith communities) allow the church to continue every day of the week in groups of all ages that intentionally wish to grow together, serve together and support each other through biblical study.
   a. Life groups will be established by a designated staff person who invites leadership/hosts in convening and facilitating small groups based on demographics or geographics.
   b. Training, curriculum and accountably will be provided for Life Group leaders and hosts by the designated staff person.
   c. Life Groups can meet in either homes, public venues, Mead’s Corner or in the church building.
   d. In order to maintain the intimacy of discipleship, support and accountability, Life Groups should be smaller than 20 persons. As they approach such a size, restructuring and recruitment of additional leadership should already be underway by the leadership of the group and the designated staff person in order to multiply the discipleship opportunities through additional Life Groups.
e. Life Groups are designed for short term interaction, they would be named for location or teacher and expected to have multiplied in less than 2 years. By design they should grow through discipleship and thus break and reform into other small groups over time, encouraging further discipleship.

f. A soft launch of Life Groups should be based in an Advent series in December 2013 or as part of the New Year in 2014.

6. **STEPHEN MINISTRY** is at its very core, one on one relationships of service that often span generations. An emphasis on Stephen Ministry would assure that everyone who walks through our doors understands this ministry. To increase awareness and support of Stephen Ministry, we would:

   a. Establish Stephen Ministry as budgeted line item of $3000 per year, allowing funds for training of leadership and subsidizing the education of 20 Stephen Ministers each year.
   
   b. Stephen Ministry Leadership Team (SMLT) will establish a page on the church website.
   
   c. Monthly promotional videos and announcements in church will raise awareness of this ministry.
   
   d. SMLT will educate groups yearly regarding the possibilities, needs, goals, training dates and process of Stephen Ministry. Each group would be asked to make a commitment to providing trainees.
   
   e. A Stephen Minister in Meads Parlor (see #6 in the intergenerational proposal) during hours of operation will provide a visual reminder of Stephen Ministry as well as allow for information about the ministry, recruiting Stephen Ministers and identifying potential care receivers.

7. **MEAD’S PARLOR** would be a centralized location in the church building providing a gathering/meeting place for the entire church community. Imagine the current Parlor space being utilized as a space where everyone can gather for coffee and conversation each Sunday morning before worship service. It would have a warm, comfortable feel of community and guests could be led by anyone who meets them in the building to find the church family gathered here. Stephen Ministers, Evangelism Specialists, coffee and goodies, along with Sunday School guides would be on hand to ensure that guests feel welcome and are guided to a place where they will want to return. Envision a prayer wall across the room, where anyone can place a prayer request, or kneel and lift to God the prayers listed on the wall. Do you hear the quiet conversations where a guest is invited to the next social, or told about how to join the bell choir? Do you smell the scones and
coffee and feel the firm handshake or hug of your church family? Mead’s Parlor can be a place of welcome, sanctuary, guidance, and sustenance.

a. A steering committee with representatives of Mead’s Corner, Evangelism, Stephen Ministry and Education would bring this vision to life and maintain it with a goal of being open for service by December 1, 2013.

b. A limited-menu of Mead’s Corner items would be available for purchase.

c. Everyone in the church would be educated to escort first time visitors to this place, where evangelism representatives, might direct their next steps to finding worship, fellowship or classes. They may even receive a punch card good for 3 free drinks at Mead’s Parlor, encouraging return visits. Of course there would be information about the church and its ministries, but there would also be an environment of hospitality.

d. Other opportunities for Mead’s Parlor to function with coffee sales might be a pre-concert reception for an Arts on Broadway event, or an organ concert.

e. Current and future resources for worship and educational opportunities would be available for sale by modifying one of the existing closets, fitting it with shelving and security at an approximate cost of $300.

f. Minimal remodeling will create a serving window between the current Parlor and the attached kitchen. We suggest preserving existing paneling to create shutters to cover a roll down serving window when not in use, and thus preserve the aesthetics of the room for more formal events, such as women’s circle meetings, pre-gathering of family for funerals, and wedding showers. It could also function as a cry room for families with small children who opt out of utilizing the nursery.

g. An estimation of $30,000 would cover the costs of:
   i. The installation of a serving window.
   ii. A large screen television (a tool for providing informational videos, for use in educational studies, such as Discipleship Bible Study, movie night for small groups, viewing of current informational slides, etc).
   iii. A small size professional espresso machine.
   iv. Ice maker
   v. Coffee grinder
   vi. Commercial grade drip coffee maker
   vii. Additional refrigerator
   viii. Dishwasher
Appendix A

Parties/Socials for all ages

1. Pool party/Picnic
2. Game night (Bunco, crazy eights, board games)
3. Potluck: bring a dish and a neighbor
4. Dinner theater/talent show/pet show
5. Trunk or treat
6. Farm and art market
7. Concert – good music – ask Arts on Broadway to consider a younger crowd
8. Ticketed events – Christian comedian
9. Educational Speakers of historic events such as the Navajo Code Talker.
10. Sports – disc golf, slow pitch softball, bocce, horseshoes, golf
11. Movie with discussion
12. Ski Trips
13. Local family fun trips (Salt mines, go carts, zoo, roller skating, camp outs)
14. Dances
15. Thanksgiving Feast
16. Sing a long
17. Story telling – seniors and others