

# Intergenerational Small Groups

Jesus tells us to go and make disciples. But He doesn't tell us to divide them up by age groups.

Age-appropriate teaching has an important place in the life of the church. Someone who has been a Christian for 50 years will need a lesson with depth to be challenged in their discipleship, while a 5-year-old needs to learn the building blocks of faith assisted by visuals and games. However, I love to be surprised when a preschooler pulls out a question or comment about faith that would drop the jaw of any long-time believer.

We spend so much time divided by age groups, I worry that we miss those surprising moments and lose opportunities to learn from one another.

Teenagers are in an especially tricky life space when it comes to age-appropriate ministry. Their brains are still developing, yet they are able to process more than most adults give them credit. They don't identify with adults, but they see themselves as largely independent. Learning alongside adults will add a depth to teens' discipleship they simply cannot get from a youth group.

**IDEA:** Host a six-week Bible study in your home using the Living Mission curriculum. Invite a few teenagers who have either expressed an interest in missions or seem to have a depth of maturity. Also invite several adults who are not a part of your NMI group.

Each week assign a different person to bring a snack and share their story of coming to faith with the group. Not only does this exercise give believers an opportunity to practice witnessing by telling their story of meeting Christ, it gives your multigenerational group a chance to get to know one another better and learn from each other.

Focus your small group time around the discussion questions provided in the curriculum. The more time you spend in discussion the greater opportunities you give to the students to experience mature Christian conversation and thought development.

Intergenerational small groups give believers of all ages a generous space to grow as disciples of Christ. You may find at the end of six weeks, your group is hungry for more opportunities to interact outside their age-appropriate groups.

Shawna Songer Gaines  
Chicago, Illinois

