

Adults and Children Together: Best Practices for Small Groups

Dr. Holly Allen

Northwest Church Planting Workshop, Portland, Oregon

March 17-18, 2006

What do we mean by the term "intergenerational"?

- "characteristically IG is meant to involve _____" (White).

- _____, _____, _____

- the generations are to be involved with each other

-
-
-

- **What is an intergenerational small group?**

"the socializing of two or more different age groups _____ in learning, growing, and developing in the _____ through common experiences of _____, _____, _____, and _____" (Prest, p. 15).

- **What happens when adults and children meet together in small groups?**

- **Icebreaker:**

- **Worship**

- **Prayer**

- **Special blessing times:**

- **Lord's Supper**

Why might IG small groups offer special opportunity for spiritual growth?

> Learning theory: (Vygotsky's sociocultural learning theory)

> Old Testament:

> The Early Church:

What did the children experience there as the church met from house to house?

- | | |
|----|----|
| 1) | 4) |
| 2) | 5) |
| 3) | 6) |

> God wants his children to grow up coming to know (and experience) him in the midst of:

- Deut 6:4-9: _____
- Psalm 78:1-7: _____
- Luke 2: 41-52: _____

> God wants:

• **Experientially?**

The benefits for our children

- > gain _____ and _____
- > see _____
- > participate in _____
- > learn by _____ and _____.
-
-
-

What adults relinquish:

- >
- >
- >

KEY POINT: Benefits for adults and children

References:

- Allen, H. (2002). *A qualitative study exploring the similarities and differences of the spirituality of children in intergenerational and non-intergenerational Christian contexts*. (Doctoral dissertation, Talbot School of Theology, Biola University, La Mirada, CA, 2002).
- Berryman, J. (1997). Spirituality, religious education, and the dormouse. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 2 (1), 9-23.
- Bunge, M. J. (Ed.). (2001). *The child in Christian thought*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Cavalletti, S. (1983). *The religious potential of the child* (P. M. Coulter & J. M. Coulter, Trans.). Ramsey, NJ: Paulist Press. (Original work published in 1979)
- Fowler, J. W. (1991). *Weaving the new creation: Stages of faith and the public church*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Heller, D. (1986). *The children's God*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Mead, L. B., & Nash, R. N. (1997). *An eight-track church in a CD world: The modern church in a postmodern world*. Macon, GA: Smyth and Helwys.
- May, S., Posterski, B., Stonehouse, C, & Cannell, L. *Children matter: Celebrating their place in the church, family, and community*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Myers, B. K. (1997). *Young children and spirituality*. New York: Routledge.
- Ng, D., & Thomas, V. (1981). *Children in the worshiping community*. Atlanta: John Knox Press.
- Prest, E. (1993). *From one generation to another*. Capetown: Training for Leadership.
- Ratcliff, D (Ed.). (2004). *Children's Spirituality: Christian Perspectives, Research, and Applications*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock/Cascade Books.
- Sheldrake, P. (2000). What is spirituality? In K. J. Collins (Ed.), *Exploring Christian Spirituality* (pp. 21-42). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House.
- Schneiders, S. (1986). Theology and spirituality: Strangers, rivals, and partners. *Horizon*, 13, 253-274.
- Stewart, S. M., & Berryman, J. (1990). *Young children and worship*. Louisville, KY: John Knox Press.
- Stonehouse, C. (1998). *Joining children on the spiritual journey: Nurturing a life of faith*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological process* (M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scribner, & E. Souberman, Eds.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. (Original works written in the 1920s and 1930s, published variously in 1930, 1935, 1956, 1960, and 1966)
- Westerhoff, J. H., III. (1976). *Will our children have faith?* New York: Seabury Press.
- Westerhoff, J. H., III, & Neville, G. K. (1974). *Generation to generation*. Philadelphia: United Church Press.
- White, J. W. (1988). *Intergenerational religious education*. Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press.
- Zuck, R. B. (1996). *Precious in his sight: Childhood and children in the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

Contact Information:

Holly Allen, PhD

Associate Professor of Christian Ministries
Director, Children and Family Ministry Program

John Brown University
Siloam Springs, AR 72761

Phone: 479-524-7298

E-mail: hallen@jbu.edu