



IDEAS FOR MINISTRY FOR AND WITH OLDER ADULTS

From the Older Adult Ministry Of the Kentucky Conference

INTERGENERATIONAL MINISTRY – SNACK AND CHAT

I recently had the privilege to attend part of Christ Church United Methodist, Louisville, KY, summer camp for children, entitled “Shepherd’s Camp.” Their theme for 2019 was “Love Your Neighbor” and they shared ways this theme would continue throughout the next year and how the children would be involved in various ministries and missions throughout the community. Places like Cabbage Patch, St. John Center for the Homeless, Wesley Manor, Veteran Dogs helping Wounded Heroes, and a local elementary school were all mentioned. Special goals were shared regarding what they hoped the children would learn from participating at each place.

On the day I attended they were having a “Snack and Chat” to teach the children about hospitality. Children were paired with a grandparent or another older adult from the congregation and sat at round tables with two other pairs. The tables were decorated with placemats that included questions they could ask each other and an activity they could do together. Older children served the food family style. The menu included fresh fruit, grapes, finger sandwiches, dessert bars, and lemonade. As they served each other there was a lot of interaction between the children and the older adults. The place “buzzed” with conversation.

After the snack, the children sang and danced. They sang songs about being a good neighbor and danced and sang a Hebrew song, “Shalom.” Each adult was presented with a candle the children had helped prepare for them as a memory of this special time. The room was filled with joy and energy and excitement as both child and older adult enjoyed the experience of being together.

This kind of intergenerational experience can be done at any sized church. It doesn’t require a large budget or large space. It is best to keep it simple and get as many people involved as possible. I can see something like this being replicated across the KY Conference as we help both our children and those in the second half of life to learn how to be a good neighbor. Who knows, it might even suggest to those in the second half of life to reach out to their neighbor and share a meal with them. Both child and adult have much to share and much to learn about discipleship.

If you would like more information on this event, you can contact Janet Hagerty at jhagerty@ccum.net.