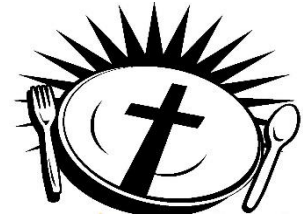


Intergenerational Lenten Dinner Service

An opportunity to bring together generations
for reflection and fellowship in the season of Lent



Objectives:

- To provide a more intimate experience for those participating in the Lenten Wednesday activities.
- To promote sharing of faith and social interaction between generations
- To give confirmation students opportunities in worship leadership and service

Audience: All ages, but typically upper elementary through adult

Duration: One and half hours

Background:

As is typical in many churches, our mid-week Lenten soup supper and service were traditionally held as tied together but separate events. Our soup supper was held first in the fellowship hall and then everyone adjourned to the sanctuary for the mid-week service. Confirmation students were expected to help with ushering at the services and were lesson readers. A visit to another church inspired us to combine the two so that now we do a dinner service, providing more opportunity for engagement across the generations.

How it Works:

- The entire dinner service now takes place in our fellowship hall, where we place a temporary altar, piano, and sound system.
- Round tables are used for easy conversation.
- Each week, a different group of people prepare a meal consisting of two soups, bread, salad, drinks. Tables are set with placemats, utensils, etc. along with chalices and patens for communion. Two spots are reserved at each table for confirmation students.
- Confirmation students are responsible for greeting people at the door, handing out the order of service. Later, they also will help serve their assigned tables the meal.
- We start with the service (we use the *Holden Evening Prayer Service*). At the point where there are readings, confirmation students with a parent or mentor read the assigned lessons. This is followed by communion, with people at each table communing each other (by intinction), once the elements are blessed.

- The meal follows, with confirmation students (with help from adults if needed) bring the food to the table from the kitchen.
- After the meal, a reflection is presented by the pastor or a lay leader on the theme for that service. Questions are prepared for participants to discuss at their table in response to the reflection, giving all ages a time to share their thoughts on the theme. In addition, each table is asked to come up with a pray petition to offer at the end.
- We end the service with the rest of the *Holden Evening Prayer Service*, substituting the individual table prayer petitions for the “Litany and Prayers” found in the service.
- Everyone helps clean up!

In Conclusion:

While we have lost a few people who miss a more contemplative service, we have gained others who enjoy the discussion, sharing of faith stories, and insights that has ensued because of the new format. Our confirmation students, with the encouragement of their elders, have gained confidence in adding their voices to the larger community. In addition, the relaxed atmosphere is more welcoming to those who are new to our community. The feedback we have received both formal and informal has been overwhelmingly positive.

Key decisions that help the intergenerational interaction: 1) divide up the youth among the tables, 2) give youth definite roles, and 3) make sure there are prepared questions that are relevant to all the generations, preferably that can be copied and put at each table.

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