

ENCORE Ministry

Older Adult Ministry in the Tennessee Conference



Resource Packet Local Church Leadership Team Older Adult Ministry

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5 Steps to Starting Older Adult Ministry

Step 1 Establish a Team or Task Force of six to eight older adults. Develop a purpose statement, which includes an intentional focus on the key areas of fellowship, Christian faith formation, outreach, and service with older adults.

Step 2 Conduct a survey of older adults in your church. Learn how many people fit in this age category, their family and marital status, common concerns/needs, interests, and talents. Use this information to help create a shared vision within the Task Force for intentional ministry with older adults.

Step 3 Conduct a demographic and a service analysis of your community. Know the needs of older adults in your community and what services are available for them. Usually such information is available at the local library, Chamber of Commerce, and Area Agency on Aging.

Step 4 Plan two high-visibility events targeted to older adults, both inside and outside the church. A high-visibility event is a church-sponsored activity to which nonmembers feel comfortable attending and members feel comfortable inviting their friends.

Step 5 Survey the people who attended the event and learn about their interests. Then plan a year's activities based on these needs and your stated purpose.

Designing Intentional Ministry By, With, and For Older Adults

Step 1

Organize an Older Adult Ministry Team or Task Force

Invite 6 to 10 older adults (from a variety of lifestyles, living arrangements and capabilities) to plan intentional ministry by, with, and for older adults in your congregation.

Step 2

Gather information about older adults in your congregation

Develop a survey questionnaire that obtains information about the needs, talents, and concerns of older adults. Using this form, survey older adults in your congregation and community.

Step 3

Review existing church programs that already involve older adults

Look at all the various ministries and programs of your congregation. Identify those that already have older adult involvement.

Step 4

Survey community social service agencies

Contact the office on aging in your community. Often by checking with your Area Agency on Aging, you can obtain a clear picture of programs and activities in your community related to older adults.

Step 5

Develop a shared vision for ministry

After you have surveyed older adults in your church and have a basic understanding of your community programs and activities for older adults, begin creating a vision for intentional ministry by, with, and for older adults in your congregation.

Step 6

Design a program of ministry for your congregation

A suggested model for ministry is the S.E.N.I.O.R.S. Ministry model. Develop various ministry options realizing that one type of ministry or program does not meet all needs.

Step 7

Identify resources and key leadership

Depending upon the specific ministry or program, your Team or Task Force will need to identify key resources and leadership needed. These may be both internal and external to your congregation.

Step 8

Involve other congregations and community service agencies

Don't feel that you must go it alone. Involve other congregations and community resources in your planning, promotion, and delivery.

Step 9

Implement your ministry

Develop a process for implementing your ministry, including timelines, check points, and leadership responsibilities

Step 10

Evaluate your ministry

During and following a specific ministry or program event, you will want to evaluate the success and effectiveness of the event. Secure information from both participants and leadership. Use this information in developing new ministry ventures.

Make your church facilities inviting, accessible, and use appropriate signage

S.E.N.I.O.R.S. Ministry Model

S: Spirituality - *Provide:* Bible Study Groups, Prayer Groups, Small Group Studies, Christian Education Classes, Retreats, Spiritual Journaling, Healing Services and Special Worship Services

E: Enrichment - *Provide:* Learning Opportunities and Classroom Seminars on topics of interest (e.g., Health Care, Finances, Advance Directives, Elder Law, Technology, Scams, and Life Review, etc.)

N: Nutrition/Health – *Provide:* Congregational Health Care Ministries, Parish Nurse, Low Impact Aerobics and other forms of exercise such as “Body Recall,” and “Cooking for One” Classes

I: Intergenerational – *Provide:* Programs, Events, Retreats, Study Opportunities for all ages. Invite older adults to serve as mentors and tutors and invite children and youth to visit homebound members

O: Outreach – *Provide:* Opportunities for Mission and Evangelism Outreach such as the Volunteers in Mission program, NOMADS, short or long term mission experiences (locally, nationally, and globally)

R: Recreation - *Provide:* Games, Fellowship Meals, Travel Events, and Field Trips. Invite participation in various activities, such as: Golf, Board games, Fishing, Tennis, Swimming, Arts and Crafts, and Quilting.

S: Service - *Provide:* Transportation, Respite Care, “Stephen Ministries,” Support Groups, Home Chore Service, Home Maintenance and Minor Home Repair Service, Telephone Reassurance, Service Providers Reference and Resource Information

S.E.N.I.O.R.S. Ministry Model Assessment

S.E.N.I.O.R.S. Ministry Assessment Grid	Active Phase Go – Goes	Passive Phase Slow – Goes	Final Phase No – Goes
Spirituality			
Enrichment			
Nutrition/Health			
Intergenerational			
Outreach			
Recreation			
Service			

Older Adult Ministry Ideas

“Best Practices”

As you plan for intentional older adult ministry, keep in mind that every older adult is a unique individual and one ministry idea does not meet all needs. Be sure to identify needs and plan ministry accordingly. Listed are some “Best Practices”

1. **Adult Day Care Ministry:** Develop a one-day Adult Day Care at your church for older adults who need specialized care for working caregivers.
2. **Caregiver Support Groups:** Start a Support Group for Caregivers and provide learning, information, resources (including financial) and sharing opportunities.
3. **Children of Aging Parents:** Provide support, networking opportunities, and resource information for adult children of aging parents.
4. **Community Faith Nursing (Parish Nurse):** provide a health care ministry including blood pressure and medication check-ups and visitation of sick
5. **Exercise and Fitness Classes:** Invite older adults to participate in “low impact” aerobics class, “Tai Chi,” or some other form of exercise designed for seniors.
6. **First Aid Training:** Invite leaders and older adults to participate in Red Cross Training Class, including CPR training, etc.
7. **Flowers for Homebound and Nursing Home Residents:** Following worship services, altar flowers are taken to homebound and nursing home residents.
8. **Food and Clothing Pantry:** Older adults maintain a church food and clothing pantry ministry for the needs of persons in the community
9. **Frauds and Scams Awareness:** Provide information to older adults about frauds and scams taking place in your community.
10. **Game Day:** Once a week or monthly, hold a game day for older adults (include games that involve mental stimulation).
11. **GrandPals:** Older adults share time and resources with children and youth who have few or no extended family members living in the community

12. **Home Minor Repair and Maintenance:** Older adults with skills help others by painting, changing light bulbs, mowing lawns, home chores, carpentry, etc.
13. **Homebound Lunch Partners:** Older adults visit persons who are homebound and share lunch together one-day a week.
14. **Homebound Sunday School Class:** Homebound class members participate in Sunday school with other members by use of a speaker phone in the classroom.
15. **Homebound Worship Participation:** Homebound members read scripture, offer Morning Prayer, or participate in other liturgy acts by telephone hooked up to church sound system, by videoing in advance, or by “Skyping.”
16. **Intergenerational Retreat:** Invite older adults and youth to participate in a retreat together. Plan for games, meals, Bible study, and sharing.
17. **Library: Resources on Aging Issues:** Place in your church library older adult reading materials, including audio and large print books and DVDs.
18. **Life Review:** Older adults participate in life review and reminiscence classes.
19. **Living History:** Older adults share their life journey and faith story (video and/or audio), in writing, and orally in worship and Sunday school classes.
20. **Marriage Enrichment Retreat:** Older married couples lead and participate in marriage enrichment programs for couples of all ages and stages of marriage.
21. **Medical Equipment Loan Ministry:** Gather, clean, and store used medical equipment (walkers, canes, wheelchairs, etc.) for loaning to persons in need.
22. **Mentoring and Tutoring Young People:** Invite older adults to serve as mentors and tutors (e.g., confirmation classes and afternoon school programs).
23. **Mission and Service Opportunities:** Older adults participate in short-term mission and services projects
24. **Multigenerational Study Groups:** Invite children, youth, and adults to study and learn together. This might include Bible topics and/or current events.
25. **Mutt Ministry:** Many older adults love dogs, cats, and other small animals yet are unable to care for them. This ministry shares the love of gentle animals.

26. **Nursing Home Sunday School Class and VBS:** Provide Sunday School classes and Vacation Bible School in nursing homes and Assisted Living
27. **Older Adult Choir:** Invite older adults to form a choir. Sing at church, nursing homes, retirement communities, and for homebound. Plan special events such as Christmas caroling throughout the community.
28. **Older Adult Newsletter:** Create a newsletter especially for the older adults in your congregation. Invite older adults to submit articles and include announcements about meetings and events.
29. **Older Adult Recognition Service and Dinner:** The congregation sponsors a special dinner, worship service, or other celebration to honor the faith, wisdom, ministry and service of older adults. The United Methodist Church designates the month of May as a special time to recognize older adults.
30. **Respite Care Ministry:** Volunteers provide respite care so the primary caregiver receives a short but needed break in caregiving responsibilities
31. **Ritual for Older Adults Moving from their Homes:** Older adults visit others moving from their home to long-term health care facilities. Share in prayer, scripture, song, Holy Communion, and words of remembrance and thanksgiving for the years spent in the home. Follow up in new home.
32. **Safe Sanctuary for Adults:** Protect older adults and leaders of older adult ministry by providing training in *Safe Sanctuary for Vulnerable Adults*.
33. **Scams and Frauds Awareness:** Provide regular information concerning scams, frauds and financial exploitation
34. **Senior Adult Bulletin Board:** Post announcements about events, job opportunities, and photos of recent activities and events on a bulletin board which is placed in a strategic location in the church.
35. **Senior Adult Devotional Booklet:** Invite older adults to compile a devotional book of scripture readings, meditations and prayers for congregational use.
36. **Senior Life Guides:** Invite older adults to serve as *Senior Life Guides*, persons who will “walk alongside” other adults who need special support and assistance
37. **Senior Technology Training:** Invite persons to provide training and support for older adults in the use of modern technology (e.g., cell phones, laptops, etc.)

38. **Service Provider “Preferred List”:** Gather information for a *Preferred List* for adults who need local services (e.g., auto repair, plumber, electrician, etc.)
39. **Social Networking with Senior Adults:** Start a blog, Facebook page, or other social networking activity with older adults.
40. **Stephen Ministry:** A specialized visitation program whereby older adults visit people who are ill, homebound, and institutionalized or have other needs.
41. **Sunday Afternoon Worship for Homebound:** Conduct special Sunday afternoon worship services (include Holy Communion) for homebound members in the church sanctuary.
42. **Sunday Morning – Faith Care Connections:** Train volunteers to provide respite care on Sunday mornings for homebound seniors so the primary caregiver can attend Sunday morning worship services and Sunday school.
43. **Telephone Reassurance:** Older adults make daily telephone calls to “homebound” or “home-centered” members.
44. **Transportation Ministry:** Provide transportation for seniors to attend worship and other church activities and to visit doctor, pharmacy, grocery store, etc.
45. **Travel and Trips:** Older adults take educational and informational, leisure, recreational, mission study, or work mission trips.
46. **Visitation Ministry:** Older adults visit other older adults who are homebound, lonely, hospitalized, institutionalized, and dying.
47. **Weekday Bible Study:** Invite older adults to participate in a weekday Bible Study (include refreshments, joys and concerns, singing and prayers).
48. **Wheelchair Ramp Ministry:** Invite older adults to help build and/or assemble wheelchair ramps needed by persons who are homebound.
49. **Widow & Widower Support Group:** Provide opportunities for widows and widowers to join together for sharing, support, information, and socialization (*Wings of Hope* in the TN Conference).
50. **Writing Letters and Sending Cards:** Older adults write personal letters and send birthday, anniversary, and special remembrance cards to others.

Sample Survey Form

Older Adult Needs and Abilities Survey for Congregational Use

1. Contact the person to be interviewed and establish a mutually agreed upon day and time for the interview. Visit in pairs (2 persons per team for each visit)
2. Upon arriving for the interview identify yourself and briefly state the nature of your visit.
3. Give the person being interviewed a copy of this survey form, read each question aloud, and record the information on your form.

NAME OF INTERVIEWER: _____

NAME OF INTERVIEWEE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TELEPHONE: _____

FAX: _____ **EMAIL:** _____

1. MARITAL STATUS: ___ SINGLE, ___ MARRIED, ___ WIDOWED, ___ DIVORCED

2. GENDER: ___ FEMALE, ___ MALE **3. BIRTH DATE:** _____

4. DO YOU LIVE ALONE? ___ YES ___ NO **5. IF NO, WITH WHOM DO YOU LIVE:**

6. IN AN EMERGENCY, IS THERE SOMEONE TO WHOM YOU COULD TURN TO FOR ASSISTANCE? ___ NO, ___ YES; TO WHOM: _____

7. DURING THIS PAST WEEK, HOW MANY TIMES DID YOU:

A. HAVE SOMEONE COME TO VISIT WITH YOU? _____

B. TALK WITH A FRIEND OR RELATIVE ON THE TELEPHONE? _____

C. GO VISIT SOMEONE ELSE? _____

8. HOW DO YOU RATE YOUR OVERALL HEALTH?

___ EXCELLENT; ___ VERY GOOD; ___ GOOD; ___ FAIR; ___ POOR

9. WHAT PROBLEMS DO YOU EXPERIENCE WITH WHERE YOU LIVE?

10. WHAT IS/WAS YOUR OCCUPATION? _____

(Check all that apply)

11. TRANSPORTATION:

I NEED TRANSPORTATION TO: ___ CHURCH; ___ SUNDAY SCHOOL; ___ SHOPPING; ___ DRUG STORE; ___ DOCTOR'S OFFICE; ___ OTHER: _____

I COULD HELP TRANSPORT TO: _____

12. MINOR HOME REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE SERVICE:

I NEED HELP WITH: ___ PLUMBING; ___ MOVING ITEMS; ___ LAWN CARE; ___ PAINTING; ___ CARPENTRY; ___ OTHER: _____

I COULD HELP WITH HOME REPAIRS: _____

13. HOME CHORE SERVICE:

I NEED HELP WITH: ___ SEWING; ___ COOKING; ___ CLEANING; ___ LAUNDRY; ___ WRITING LETTERS; ___ SHOPPING; ___ OTHER: _____

I COULD HELP WITH HOME CHORES: _____

14. HEALTH CARE:

I NEED HELP WITH: ___ MEDICAL CARE; ___ DENTAL CARE; ___ VISION CARE; ___ FOOT CARE; ___ HEARING LOSS; ___ OTHER: _____

I COULD HELP WITH HEALTH CARE: _____

15. LEGAL AND FINANCIAL COUNSEL:

I NEED HELP WITH: ___ WILL PLANNING; ___ LIVING WILL; ___ POWER OF ATTORNEY; ___ FINANCIAL PLANNING; ___ OTHER: _____

I COULD HELP WITH LEGAL/FINANCIAL ADVICE: _____

16. RELIGIOUS SERVICES:

I NEED: ___ PASTORAL VISITATION; ___ HOLY COMMUNION; ___ DEVOTIONAL MATERIALS; ___ PRAYER; ___ BAPTISM; ___ OTHER: _____

I COULD HELP WITH RELIGIOUS SERVICES: _____

17. PERSONAL CONTACTS:

I NEED: ___ DAILY TELEPHONE CALLS; ___ FRIENDLY VISITS; ___ CARDS AND LETTERS FROM CHURCH MEMBERS; ___ OTHER: _____

I COULD HELP WITH PERSONAL CONTACTS: _____

18. SOCIAL, EDUCATIONAL, AND RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS:

I'M INTERESTED IN: ___ TRAVEL; ___ GROUP GAMES; ___ EXERCISE CLASSES; ___ FELLOWSHIP CLASSES; ___ READING; ___ SUPPORT GROUPS; ___ AUDIO BOOKS; ___ VIDEOS; ___ MISSION TRIPS; ___ OTHER: _____

I COULD HELP WITH PROGRAMS: _____

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS: _____

Characteristics of Intentional Ministry By, With, and For Older Adults in the Local Church

- There is a shared vision for ministry
- The ministry focuses on the mission of the church
- Needs and capabilities of older adults are known and addressed
 - Training is provided for leaders and volunteers
- Persons willingly serve as *champions* for various ministry programs
- Contact information for leaders and members is available and records of programs are kept
 - The ministry has an annual budget
- Community resources are known and made available
 - The ministry reaches out to the community
 - Evaluation of ministry is regular and ongoing

Older Adult Ministry Vision Shaping

God's vision for older adult ministry at _____
Church is:

In order to achieve God's vision for intentional ministry by,
with, and for older adults these steps need to be taken:

Step 1 _____

Step 2 _____

Step 3 _____

Step 4 _____

Step 5 _____

Step 6 _____

Step 7 _____