



SENIOR ADULT MINISTRY IDEAS

Our churches are being challenged to provide specific activities for seniors. This has come about because there are more senior adults in our congregations than ever before. Given the fact that seniors are living longer and are more active, our senior adult ministries need to provide appealing programs that will interest those living in the 'mature' years of their lives. A viable senior adult ministry the local church will:

- Serve as a means of providing meaningful relationships with other seniors
- Serve as a affirmation of faith and encouragement to seniors
- Serve as an outreach to seniors who have not yet surrendered their lives to Christ
- Serve as an outlet for seniors to use their gifts and skills in the local church
- Serve as a means for seniors to keep 'mentally alert' and "physically involved"
- Serve as a means for seniors to participate in the spiritual worth of the local church

A senior adult coordinator or better yet, a senior adult committee can help organize and facilitate an exciting senior's ministry in the local church. As you plan, keep in mind that each senior adult is an individual. What may interest one person may not interest another. One ministry idea won't meet all needs, so be flexible and innovative as you plan your programs and activities. The following ideas can be implemented and revised as needed for the local senior ministry. The list is adapted from *The Graying of the Church* by Richard H. Gentzler, Jr. Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 2004

1. **Adult Day Services**

Develop a one-day or several-days a week Adult Day Care at your church for older adults who need specialized care for working caregivers.

2. **Advertise in Local Theatre & Senior Citizen Center**

Advertise your older adult ministry in the local theatre, Senior Citizen Center, local restaurants, and other places older adults congregate.

3. **Annual Older Adult Picnic**

Invite older adults from your church and community to participate in a summer picnic. Provide entertainment and games.

4. **Care giving**

Older adults can provide direct care for people having difficulty with activities of daily living: walking, dressing, getting to/from bed, going shopping, and preparing meals.

5. **Children of Aging Parents (COAP)**

Provide support, networking opportunities, and resource information for adult children of aging parents. Companion Services: Older adults escort other older adults for visits to the doctor, dentist, pharmacy, grocery store, etc., helping them along the way.

6. **Exercise and Fitness Classes**

Older adults participate in "low impact" aerobics class, "Body Recall," or some other form of exercise designed for older adults.

7. **Field Trips**

Senior adults take educational and informational, recreational, mission study, or work mission trips.

8. **Flowers for Homebound and Nursing Home Residents**

Following worship services, altar flowers are taken to homebound and nursing home residents.

9. **Foster Grandparents**

Older adults share their lives with children and youth who have few or no extended family members living in the community.

10. **Game Day**
Once a week or monthly, hold a game day for older adults (include games that involve mental stimulation).
11. **Helping Hands**
Older adults maintain a church food and clothing pantry.
12. **Home Maintenance and Minor Repair**
Older adults with skills help others by painting, changing light bulbs, mowing lawns, home chores, carpentry, etc.
13. **Homebound Sunday School Class**
Homebound class members participate in Sunday school by use of a speaker phone.
14. **Homebound Worship Participation**
Homebound members read scripture, offer Morning Prayer, or participate in other liturgy acts by telephone hooked up to church sound system.
15. **House Sharing**
Older adults share housing with college students in exchange for chore service, minor home repair, cooking, and laundry, etc.
16. **Intergenerational Retreat**
Invite older adults and youth to participate in a retreat together. Plan for games, meals, Bible study, and sharing.
17. **Kitchen Band**
Invite older adults to make musical instruments from household and other common materials. Play at nursing homes (and other long-term health care settings), retirement communities, church functions, etc.
18. **Latch Key Kid Ministry**
Older adults provide after school program, including tutoring and mentoring opportunities for children.
19. **Library: Resources on Aging Issues**
Place in your church library older adult reading material, including audio and large print books. Field trip to local library
20. **Life Review**
Older adults participate in life review and reminiscence classes.
21. **Living History**
Older adults share their life journey and faith story on tape (video and/or audio); in writing, and orally in worship and Sunday school class.
22. **Lunch Partners**
Invite older adults to eat a meal once a week with a homebound member in his/her home.
23. **Marriage Enrichment**
Older married couples lead and participate in marriage enrichment programs in an intergenerational format
24. **Meals**
Older adults provide meals for homebound, following hospitalization, participate in Meals-on-Wheels, group meal programs, etc.
25. **Mentoring**
Invite older adults to serve as mentors for children, youth, and other adults (e.g., youth during confirmation and for new church members).
26. **Multigenerational or Intergenerational Study Groups**
Invite children, youth, and adults to study and learn together. This might include Bible topics and/or current events.



- 27. 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.
- 28. Nursing Home Sunday School Class**
Invite older adults to participate in a Sunday School class in nursing homes and Assisted Living settings.
- 29. Older Adult Choir / Special Music**
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.
- 30. Senior 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.
- 31. Parish Nurse Ministry**
Provide a health care ministry for older adults.
- 32. 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.
- 33. Ritual for Older Adults moving from their Homes**
Older adults visit with 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.
- 34. S.E.N.I.O.R.S. Ministry**
Congregations involve older adults in spirituality, education, nutrition/fitness, intergenerational, outreach/mission, recreation, and service opportunities.
- 35. Senior Bulletin Board**
Place a large bulletin board in a strategic location where older adults congregate in the church. Post announcements about events, job opportunities, and photos of recent activities and events on the bulletin board.
- 36. Senior Devotional Booklet**
Invite older adults to compile a devotional book of scripture readings, meditations and prayers for congregational use.
- 37. Senior Yearbook**
Invite older adults to create an annual yearbook, include photos and pictures of activities throughout the year.
- 38. Shepherd's Center**
Senior adults participate in ecumenical ministry meeting needs: life maintenance, life enrichment, life reorganization, life transcendence.
- 39. Short Term Mission Service**
Older adults participate in short-term mission projects (e.g., Habitat for Humanity and VIM).
- 40. Social Networking with Seniors**
Start a blog, Face book page, or other social networking activity with older adults.
- 41. Stephen Ministry**
A specialized visitation program whereby older adults visit people who are ill, homebound, and institutionalized or have other needs.
- 42. Sunday Afternoon Worship for Homebound**
Monthly, quarterly, or twice a year, conduct a special Sunday afternoon worship service (include Holy Communion), for homebound members in the church sanctuary.

43. Telephone Reassurance

Older adults make daily telephone calls to others.

44. Visitation Ministry

Older adults visit other older adults who are homebound, lonely, hospitalized, institutionalized, and dying.

45. Weekday Bible Study

Invite older adults in your church and from your community to participate in a weekday Bible Study (include refreshments, singing and prayers).

46. Writing Letters and Sending Cards

Senior adults write personal letters and send birthday, anniversary, and special remembrance cards to others. They can also send cards or letters to those who have visited the church

47. Welcome of visitors

Seniors can hand out church bulletins as parishioners gather for the church service.

48. Single Seniors Bible Study

Single seniors who may never have married, or who are widowed, may feel more comfortable in a setting of other non-married persons.

49. Prayer Teams

Seniors can be used as prayer teams after a service, or as a part of a prayer chain ministry.

50. "Grandparents" to Single Parents

Seniors can 'adopt' children of single parents as a means of support and encouragement.



We will be adding ideas to this page. Share your ideas with us!