

# **FACILITATOR MANUAL**

FOR USE IN EQUIPPING LOCAL CONGREGATIONS  
FOR MINISTRY  
BY, WITH, AND FOR  
THEIR ADULTS BEYOND 50

DESIGNED BY THE *BEYOND 50* MINISTRIES TASK TEAM  
OF THE FLORIDA ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Welcome, Facilitators! As the mission statement of the Florida Conference *Beyond 50* Ministries Task Team states, we will “equip local churches to utilize the gifts and talents of adults beyond 50 as vital disciples of Jesus Christ.” ***This manual is intended to equip trained facilitators to mentor local congregations as they begin or grow their intentional ministries to those beyond 50.*** The *Beyond 50* Ministries Task Team web page on the Florida Conference website ([www.flumc.org](http://www.flumc.org)) will be used to post revisions. We invite and encourage your suggestions.

As we begin the task ahead of us with heightened awareness, we must recognize issues that will be of particular concern to a new generation entering the realm of “beyond 50.” More than ever as Baby Boomers become “of age”, clergy and trained laity must be prepared to counsel regarding such issues as depression, marital distress, caregivers’ stress, and grandparents raising grandchildren. They, along with lay people involved in ministries with those beyond 50, will need to create educational opportunities and programs based on the needs of their congregations. Laity and clergy will also need to actively promote involvement of this rich resource at all levels in the life of their congregations, promoting inclusion rather than segregation, and to combat ageism both there and in the community. In addition to meeting needs of adults beyond 50 within the church family, effective ministry will require knowing what resources are available to adults beyond 50 in the community. *Good communication is vital!* We pray for God’s guidance as we greet the future with joy and excitement!

Groups to be equipped:

1. Pastors – Staff – Leaders
2. Cluster group leaders
3. District Office staff
4. Healthy Church Academy
5. Local church groups in ministry to those beyond 50

For further information, please contact a member of the *Beyond 50* Ministries Task Team (see the *Beyond 50* Ministries web page at the Florida Conference website for contact information).

*A special thank you to Rev. Dr. Richard H. Gentzler, Jr., director of the Center on Aging & Older Adult Ministries ([rgentzler@gbod.org](mailto:rgentzler@gbod.org)), the General Board of Discipleship of The United Methodist Church ([www.aging-umc.org](http://www.aging-umc.org)) for his invaluable input and permission to use some of his teaching materials.*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## **Section I – Creating Awareness**

- Who are the “Beyond 50” adults?
- Statistics
- Diversity
- Health Issues
- Financial Concerns
- Education
- Retirement/Workforce
- Caregiving/Giver
- Single/Married
- Addressing This Demographic

## **Section II – Equipping**

- Faith Needs of Adults Beyond 50
- Inviting and Involving Adults Beyond 50
- Designing a Ministry with Adults Beyond 50
- Ministry Models
- Resources
- Government/Community Resources
- Boomer Fact Sheet (PDF file)
- Worksheets (PDF file)

## **CREATING AWARENESS**

### **Who are the "Beyond 50" Adults?**

There is no single "beyond 50" population in our churches. In fact there are at least three distinct groups within this population.

The GI Generation (those born between 1905 and 1925):

- Attitudes and values shaped mainly by the Depression and World War II
- A major force that exerted leadership in every aspect of our country
- Now redefining what it means to be "old"
- 79% believe in God, without a doubt
- 47% attend weekly religious services

The Silent Generation (those born between 1926 and 1945):

- A smaller population as a result of the Depression years
- Swings with the attitudes of generations on either side
- 62% believe in God, without any doubt
- 38% attend weekly religious services

The Baby Boomer Generation (those born between 1946 and 1964):

- A massive population that has had enormous influence on the American economy and culture
- The most educated generation in the history of our country
- Most likely to "volunteer" according to research
- 62% believe in God, without any doubt
- 30% attend weekly religious services

The differences that exist between these groups have clear implications for the local church that seeks to reach out to this population. Let's keep in mind that:

GI and Silent Generations are more likely to be "brand loyal" to the institutional church and its denominations.

Boomers are more likely to pick and choose what they believe in and the causes they will support. To attend any church, they must be committed to the goals and causes of that church.

## **Statistics**

By 2030, adults 65+ will outnumber children and youth.

From 2010 to 2030, the U.S. older adult population will grow by about 40% to 70 million.

By 2030, 1 in 5 Americans will be 65 years of age or older.

Society and churches must confront the reality of older adults and their impact on public and religious life.

The mentality concerning older adults has to change – including those who are 65 and older – and change begins with ***awareness!***

## **Diversity of Adults Beyond 50**

As life expectancy grows, so does the diversity of life experiences.

The older adult of 2008 is less like other seniors than ever before.

The components of diversity arise from many aspects of life, most of which are beyond the control of the individual. Particularly as the Boomer generation reaches 65+, increasing numbers of Blacks, Hispanics and Asian Americans will increase the diversity among the older adult population.

Diversity exists in health issues (physical, mental and emotional); financial/security issues; housing; fitness; education; retirement/employment issues; care-giving; and marital status.

## **Health Issues of Adults Beyond 50**

Old age is not a death sentence any more for, with healthy lifestyles and good genes, older adults can be active in work and play, mentally and physically.

Nearly 74% of older adults assess their health as excellent, very good, or good.

Geriatric medicine must be placed on the front burner of health care –

70% of the population being seniors is no longer a statistic the medical profession can ignore.

The church must face this diversity as well – programs must be created to meet the needs of the healthy as well as the unhealthy elderly.

Older adults who remain active must be tapped into service with those who are not able to be active – e.g., a phone call to the homebound.

A fitness program that does not address emotional and mental problems such as dementia and Alzheimer's disease is not complete.

Counseling of seniors will become more and more necessary for the church of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## **Financial Security and Adults Beyond 50**

Declining income or fixed income brings great stress to the elderly, causing concerns for living arrangements, home upkeep, etc.

Costs are soaring for medical expenses especially when the need arises for assisted living or nursing home care.

Government aid is limited and replete with loopholes.

Church ministries should be expanded to address these issues advocate ministry-in-place to assist with needs, e.g. light home repairs, and yard upkeep.

## **Education Diversity Among Adults Beyond 50**

Educational differences cause a gap between the generations. 30% of people over 65 did not graduate from high school.

With more years of retirement, educational opportunities should be addressed – e.g., audit courses or church studies made available on a variety of subjects.

The mind that is active and interested promotes good physical and mental health.

## **Retirement/Workforce**

More and more older adults are returning to work, though not all nor the majority will be working full time.

It is important for church leaders, however, to be aware that many older adults will be in the workforce (for a variety of reasons) and to keep this in mind as they plan for ministries.

## **Caregiving/Caregivers**

Older adults may face the need to be cared for or to care for a spouse or grandchildren, being called upon to assist in rearing another generation.

Older adults may become quite burdened by these tasks. The church, with its broad programs for all ages, should be uniquely effective to assist—providing elderly day care and/or after-school programs, for example.

## **Single/Married Adults Beyond 50**

Elderly widows/widowers, divorced, and single adults face financial and emotional demands. Suicide rates are higher among those over 65.

Distress may be present in older adults' marriage that is not visible outside of the home; this, too, can be fatal.

Those experiencing these severe concerns often have fewer avenues for assistance from both church and society.

Marriage counseling must be addressed with the elderly as much as with the younger adults.

## **Addressing This Demographic**

This will be tasking financially – Advance planning will pave the way for less costly programs (e.g. affordable housing and appropriate health care).

The survival of the church is dependent on each church developing programs that will grow with the increasing older population, tapping their time and talents.

A decline is predicted in the standard of living by the Gen-X retirees. The church must assist to identify and recognize generational differences.

Equally, older adult members are dependent on their church to be there for them in "sickness and health until death does them part."

This relationship, like any sanctified marriage, demands total commitment: prayers, presence, gifts, and service. May churches and older adult members prayerfully move forward in service and discipleship – TOGETHER!

References:

The Graying of the Church by Richard H. Gentzler, Jr.  
(Discipleship Resources, 2004).

Designing An Older Adult Ministry by Richard H. Gentzler, Jr.  
(Discipleship Resources, 1999).

## **FAITH NEEDS OF ADULTS BEYOND 50**

- Know that God loves older persons
- Experience a church that cares about adults beyond 50 as individuals and as a group
- Remain a vital part of the church by making significant contributions (beyond financial) to its ministry which includes programs by, with, and for these members
- Find new ways of serving others, even when health and physical strength decline
- Serve as mentors and role-models for the benefit of succeeding generations
- Have available support systems for coping with losses and transitions.

*Designing an Older Adult Ministry* by Richard H. Gentzler, Jr.  
(Discipleship Resources, 2000)

## **INVITING AND INVOLVING ADULTS BEYOND 50**

- Develop a shared vision for ministry
- Accept adults beyond 50 for who they are, honoring the unique insights they can bring to the Church
- Involve adults beyond 50 in the decision-making process
- Know the needs and talents of adults beyond 50
- Support their spiritual gifts
- Personally invite adults beyond 50 to become active in ministry; offer specifics!
- Accommodate personal needs and problems, facilitate and encourage spiritual growth
- Say “Thank you!” for their contributions, whatever form they may take

## **DESIGNING A MINISTRY WITH ADULTS BEYOND 50**

1. Organize a council of those beyond 50
2. Gather information about adults beyond 50 in your congregation
3. Review existing church programs that already involve adults beyond 50
4. Survey community social service agencies
5. Develop a shared vision
6. Develop a program of ministry for your congregation
7. Identify resources and key persons
8. Where appropriate, involve other congregations and social service agencies
9. Implement your program
10. Evaluate

*Designing an Older Adult Ministry* by Richard H. Gentzler, Jr.  
(Discipleship Resources, 2000)

## **S.E.N.I.O.R.S. Ministry (*brochure available*)**

- **S** pirituality
- **E** nrichment
- **N** utrition/Fitness/Wellness
- **I** ntergenerational
- **O** utreach/Evangelism
- **R** ecreational
- **S** ervice

*The Graying of the Church* by Richard H. Gentzler, Jr.  
(Discipleship Resources, 2004)

*Baby Boomers may not identify with the term "seniors;" however, when they lose their parents, they become the senior generation.*

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF A SUCCESSFUL S.E.N.I.O.R.S. MINISTRY**

- A shared vision for older adult ministry is developed
- The ministry is part of a specific organization or structure in the church as are the children's ministry, youth ministry, etc.
- Needs and talents of adults beyond 50 are assessed
- Records are kept
- Leadership is available
- Training is provided
- The ministry has a budget (this is very important since the amount allocated to each church ministry reflects how it is perceived and valued)
- The ministry reaches out to the community and community resources are known and used
- Evaluation is regular and on-going

*We need to keep in mind that assimilating Baby Boomers into existing ministries is navigating in uncharted waters. Boomers will not automatically move or fit into what is currently in place.*

## MINISTRY MODELS

- ❖ Adult day services
- ❖ Annual OA picnic
- ❖ Caregiving
- ❖ Companion services
- ❖ Exercise and nutrition
- ❖ Field trips
- ❖ Flowers for homebound
- ❖ Foster grandparents
- ❖ Game day
- ❖ Helping hands
- ❖ Home maintenance
- ❖ Homebound Sunday School class
- ❖ Homebound worship
- ❖ House sharing
- ❖ Intergenerational retreat
- ❖ Kitchen band
- ❖ Latch key kid ministry
- ❖ Life review class
- ❖ Living history recorded
- ❖ Lunch partners
- ❖ Marriage enrichment
- ❖ Meals
- ❖ Mentoring and tutoring
- ❖ Multigenerational study
- ❖ Nursing home vacation Bible school
- ❖ Older adult choir
- ❖ Older adult newsletter
- ❖ Parish nurse
- ❖ Primetimers (*brochure available*)
- ❖ Older adult recognition dinner
- ❖ Older adult recognition service
- ❖ Respite care
- ❖ Ritual for adults beyond 50 who are moving
- ❖ S.E.N.I.O.R.S. ministry (*brochure available*)
- ❖ Senior bulletin board
- ❖ Senior devotional booklet
- ❖ Senior theater
- ❖ Senior yearbook
- ❖ Shepherd's Center
- ❖ Short-term mission trip
- ❖ Stephen Ministry
- ❖ Sunday afternoon worship
- ❖ Telephone reassurance
- ❖ Visitation ministry
- ❖ Weekday Bible study
- ❖ Writing letters and sending cards

## RESOURCES

*Updates to this list will be maintained and updated online on the Beyond 50 Ministries web page at the Florida Annual Conference web site ([www.flumc.org](http://www.flumc.org)).*

7 Practices of Effective Ministry – Andy Stanley, Reggie Joiner & Lane Jones

10 Gospel Promises for Later Life – Jane Marie Thibault

A Deepening Love Affair – Jane Marie Thibault

A Gospel for the Mature Years (Finding Fulfillment by Knowing and Using Your Gifts) – Harold Koenig, M.D., Tracy Lamar, MDiv, and Betty Lamar, BFA

Aging Well – George Vaillant, M.D.

Aging: God’s Challenge to Church and Synagogue – Richard H. Gentzler, Jr., and Donald Clingan

Art of Possibility, The – Rosamund and Benjamin Zander

Building a Ministry with Homebound and Nursing Home Residents – Marie White Webb

Center Sage newsletter, a biannual publication of the Center on Aging & Older Adult Ministries (<http://www.gbod.org/coa/newsletters.asp>)

Designing an Older Adult Ministry – Richard H. Gentzler, Jr.

Finishing Well – Bob Buford

Full of Years (Aging and the Elderly in the Bible and Today) – Stephen Sapp

Forty-Sixty: a Study for Midlife Adults Who Want to Make a Difference – Richard H. Gentzler, Jr., and Craig Miller

Graying of the Church, The: A Leader’s Guide for Older Adult Ministry in the UMC – Richard H. Gentzler, Jr.

Grey Hair and I Don’t Care – Carlita Hunter

Grow Old Along with Me the Best is Yet to Be – Edited by Sandra Haldeman Martz

Half Time – Bob Buford

How to be Ageless (Growing Better, Not Just Older) – Suzy Allegra

I Never Found that Rocking Chair (God's Call at Retirement) – Richard L. Morgan

Light on a Gray Area – Stephen Sapp

Mature Mind, The – Gene D. Cohen, M.D., Ph.D.

Reflections on Aging and Spiritual Growth – Weaver, Koenig, and Roe

Remembering Your Story – Richard L. Morgan

Rock of Ages: a Worship and Songbook for Retirement Living

Virtues of Aging, The – Jimmy Carter

Senior Adult Ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – David P. Gallagher

When Alzheimer's Disease Strikes! – Stephen Sapp

Wine at the End of the Feast (Embracing Spiritual Change as You Age) – Kristen Johnson Ingram

## **GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES**

### **Federal**

Administration on Aging – 800 677-1116

<http://www.aoa.gov/>

Department of Health and Human Services Eldercare Locator

<http://www.eldercare.gov/Eldercare/Public/Home.asp>

Medicare – general information 800 633-4222

<http://www.medicare.gov/>

### **State**

Florida Department of Elder Affairs – 850 414-2000 / FAX 850 414-2004

E-mail: [information@elderaffairs.org](mailto:information@elderaffairs.org); website <http://elderaffairs.state.fl.us/>

Elder Helpline Information and Referral – 800 963-5337

Abuse Hotline 800-962-2873

S.H.I.N.E. (Serving Health Insurance Needs of Elders)

1-800-963-5337 or <http://www.floridashine.org/>

### **Suggested Community Resources**

- RSVP
- Meals on Wheels
- AARP
- Parish Nurse: contact the Conference office for one in your area
- Hospice programs