

CLD1-8-4H



## Facilitator's Guide

# Understanding Generational Differences

*Each generation goes further than the generation preceding it because it stands on the shoulders of that generation. You will have opportunities beyond anything we've ever known. — Ronald Reagan*

### Rationale:

Each generation is significantly different from those who preceded and followed it because each generation was shaped and molded by markedly different societal influences during its developmental years. These differences in perspective are usually attributed to generational differences. In many cases, these generational differences can lead to misunderstandings, breakdowns in communication and conflict at home, work or in community activities.

### Program Goal:

To understand the characteristics and values of each generation, in order to develop strong, intergenerational relationships.

### Program Objectives:

- Compare the characteristics and values of six different generations.
- Analyze how events and changes in invention and technology impact lifestyles in society and influence generational perspectives.
- Examine how generational values are reflected in family, work and social behaviors.

### Pre-program Preparation:

- Read "Understanding Generational Differences" factsheet
- PowerPoint Slides – Norman Rockwell's "Freedom from Want" & C. F. Payne's "Thanksgiving," projector, laptop computer
- Collect pictures of different generations at work, play and at home for the activity in Objective 3.

### Introduction:

Each generation is significantly different from those who preceded and followed it because each generation was shaped and molded by markedly different societal influences during its developmental years. By gaining a better understanding of the factors, influences and values that have shaped each generation, we increase our ability to build strong family, work and community relationships.

### Introductory Activity:

- Instruct participants to line up in birth order from the first born (oldest) to the last born (youngest).
- Have participants introduce themselves giving their birth date (month, date and year).
- Ask participants to divide into groups using the following generational categories:
  - » 1901-1929: Civic Generation
  - » 1929-1946: Mediating or Silent Generation
  - » 1946-1964: Baby Boomer
  - » 1965-1981: Generation X
  - » 1981-2001: Millennials
  - » 2001 - ?: Generation Z

Ask each generational group to discuss the following questions:

- How many children were raised in your family?
- How did your family spend Sunday afternoons?
- Did you work for salary or wages during your school age years?

---

This leadership curriculum was developed by 4-H Youth Development agents with University of Kentucky specialists. Examples in the guide are geared toward an 4-H audience. This guide may be reproduced or modified for educational or training purposes and used with other audiences.

---

- What did you do on Saturday night for fun?
- What were the most popular TV shows when you were in grade school and high school?

Have people go back to their seats and sit in generational groups.

---

### Objective 1: To compare the characteristics and values of six different generations.

---

Show Norman Rockwell’s “Freedom from Want” and C.F. Payne’s “Thanksgiving” painting. Ask the group the following question: What similarities and differences in the generational values and characteristics do you see in the two scenes?

Share descriptions and values from each generation. (Use info from fact sheet: first two paragraphs under each paragraph.)

#### Learning Activity 1:

Ask a representative of each generational group to come forward and answer each question.

- How many children were raised in your family?
- How did your family spend Sunday afternoons?
- Did you work for salary or wages during your school age years? If so, how much did you earn per hour?
- What did you do on Saturday night for fun?
- What were the most popular TV shows when you were in grade school and high school?
- In what extra-curricular activities did you participate during your school years?

Discuss with the group how their experiences are reflective of their generational values.

---

### Objective 2: To analyze how changes and events in society influence generational perspectives.

---

Each generation has been effected by changes or events in society. Share from the handout the statistics and national events that occurred during each generational time frame.

#### Learning Activity 2:

While staying in generational groups, ask participants to discuss the following questions:

- During your formative years (through high school) what were some of the significant local, state, national, or world events that you remember in the news?

- How did those events influence the development of your life values?
- How were the significant local, state, national or world events that occurred during your formative years different from those that have occurred during the past 10 years?
- How have these events influenced the development of the lives of today’s youth?

---

### Objective 3: To examine how generational values are reflected in family, work and social behaviors.

---

There is great potential in the workplace and in the community for conflict-based inaccurate perceptions of generational differences. In most cases, our underlying values may be the same, but how we exhibit those values can be reflected in different behaviors.

Show a series of pictures or photographs that represent each generation. Discuss the content from the handout of values, characteristics in the workplace, and characteristics as a volunteer.

#### Learning Activity 3:

- Develop a 4-H volunteer campaign designed to recruit multiple generations using the information regarding generational differences.
- What methods of communication would be most successful for each generation when inviting members to a special event or activity?
- What message should be emphasized for each generation, in order to create interest in your organization?

### Summary:

Working with people of different generations can be rewarding and productive. An “A-B-C” approach can be used to develop respect among multiple generations.

- **A= Accommodate differences.** Remember that a diversity of perspectives enriches an organization. Understand and appreciate generational differences.
- **B= Be flexible.** Be willing to step out of your box. Focus on the end result rather than the process or other people.
- **C= Create an atmosphere of trust.** Do not try to micromanage other people. Involve others in planning and decision making. Provide clear and specific goals as well as the resources needed, and then step out of the way.

Understanding generational differences and developing respect between the generations is an important step in decreasing conflicts, misunderstandings and communication breakdowns at home, work, and in the community.

## Reference:

Oppapers (2010). Retrieved from <http://www.oppapers.com/essays/World-war-Ii/16958>.

---

Adapted by Ken Culp, III, Principal Specialist for Volunteerism, Department of 4-H Youth Development, from original materials developed by: Rosie Allen, Family & Consumer Sciences Agent, Gallatin County; Janet H. Johnson, Family & Consumer Sciences Agent, Allen County; Laura F. Stephenson, Family & Consumer Sciences Program Leader, UK Cooperative Extension; Ken Culp, III, Principal Specialist for Volunteerism, Department of 4-H Youth Development

---



# My First 4-H Club Meeting

1. What year did you attend your first 4-H meeting? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Who invited you to attend your first 4-H meeting? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Where was your first meeting held? \_\_\_\_\_

4. What do you remember most about your first 4-H meeting? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

5. What activities were conducted at your first 4-H meeting? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

6. What business was discussed at your first 4-H meeting? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

7. Were refreshments served? \_\_\_\_\_ And if so, what was served? \_\_\_\_\_

---

8. Who took you to your first 4-H meeting? \_\_\_\_\_

Did that person stay at the meeting with you? \_\_\_\_\_

9. Were you excited to attend the meeting? \_\_\_\_\_

Were you nervous about attending? \_\_\_\_\_

What do you remember most? \_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---