

## **Becoming Wise, Imparting Wisdom and Connecting the Generations**

The *Greatest Generation* is unfortunately also the *Silent Generation*, the *Hurting Generation* and **the Bored, Lonely and Helpless Generation**.

Are you hearing God's call to set up a nursing home or assisted living ministry?

**Make a commitment to go regularly.** Once a month at the least, more if you can, make it a goal to go every other week or even every week.

What nursing home or assisted living or adult day program is in your community?

To find out go to [www.healthfacilities.info](http://www.healthfacilities.info), look up Nursing Homes or Assisted Living Residences or Adult Day Programs, select your County or City. Sometimes there are homes or programs you may not even know about around the corner.

Call or go to the home and ask who to talk to, probably the activity director maybe a volunteer coordinator, they will know and refer you.

Express your desire to start a ministry to build relationship, get to know residents, and do so regularly. Propose and ask for days and times that would work best for all.

**Focus on building relationships.** Don't panic about what "to do" so much. Express to residents you just want to get to know them and there will not be much of a "program" but more visiting, sharing of one another's lives and developing friendships.

**Think connection.** Some activities, however, can be a catalyst to connect people:

Sing songs. Little ones can do finger play songs, residents love to watch and sometimes join in. Solicit requests; ask everyone for ideas - kids, residents, parents alike. Hymns are usually well known by older people and they will sing them by heart, bring a hymn book so you have the words.

An additional benefit: bring an echo/play microphone/karaoke machine, use as leverage kids only get to hold the microphone if they lead a song, sing a solo or recite something. This has been very successful in building their comfort level with being in front of others.

Ask your group what your skills, interests, and ideas are for connection activities. Toss balloons or beanbags, blow bubbles outside, have kids serve residents a snack (made by nursing home), simple crafts, certain songs or activities that purposefully engage kids with residents, etc.

**Challenge yourselves to just be together**, converse, chat, get to know each other, ask open ended questions.

Pose to the entire group: "I was wondering what question could we all answer that would help us get to know each other better." Come with some ideas for conversation starters in your "back pocket" usually someone in the group will come up with something. Favorites work well.

**Make it a secret mission to also go to touch.** Yep. Think about it. When you are old, who touches you and who do you touch? You don't have babies to hold, children to sit on your lap nor in many cases your spouse's hand to hold. We all know how important touch is so concentrate also on touching. Purposefully shake hands when you first arrive and share names and a greeting. Before you leave, purposefully leave 10 minutes or so for saying goodbye with lots of hugging. You will notice the impact on your new friends. They will thank you, they will sit taller, they will smile and they will tell you things like, "I love it when you come." It is precious.

**And go to "get wisdom!"** In China, students go to the Home for Respecting the Elderly to learn how to become wise! We have too much wisdom being warehoused in long term care settings and not utilized, go to ask questions, share your lives and get some wisdom from the greatest generation.

"Teach us to number our days aright that we may gain a heart of wisdom." Psalm 90:12

"He who gets wisdom loves his own soul; he who cherishes understanding prospers." Prov. 19:8

**"Get wisdom, get understanding; do not forget my words or swerve from them."** Prov. 4:5

**The culture change movement** in nursing homes is really the same movement as home educating: individualized care and self-directed living. Please know about it, please demand normal life for anyone living in one where life is on their terms, according to their preferences, their daily routine and their choices; where life is meaningful, where people are engaged; and where institution is traded in for home, being a number for relationship. For more information go to: [pioneernetwork.net](http://pioneernetwork.net), [coculturechange.org](http://coculturechange.org), [edenalt.com](http://edenalt.com), and [culturechangenow.com](http://culturechangenow.com).

**Rise in the presence of the elderly, show respect for the elderly and revere your God.**

**I am the LORD."**

Leviticus 12:32

**"Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this:**

**to look after orphans and widows in their distress**

**and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world."**

James 1:27

If I can be helpful, contact me, Carmen Bowman 303-833-1492 or [carmen@edu-catering.com](mailto:carmen@edu-catering.com).

For more information, Kevin Swanson showed interest in this topic and interviewed me Nov. 27, 2009 on the *Generations with Vision* radio show, archived at [generationswithvision.com](http://generationswithvision.com).