



St. Martin's Episcopal Church, Providence, Rhode Island.  
Photo courtesy David Brookhart.

# PROJECT RESOURCE

TRAINING SPONSORS



# Generational Characteristics

## Notes:

### **Donor Motivations = Pastoral Needs**

**Meaning Making**

**Rage/Catharsis**

**Agency/Social Injustice**

### **Donor Characteristics**

**How do you know what your folks need?**

Ask

Listen

Respond

# Generational Characteristics



## Some Quick Definitions:

“Generalizations make sense when talking about thousands of people, but not when talking about one person — the person you know. Applying a valid statistical generational characteristic to one person is stereotyping.”

— Haydn Shaw

## Notes:

## Generational Cohorts

**Silent Generation: 1928-1945**

**Baby Boomer: 1946-1964**

**Generation X: 1965-1980**

**Millennial: 1981-1996**

**Generation Z: 1997-2012**

# Generational Characteristics

## Notes:

### The Silent Generation

**Born between 1928-1945**

#### Defining Cultural Moments

- WWII: The move from rural to urban, the rise of the single authority/expert by radio, Japanese encampments
- GI Bill: Inequity of wealth/opportunity distribution
- Greatest Depression: collective suffering, redlining

#### Defining Characteristics

- Value uniformity, loyalty, "if everyone did their part."

**MESSAGE:** Legacy, faithful stewardship of resources

**STRATEGY:** Authority figure/Voice of the expert

### The Baby Boomer Generation

**Born between 1946-1964**

#### Defining Cultural Moments

- Vietnam War/WaterGate
- Civil Rights Movement
- Shift from Church as center of community
- Start of philanthropic redlining
- Shift from single authority to multiple authority

#### Defining Characteristics

- Care of self is more important than uniformity
- Need information on impact/how gift will be used.
- Need for transparency in light of mistrust of institutions

# Generational Characteristics



**MESSAGE:** 1.) Use of gift impactfully/wisely and 2.) Prioritization of Giving

**STRATEGY:** “Trust indicator”, like charity navigator rating or endorsement, when possible, transparent money narrative budgets, drop any language of obligation, regular check in’s to share impact of gift.

## Notes:

## Generation X

### Born between 1965-1980

#### Defining Cultural Moments

- End of Cold War
- Latchkey Kids
- First Generation to not do as well financially as their parents
- The tech Revolution
- War on Drugs
- Rise of the personal computer
- Will move 5 + times over the course of their career

#### Defining Characteristics

- Experience tied to giving
- Wish to “experience” church, though may not attend regularly
- Experience is tied to relationship, giving is supported when leaders are seen rather than institutions

**MESSAGE:** We are a people/community who care about each other. Put individuals in front of ministries/institutions.

**STRATEGY:** Year-round thinking on giving. Don’t just focus on the fall. Focus on peer-to-peer experience.

# Generational Characteristics

## Notes:

### The Millennial Generation

#### Born between 1980-1996

##### Defining Cultural Moments

- 9/11
- Stock market crash of 2008
- War in Afghanistan and Iraq
- Obama Election
- Murders of Michael Brown, George Floyd, and so many other people of color by those in positions of authority
- First Generation of “scheduled” children

##### Defining Characteristics

- Pew points to similar characteristics as silent generation
- Mentor relationships important with giving
- Authority/experts shift the level of trust
- Want to feel their gifts matter rather than used wisely or encounter a bad experience

**MESSAGE:** Your giving matters and will make an impact. Now, how do we get to know you?

##### STRATEGY:

- Immediate gratification of giving.
- Online community presence.
- Online stories of impact.
- Use them for focus groups, ask their opinions.
- Put them in charge of using technologies for appeals. No long appeal letters.
- Utilize their networks. Have them plan events that interest them.

# Generational Characteristics



## Generation Z

### Born between 1997-2012

#### Defining Cultural Moments

- Trump's Election
- Covid 19 Pandemic
- Virtual schooling
- Smart Phone/Mobile First/Text First
- Social Networking
- Climate Change

#### Defining Characteristics

- Blackbaud and QGiv report increased giving in summer and holiday seasons. When not in school, they want to be involved and engaged.
- This group of donors is the most willing to get involved in advocating for their favorite nonprofits; 84% of Generation Z donors say they're willing to raise money for their favorite causes
- While their assets are smaller, this generation indicates that philanthropy and service is of significant importance to them.

**MESSAGE:** We know there is so much out there that is difficult. But, we believe, with your help that we can change the world together.

**STRATEGY:** A independent led fundraiser in honor of their birthday or milestone online

## Notes:

## Targeted Formation

- Lose the 100% mentality.
- Pay attention to language
- Determine how to match donor need with opportunity.

# Generational Characteristics

## Notes:

### **What is the Why? Strategy Changes, the Why Remains.**

“What finally brought me back, after years of running away, wasn’t lattes or skinny jeans; it was the sacraments. Baptism, confession, Communion, preaching the Word, anointing the sick — you know, those strange rituals and traditions Christians have been practicing for the past 2,000 years. The sacraments are what make the church relevant, no matter the culture or era. They don’t need to be repackaged or rebranded; they just need to be practiced, offered and explained in the context of a loving, authentic and inclusive community. “

— Rachel Held Evans



# Generational Characteristics



## Cross-Generational Giving

**Are there strategies that work...with a different audience?**

- Videos
- Mission Moments
- Emails
- Letters

**Representation rather than perfection matters.**

**Notes:**

## Generational Giving: Your Letter for All

- Who are in your pews?
- Based on your data, what messages need to be heard?
- What would a letter look like from your parish?



## Describe Your Generational Characteristics

What are the generational characteristics of your church?

- Who are in your pews?
- Based on your data, what messages need to be heard?
- What would a letter look like from your parish?