

Generation

Celebration



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This edition was prepared by Jan Scholl and Matthew Kaplan, associate professors of agricultural and extension education, and Lydia Hanhardt, program associate. The first edition was prepared by Michelle Rodgers, Jan Scholl, and Barbara Davis in 1995.

This second edition of *Generation Celebration* covers the same themes and goals as the original curriculum, but the format has been updated based largely on the comments of Pennsylvania 4-H and family and consumer science extension agents. Changes have been made to the structure and labeling of some sessions.

Generation Celebration features six sessions. The table of contents outlines the types of activities included in the project and where they can be found. Activities may be completed by an individual or in a group setting. “Fun with My Friend” activities involve both a young person and an adult who is several generations older. All activities should include supervision by a parent or leader, at least to start.

Each session in this project begins with an introduction. Activities, checklists, and questions are provided in order to stimulate learning and two-way conversation between the youth and the older adult participant. Alternate activities are optional or may be substituted for the main activities if they work better in your situation. Resources, references, and further reading sections are included in the leader’s guide.

While primarily designed for teens, the project manual may be modified for use by younger participants.

Some activities were adapted from *Insights on Aging* by Mary Kalymum, 1979. Permission was granted by the American Association of Family and Consumer Sciences to use the information included in this publication.

The activity “What Does ‘Old’ Mean?” was adapted from a pamphlet by the same name developed by the Center for the Study of Aging and Human Development, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

Storytelling practices were taken from *Celebrate Your Family Through Stories* by Pat Leach, Penn State Cooperative Extension, 1984.

“Jumping to Conclusions” was adapted from “Growing Up and Growing Older: Confronting Ageism,” an activity developed by Fran Pratt, director of the Center for Understanding Aging in Framingham, Massachusetts.

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Introduction

Generation Celebration is a 4-H project designed to help young people and older adults enjoy and learn from each other.

There are many reasons to spend time with older people. They have experiences to share and can teach us how to enjoy life and deal with difficult times. Older adults may have more time to listen and to share their talents, too.

This project has six sessions. Each session includes several activities to do by yourself, with a group of young people, or a group of youths and senior adults together. One-to-one “Fun with My

Friend” activities are for you and your special friend, though other adults may be involved.

In this project, you will:

1. Discover your attitudes toward aging.
2. Learn how the media affect your attitudes.
3. Spend time with an older person.
4. Experience how aging affects the senses.
5. Become sensitive to the needs of others.
6. Widen your circle of friends.

To complete Generation Celebration, carry out the activities in this guide and enjoy planning group meetings with your leader.



1

Session 1: Our Attitudes Toward Aging

Introduction

One out of every eight Americans is over 65 years old. Research shows that older adults are one of the fastest-growing groups in our country. It is important that we examine our attitudes toward older people. Why? Because the more open-minded you are about older people, the more fun you will have being with them. You will also learn that there are all kinds of older people, just like there are all kinds of young people!



Activity 1: How Do We View Older Adults?

Read the following statements and check the boxes that best describe the way you feel about aging and older people. Don't worry, there are no right or wrong answers to this activity.

Statements	Agree	Strongly Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. I'd like to know more older people.					
2. I usually try to help older people who ask for help.					
3. Being with older people can teach you a lot.					
4. Older people should pretty much stay with others their own age.					
5. Older people sometimes have interesting things to tell me.					
6. The older people I know don't have a sense of humor.					
7. Older people move too slowly.					
8. Older people are not all the same—they are individuals.					
9. Older people are too frail to handle small children.					
10. Older people don't understand young people like me.					
11. You really don't start aging until you are 40 years old.					
12. Young people don't care about the real needs of older people.					
13. Old people always worry about other people's business.					
14. Old people always talk about their aches and pains.					
15. I wish there were more television programs about aging.					
16. I hardly know any older people enough to judge them.					
17. Older people have more wisdom than younger people.					

If you want to give more information about an answer, add a "personal touch."

I answered ____ for question ____ because _____

I answered ____ for question ____ because _____

I answered ____ for question ____ because _____

I answered ____ for question ____ because _____

Activity 2: What Does “Old” Mean?

We have attitudes about everything—from the food we eat to the clothes we wear. Each of us has a different idea of what it means to be “old.” But what does “old” mean? Answer the following questions by circling “T” for true and “F” for false.

1. Most older people (over 65 years old) have a bad memory.

T F

2. Most older people feel miserable all the time.

T F

3. Physical strength always weakens in old age.

T F

4. At least one-half of the aged live in nursing homes.

T F

5. Most old people are set in their ways and cannot change.

T F

6. The reaction time of a younger person is faster than that of an older person.

T F

7. In general, most old people are pretty much alike.

T F

8. The majority of old people are seldom irritated or angry.

T F

Answers

1. False

Research shows little or no decline in short-term memory with age. Fewer than 10 percent of senior adults have trouble with long-term memory.

2. False

A national survey found that fewer than one-fourth of the old people surveyed reported, “This is the dreariest time of my life.” Most said, “I am just as happy as when I was younger.”

3. True

Muscular strength declines from 15 to 46 percent between young adulthood and old age.

4. False

In 1997, only 4 percent of those over 65 years old were living in nursing homes.

5. False

Despite evidence that older people become more stable in their attitudes, they adapt to such big changes as retirement, children leaving home, the death of a husband or wife, leaving their own homes, and serious illness. Political and social attitudes tend to change with those of the rest of society, but more slowly.

6. True

Older adults have a slower reaction time when doing some types of activities.

7. False

Just like all kids are not the same, there are many differences among older people. There are rich and poor, healthy and sick, happy and sad, and those of high and low intelligence.

8. True

In one study, over one-half of older adults said they are never or hardly ever irritated.

Were you surprised at these answers? Actually, Americans are living longer and maintaining their health better than ever before. Life expectancy depends on health, genetics, and surroundings. Through healthy diet, exercise, and active lifestyles, we can preserve and even enhance our health and sense of well-being as we age.

Activity 3: Jumping to Conclusions

We tend to stereotype people when we jump to conclusions because of some characteristic about them—for example, their size, whether they have glasses, their hair color, or even their age. We often draw these conclusions even before we get to know them!

Each of the following statements expresses a stereotype about a group of people only defined as “they.” Decide whether you think a younger person is talking about an older person or an older person is talking about young people, and why.

Which statements represent common stereotypes of young people? Of older people? Of both?

1. They always stick together and keep their distance from other age groups.
2. I hate the way they drive. They are all over the road.
3. They always take and never give. They think they own the world.
4. They have so many opinions. They think they know it all.
5. They are never satisfied, and they’re always complaining about something.
6. Don’t hire them, you can’t depend on them.
7. Don’t they have anything better to do than hang around the parks and shopping malls?
8. Why are they always so forgetful?
9. I wish I had as much freedom as they have.
10. Why don’t they act their age?

What did you learn in this activity?

Fun with My Friend: “Getting to Know You” Card Game

Sometimes people have different perspectives that cause them to think, act, and relate differently than other people. Some are based on past experiences. Get to know more about your older adult friends and help them learn more about you! Introduce yourself. Share something you are doing in school, a hobby, photos, or a small gift that you think they might enjoy. Let them ask you questions and share their interests, too.

To get the conversation going, use the “Getting to Know You” cards found on the next page. Take turns picking up cards and asking questions of each other. If someone doesn’t want to answer a question, that’s fine—just go on to the next question or next card.

This game can also be played with each person answering the same questions they ask. This will help your older friend get to know you and feel more comfortable talking to you.

After your visit, ask yourself how life has been the same for both you and your older friend. How has your life been different?



About School

- What subjects do/did you like the most?
- What were some of the school rules?
- Did you have homework?
- What was your school day like?

About Family

- How many are in your family?
- Where were you in the family (oldest, youngest)?
- Did you stay in one place, or move around?
- What did you like most about your family?

About Growing Up

- What was it like when you were younger?
- Did you have any problems?
- How did you solve them?
- What is your favorite childhood memory?

Recreation

- What did people do for fun when you were growing up?
- What did you do as a family?
- Did you have hobbies?
- Did you collect anything?

Clothes

- What is your favorite color?
- Have you ever worn a hat?
- What do/did people wear to school? To church?
- What is in fashion?
- May I see a picture of you when you were growing up?

If You Had a Million Dollars:

- How would you spend it?
- How would your life change?

Food

- What is your favorite food?
- Describe how it tastes.
- What was the first food you learned to cook?

Candy

- What is your favorite candy?
- Describe how it tastes.
- How do your teeth feel after eating a lot of it?

Travel

- Where have you traveled?
- Where would you like to travel and why?

Good Health

- What is "good health"?
- What are three things people can do to improve their health?

Pets

- Do you have any pets? What are their names?
- What is your favorite kind of pet and why?
- Do you think people look like their pets?

Wild Card: Question of your choice

- Ask any question you like.
(Remember, the other person does not have to answer!)

Music

- What is your favorite kind of music?
- What is your favorite song?
- How do you feel listening to your favorite music?

Hiking

- Have you ever gone hiking?
- If yes, where did you go and how did you feel about it?
- Where would you like to go hiking?

Reverse Wild Card:

- Ask your partner a question they would most like you to ask them.

Dancing

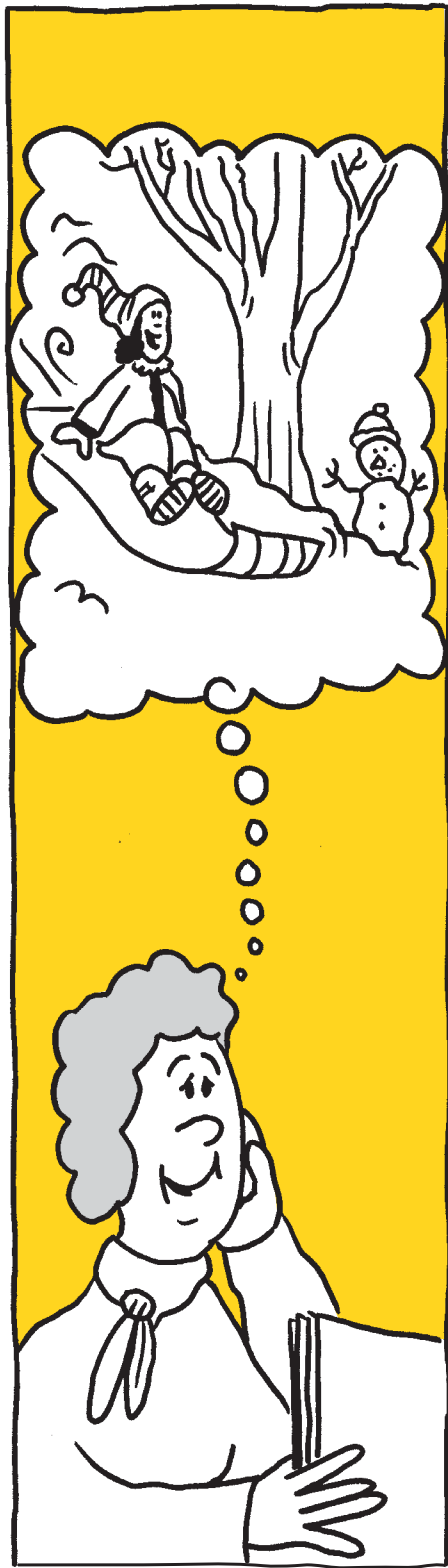
- Do you like to dance?
- What dances do you know?
- Which, if any, dances would you like to learn?

Holidays

- What is your favorite holiday?
- What other special days do you celebrate?

Humor

- Tell a joke, a riddle, or a funny story.



Alternate Activity: Stories about Youth and Older Adults

With the help of your librarian, find three or more books about youth and older adults together and read them. There are dozens of young children's books that are only 10 to 20 pages long. You may be able to listen to some of these books on tape. If you want to read a longer book, try *Disguised* by Pat Moore, or *Tuesdays with Morrie* by Mitch Albom. Some suggested books are listed in the leader guide.

These are the books I read:

Title:

What I learned:

Title:

What I learned:

Title:

What I learned:

Title:

What I learned:

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Session 2: Aging and the Media

Introduction

Though older Americans are healthier and more active than ever before, there seem to be many stereotypes about old age. Sometimes our attitudes are influenced by television, by birthday cards meant to be humorous, and by living in a society which prizes a youthful appearance. But

negative feelings often rob older people of their uniqueness. When we tell someone to “act their age,” we limit their behavior. Think about the names people use to describe older people. Are they really true?

While you are on a busy street, notice both older and younger people. How are they alike? How are they different?

Do your feelings about people change when you get to know them? Can you think of a time when someone labeled you by calling you names? How does it feel to be labeled?

Is it fair to be called a name when someone doesn't really know you? Of course not! The only fair statement about older people is that they've lived longer!

Choose one or more of the following activities to help you learn more about how older people are portrayed in the media.



Activity 1: Spotlight on You

Many of our attitudes toward aging are formed by what we see, hear, and read in the media (television, radio, the Internet, and newspapers). Take this chance to evaluate your feelings about the way the media portray older people. Read the statements below and check the boxes that best describe your attitudes. Discuss your answers with the group.

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. We don't see enough on TV about older people.					
2. There are too many stories about older people on TV news.					
1. Older people are an important part of a family.					
3. Older people would rather look at ads of younger models.					
4. Older models should be used to advertise products everyone uses.					
5. Older actors don't have enough energy to star in film roles.					
6. Television programs usually make fun of older people.					
7. Magazine stories about older people are boring.					
8. Older people have rewarding lives of their own.					
9. The elderly aren't interested in news stories about today's world.					
10. Aging film stars should be allowed to play many different roles.					
11. Older models can be as elegant as younger models.					



Activity 2: Media Watch

Publication Watch

Look at a variety of newspapers and magazines, then fill in the blanks. If you don't get many papers or magazines at home, check out copies at your community or school library. Then discuss what effect media coverage has on your attitudes toward older people.

List the newspaper(s) and magazines you read:

I read a total of _____ stories and articles about older people.

The topics of these articles included:

Answer the following questions:

Older people were treated fairly (unfairly) in most of these articles because...

How did it seem to be an older adult?

The image of older people was...

Television Watch

Look in your television listings and watch television to answer the following questions:

What television programs have older people in them?

The parts they played in these shows were:

The problems faced by these older people included:

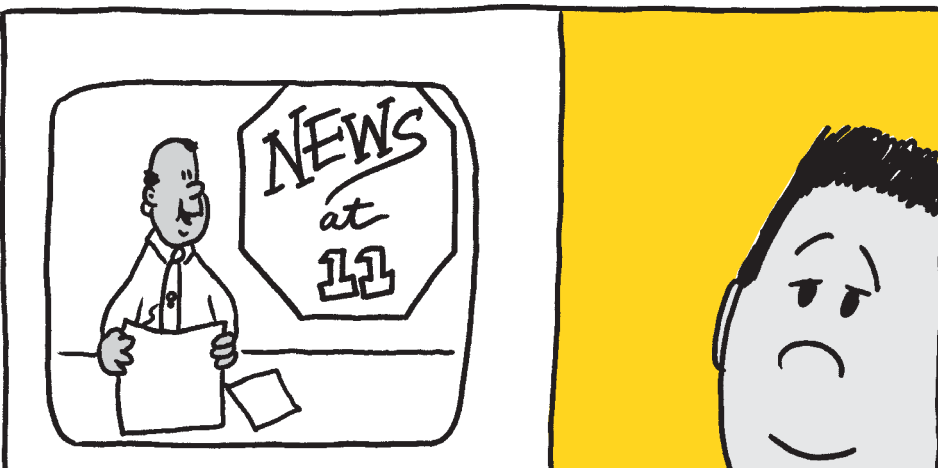
The situations were true (or untrue) to life because...

The situations were fair (or unfair) to older people because...

How did the parts played by younger people on the show compare to those played by older people?

Do you think that television treats older people fairly?

Do you think that television gives older people more attention than other groups?



Activity 3: Advertising Watch

Watch television for at least one hour and keep a tally of the number of television commercials that have older adults in them. Then read a magazine and keep a tally of the number of advertisements that have older adults in them.

Record what you found:

I observed a total of ____ television commercials and ____ magazine advertisements and found ____ of the ads had an older person in them.

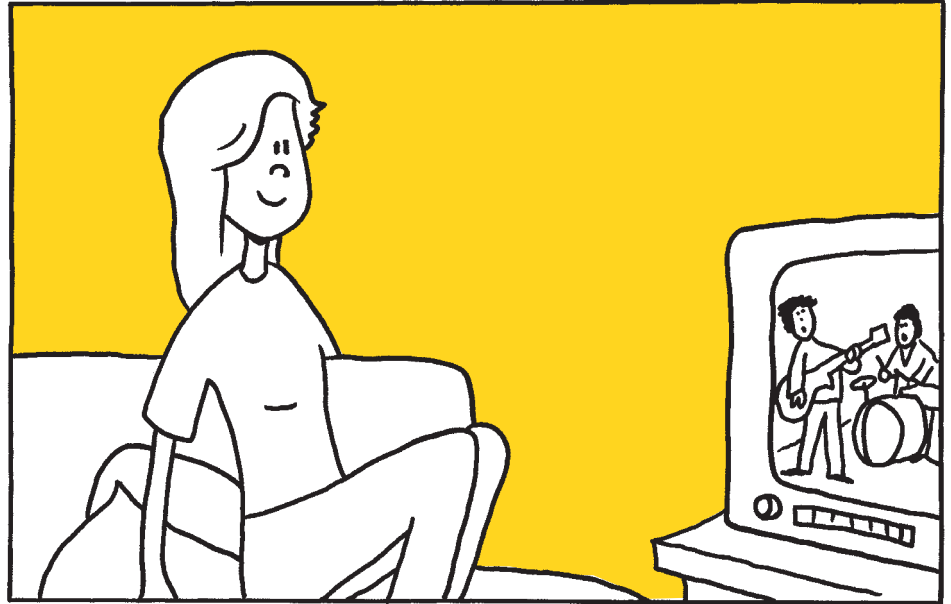
Then answer the following questions:

I feel the older people were treated fairly (or unfairly) in these ads because...

The situations shown in the ads seemed true (or untrue) to life because...

The advertisements showed me the image of older people as...

Advertisements should show more (or fewer) older people because...



Attach an advertisement or article about an older person here:

Large empty rectangular area for pasting an advertisement or article.

Fun with My Friend: Sharing Fun Together

Spend some time with your friend this week and do some fun things together. Talk with your friend before you meet and find out what your friend would like to do. Plan on doing something fun at every one of your visits. The suggestions below are just a few fun things you could do together:

- Sing songs with your friend.
- Take a short walk with your friend and enjoy the exercise, the sun, and the wind.
- Bake cookies or bread together.
- Make a trip to the library or bookmobile and choose books or magazines to read together.
- Go fishing with your friend.
- Share your favorite hobbies. If you don't have a hobby, maybe you can develop and share a hobby together.
- Organize a show-and-tell session. For example, show your friend pictures of your family and tell a little bit about each person. Ask to see pictures of your friend's family and talk about them.
- Invite your friend to your home for a family meal. Your friend may need a ride, so check with family members before making the invitation.
- Make plans to see a play, attend a concert, or go to a fair together.
- After your visit, record what you did in the record sheet at the back of this project book.

Alternate Activity: More Media Watch

Find out which TV programs your older adult friend likes to watch and why.

Watch a favorite TV program together.

Does the program contain advertisements or situations that include older adults?

Share your ideas about how older people are shown on television in both shows and advertisements. Do the shows focus on older adults having valuable traits and skills?

After your visit, record what you did and what you learned in the back of this project book.



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Session 3: What about the Senses?

Introduction

Understanding older people requires that you understand the aging process. People grow older from the moment of their birth. This means that each of us is always growing older.

All parts of the body seem to be affected by aging. Some very obvious examples are graying hair and wrinkling skin. People wear bifocal or reading lenses because they cannot see as well as they would like.

They may use a hearing aid to help them hear better, or season their food more so that it tastes better to them.

Activity 1: How Aging Affects Our Senses

Though some older people may not be able to see or hear as well or to move as quickly as younger people, they can still enjoy life!

Just because someone is older, do not assume that they have any of these problems. Many older people have good hearing, taste, and smell, or have developed ways that help them cope.

The following activities can help you understand what it is like to not hear or see so clearly, or to not move so easily. These exercises are intended to help you understand how it feels to live with a loss of physical ability.

Decreased vision

Smear petroleum jelly on the outside lenses (the side away from the eyes) of some old sunglasses. A few minutes of looking through the glasses will probably be enough time to help you fully understand how it feels to lose some sight. How do you feel about this experiment in losing some degree of eyesight?

Decreased hearing

Place ear plugs or cotton balls in your ears to simulate a loss of hearing, or use earmuffs or headphones to do the same. Have your friends talk normally and try to hold a conversation with them. List your feelings about this experiment in hearing loss:

Decreased touch

Wear surgical gloves or place tape loosely around the ends of your fingers to imitate the loss of touch. Then touch fabrics and other items around you. Try to feel the warmth of your own skin. Describe your feelings about this experiment with loss of touch:

Decreased taste

Eat saltless crackers or drink weak lemonade to find out what it's like to have less ability to taste food. You also could make your own tasteless cookies with the following recipe:

Tasteless Cookies

Sift 1 cup flour and 1/4 teaspoon baking powder. Pour into a bowl. Blend in 1/4 cup shortening. Add 1 egg. Cover and refrigerate 1 hour. Roll into small balls and press flat with a fork dipped in flour. Bake at 400 degrees Fahrenheit for 6–8 minutes. Makes 20 cookies about 1 inch in diameter.

List your feelings about your experience with decreased taste:

Alternate Activity: Three Views of Aging

Is aging a demeaning process? Is it a time of life when you really need the help and understanding of your friends, family, and community? Or is it a chance to make a new beginning by accomplishing something you always wanted to do, but never had the time? Is it both? After you have read the three case studies below, answer the questions that follow.

View 1: In “the Nursing Home”

Since the death of his wife, Carl Borden, a retired accountant spent his days at home with the blinds drawn and the TV on in another room. His nights were spent listening to talk shows on the radio or going through his collection of family snapshots.

After being hospitalized for an injury caused by a fall, Carl was persuaded to sell his home and move into a nursing home, where he could have someone care for him. Now he waits in the lobby with the other aging residents for a weekly visit from his family. He doesn't even watch television anymore.

View 2: A Little Help from My Friends

Madge Parsons is the energetic type. After moving in with her son's family, she kept busy with housework and the kids. But when her daughter-in-law lost her job as a teacher, Madge found she was just getting in the way. She wanted to move into a place of her own, but her family had another idea.

A day-care center for the aging was being set up in town. It was to be a place where older people could socialize and learn new skills. Madge agreed to give it a try. She discovered that she enjoyed getting out of the house and being with people her own age. She liked helping older, less capable people enjoy themselves. Best of all, when Madge returned home at night, her family was interested in her experiences.

Today Madge feels good about her life and herself. “Thanks,” she is quick to add “to a little help from my friends.”

View 3: A Fifty-Year Love

Ben Ophul's “first love” was his car. He could fix anything on four wheels, but he regarded his interest in mechanics as a hobby that had to take second place to his job.

After he retired, Ben tried to interest himself in travel, fishing, and crafts, but nothing gave him as much pleasure as working on cars. He applied for a job in a local garage—more for something to do than for the money. When the garage owner told Ben he didn't need a new employee, Ben got so depressed he wouldn't leave home.

A week later, to Ben's surprise, the garage owner called back to tell Ben about a chance to teach mechanics to local teenagers. At first, Ben was too proud to take a volunteer job, but his wife insisted he give it a try. Within a month, there were a dozen students in Ben's mechanics class.



Questions

Based on your understanding of the three case histories you just read, what conclusion can you come to about aging?

Answer the following questions:

1. What do the people in each situation have in common?

2. Do each of the people have different needs? If so, what are they?

3. Do you know anyone in any of these situations? Explain.

4. How were one or more of these people helped by family, friends, or understanding members of the community?

5. If you knew an older person in a situation like any of these described, what would you do?

6. If you were in a situation like any of these described, what would you try to do?



Fun with My Friend

Because of a possible loss in mobility or sensory acuteness, your older friend may have difficulty doing certain things without assistance. Two of the best gifts you can give are time and effort spent on things your older friend can no longer do alone. Try to find one thing to do this week with your older friend, or have your older friend choose one from this list. Record your activity on the last page of this guide.

- Read with your friend.
- Write or record letters and mail them.
- Go grocery shopping.
- Do yard work.
- Chop and stack wood.
- Prepare a snack or meal.
- Help clean up the house or do the dishes.
- Call or mail cheery cards between visits.
- Give some time or energy to help your friend in another special way.

Follow-Up Activity: Coping with Challenges

Visit an occupational therapist or review catalogs and visit drug stores for tools that help older people remain active and independent. Try out one or more tools, such as a wide-grip bottle opener or a potato holder. How do they work?

You may wish to make a useful gift for your older friend. An excellent resource is *Easy Things to Make to Make Things Easy* by Doreen Greenstein (Brookline Books, 1997). Basic 4-H woodworking, sewing, and other projects may also contain patterns for useful items. Items may be made as an individual, a group, or with your special older friend.

4

Session 4: Storytelling

Introduction

Stories are a valuable part of culture. The Chippewa-Cree Indians of Saskatchewan, Canada, have their own resident storyteller, referred to as the “keeper of the talking sticks.” His job is to tell the stories of his culture and educate the newer generation. The value of this spoken history of his people is so important that he does not allow anyone to record his stories. He believes that the “magic” or power of the story is lost when it is recorded.

Storytelling might be “magic” for you and your older friend. You can get to know each other better by collecting an “oral autobiography.” You and your friend can take turns interviewing each other. A notebook and pen (or a portable tape recorder and cassettes) and some questions to start the interview are all you need.

If you decide to tape your story, make sure it is okay with your special friend and practice with your group or family before you start. Read the following tips on recording and try one or more of the activities suggested. Also, practice posing the questions you will ask your older friend. A very good way to do this is to try interviewing one of your grandparents or even your great-grandparents. Sample questions are in the “Fun with My Friend” section on pages 20–21. In some cases, your older friend may feel uncomfortable about being recorded. If so, try to remember what was said as accurately as possible.

Tips on Recording

1. If you can find one, try to use a tape recorder with a separate external microphone. Many recorders with a built-in microphone pick up the “hum” of the recorder’s motor (but even the “hum” won’t prevent you from doing a great interview)!
2. Test the person’s voice level and closeness to the microphone so you can position it and not have to worry about it during the recording.
3. Have plenty of cassette tapes and extra batteries. You might need an extension cord and an adapter.
4. Avoid rooms with ticking clocks, humming refrigerator motors, a TV or a radio playing nearby, constant talking, or background traffic noises.
5. Give visual encouragement—a nod of the head, for example—as opposed to the “uh-huh” you might usually use. Also, avoid “jumping in” with another question or remark before your friend has finished his or her thought.
6. Don’t be afraid to ask questions not on your list if you want to know more about something your friend said.

Label your tapes with topics, date, your name, and your friend’s name.



Activity 1: Storytelling Ideas

(Choose one or more activities to practice in your group before you interview your older friend.)

A. Story Circle

One person begins by selecting a topic or subject to guide a make-believe story. This person stops after a few sentences and the next person picks up the story and continues for a while and then stops. The next person adds to it, and so on until the tale comes to a finish or the group becomes tired.

B. Story Song

Find and learn songs that tell a story, or listen to a record with a story song on it, then re-tell the story.

C. Happenings

On separate slips of paper, write statements like: the funniest thing that ever happened to me, the most embarrassing, the weirdest, and the scariest. Each person draws a slip of paper and takes a few minutes to think of details of a story for the statement he or she has drawn. In turn, each person tells the group a short story about the incident. Here are more ideas:

- A time when I was warm
- Something sour
- First day of school
- A special place
- A gift I received
- The most important thing I have learned in my life
- An embarrassing situation in my life
- Getting lost and being found
- Being in a kitchen
- A proud moment in my life
- Being on a train or airplane for the first time

- My first memories of (a story of as far back as I can remember)
- Something I made with my hands
- A story I told in my childhood
- A story that took place outdoors
- A story about something that I wished had happened

D. History Tales

Interview a member of your group and record a story about his or her life up to the present. Ask questions like, Where were you born? In how many different places have you lived?



Fun with My Friend: Storytelling

Before you visit, ask if your older friend would like to provide a life story on tape. If so, learn how to use a tape recorder and practice asking the interview questions below. If not, choose one or more of the above practice activities to stimulate conversation, and don't worry about taping the session.

Personal Histories

Have a storytelling session with your older friend! The following questions will help you get started. You may want to think up a few more questions especially suited to your older friend. Your older friend should ask you questions, too. You might want to take turns asking each other questions.

Breaking the Ice: Ask if your older friend would like to provide a personal history on tape, and explain how it will be used in your project. To test your recorder and start the conversation, spend a few minutes recording another practice exercise. Run the tape back and allow your friend to listen. Then ask the older person to talk about their history, and ask questions when they need a cue. Below are some questions you might want to ask. Remember, your friend might choose not to answer a question. In that case, go on to the next one.

To make it interesting, you can have your older friend ask you the same questions! Play back a bit of the tapes.

These are sample questions. Don't feel you have to ask every one. When you are finished, make an extra tape and send a tape or a summary to your friend so they can remember your visit!

Some Storytelling Questions for Older Adults to Ask Young People

- What is your favorite subject in school?
- Who is your best friend? What are some fun things you do together?

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Session 5: Making Visits Count

Introduction

There are a lot of ways to make your visits with your older friend more fun and relaxing. The following suggestions may help you during your visits.

Prepare to Visit a Nursing Home

The friend that you have been visiting may be living at home or in a long-term care facility. Older people who live in a nursing home can feel cut off from their family and young people. You can make a world of difference to them! There are many creative ways to make your visits memorable. Happy memories are important for all of us.

- The number of visits may be less important than the quality of visits, though the older person may enjoy frequent or regular visits. Call the facility before making a visit.
- If this person worked hard all of his or her life, living in the present situation with a lot of free time may be especially difficult. If you hear complaints, they may reflect a sense of loss.
- Many older people have strict diets. Always check with the nurse before giving any older persons food.
- When the people you visit need to talk, give them your full attention. Try to discover what they are feeling as they talk.
- Don't make promises you cannot keep. Also, if you must change the time of a visit, call or write in advance to explain and arrange another time.
- Be positive in your attitude. Your outlook is contagious and will help the resident take a positive approach to daily life.



Discussion Starters

Getting a conversation started does not need to be difficult. Here are some suggestions to stimulate conversation.

- Do a small project together and talk about it as you work. Here are some possible projects: assemble a photo album, do a craft project together, help them write a letter to a friend or family member, arrange flowers, make bread, work on a puzzle, or write an article for the nursing home newsletter. (These activities should be worked out with your group leader before the nursing home visit.)
- Ask the resident about their interests and skills. You might ask them how they do something that interests you.
- Ask the questions listed in the section “Fun with My Friend: Storytelling” in Session 4.
- Follow up on personal interests and ideas. Older people appreciate the opportunity to recall events in their lives and to talk about them. Listen carefully, even if you have heard some of the stories before. Remembering helps older people find additional meaning in their lives. Also ask about their opinions of current events as well as their hopes for the future.

Activity 1: Stimulate the Senses

When you visit, think of ways to stimulate each of the resident’s five senses. In doing so you can help the person stay tuned into the world and enjoy pleasures that enrich the lives of all human beings. Activities that use our senses can also be a lot of fun! Once you pick an activity, practice sharing it with your group or family before visiting your older friend.

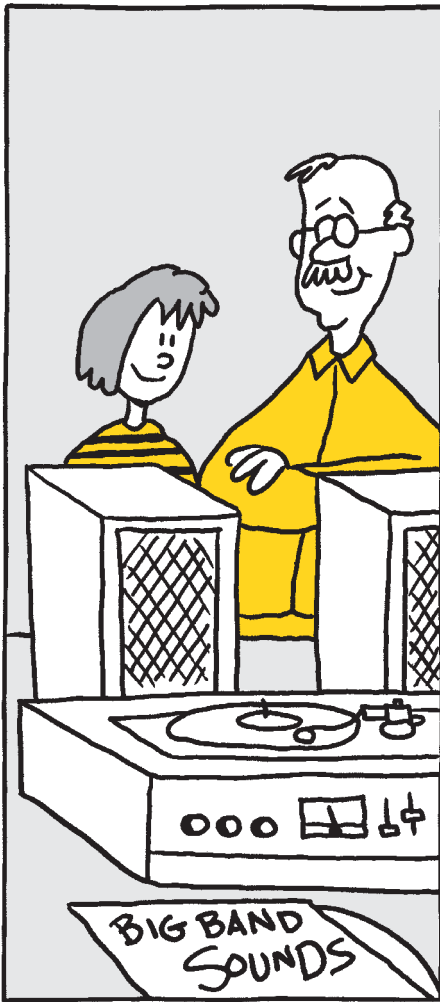
For these activities, make sure to sit at the same level where you can be easily seen and maintain good eye contact.

1. Sight and Coordination

The following is a list of things you can show, play with, or make with your older friend.

- A terrarium
- A colorful toy, flowers, or a card
- A large calendar with pictures
- Books with colorful pictures
- Board games
- Plants
- Needlework supplies
- Video games
- Seasonal door decorations
- Paintings from the local library
- Drawings
- Old newspaper clippings
- Pictures of local history
- A church directory with members’ pictures
- Photo albums/photos





2. Hearing

Speak clearly, slowly, and strongly—but don't shout. Keep the pitch of your voice as deep as possible, because higher frequencies can be harder to hear. When possible, visit where there is a minimum of background noise and where the other person can read your lips, if necessary. Turn off the television or radio. The following are some activities you can do with your friend:

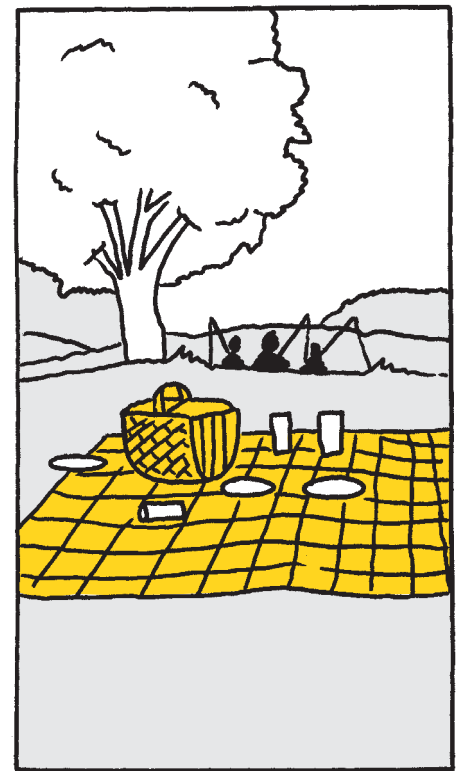
- Play favorite music on the radio, records, and tapes. Try old favorites, hymns, or music played or sung by family members.
- Listen to voices, traffic, and sounds of nature from the window or when taking a walk.
- Attend a concert indoors or in a park.
- Share jokes and family stories.
- Read aloud favorite passages from books, letters, or poetry.



3. Touch

Here is a list of things which you could do with your friend:

- Initiate hugs, handshakes, or hold the person's hand. We all need to give and receive love.
- Have the person handle craft items such as wood, fabric, clay, rocks, or coins.
- Do a puzzle or game together.
- Plant a window garden together.
- Make decorations for a party.
- Take seasonal and natural objects to hold or display, like pine cones, acorns, leaves, flowers, a snowball, or feathers.



4. Taste and Smell

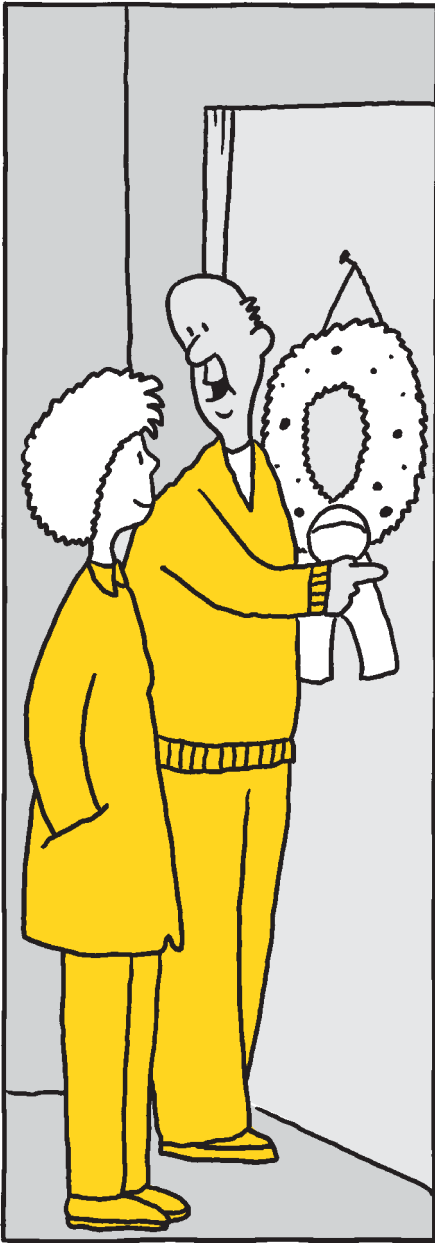
There seems to be a decrease in the ability to taste and smell after age 70. By providing a range of textures, flavors, and smells, you can arouse the appetite and help an older person continue to experience the world through senses he or she has enjoyed since birth. Pleasant memories may also be recalled through these experiences.

Check on personal preference and nursing home restrictions if you want to take food to your older friend.

Here are ideas of things you can do to stimulate smell and taste:

- Arrange for a snack with a variety of textures, flavors, and temperatures.
- Talk about a favorite meal or a kitchen disaster they know about.
- Eat some meals together to stimulate appetite; go out for lunch or a picnic.
- Take an arrangement of colorful flowers or create one.
- Give paper or fabric sachets of fragrant floral scents and pine.

Activity 2: Celebrate with Your Friend



It is fun to be remembered with a gift! A gift you have been giving to your older friend is the gift of time. Think about other gifts you can give that do not involve things bought with money. Then give one of these gifts to your older friend. Be sure to record your activity in the back of this guide. Your group leader can help you make arrangements for your gift. Here are some ideas:

- Read to your friend from the newspaper, a magazine, or a book they choose.
- Share a cartoon or comic strip.
- Write a letter to your friend.
- Pick a bouquet of wild flowers and give it to your friend.
- Prepare a simple favorite food of your friend's and eat a meal together.
- Celebrate your friend's birthday.
- Make a card or small gift and send it between visits to remember a special day or say "thank you."
- Remember special days throughout the year with a card or drawing.
- Draw a picture for them.
- Write a poem or a story about your friendship.
- Take a photo of the two of you together and give it to your friend so he or she can remember.



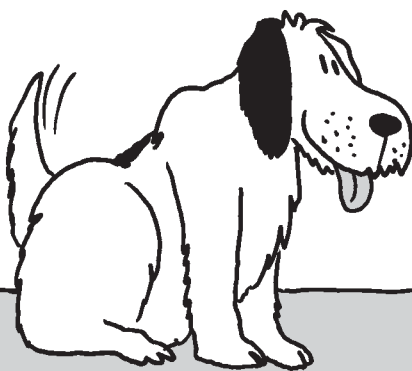
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Session 6: Foxfire: A Generation Celebration

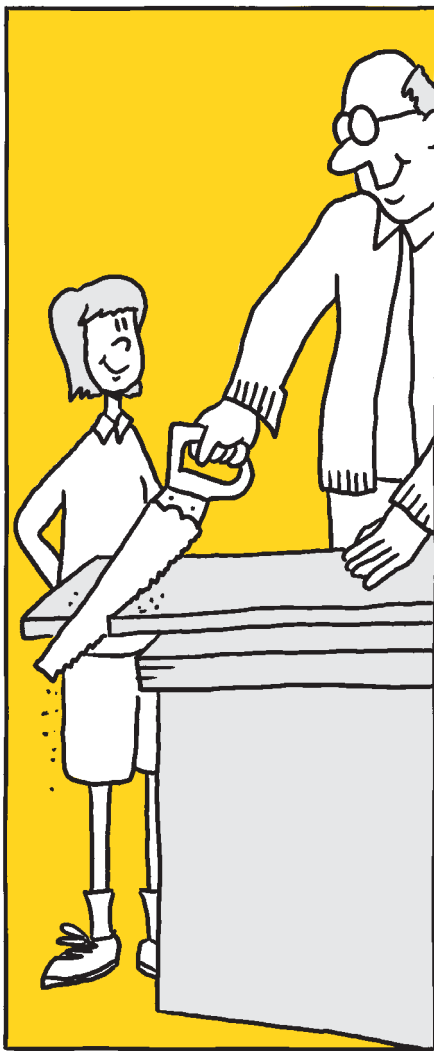
Introduction

Foxfire comes from a program conducted in the Appalachian Mountains where older adults taught traditional crafts and customs to young people. Later, books were written about these crafts in order to share them with others.

Sharing is a big part of being friends. Your older friend has things to tell and teach you, and you have things to tell and teach your friend. Older people have a lifetime of experiences, but they aren't always as familiar with the things that young people love to do today. Telling and teaching can be a great way to help build your friendship.



Activity 1: Learning New Skills



Each of us, regardless of our age, has skills and talents to share with others. Your older friend may have skills you have never seen before but would like to learn. You too may have skills your friend would like to learn. The purpose of this activity is to give you and your friend the opportunity to share your talents with one another.

For the skills and talents you would like to share:

- Plan to have hands-on experiences, if possible.
- Keep what you plan to teach to just a few ideas and within the time you have available.

- Bring enough supplies and materials so that everyone can try what is being demonstrated and take a finished or mostly finished item home.
- Practice “teaching” before your program by sharing something you know with your group or a few persons in your family. Teaching is not as easy as it may seem. Start off by teaching everyday things like tying shoelaces, braiding, or skipping. Move on to other things like games, surfing the Internet, or a new dance. A fun way to do this is to have one person give directions or demonstrate something and have the rest of the group follow. However, some of the best teaching occurs when a person sits or stands

side-by-side showing and explains something. Often the most important part of teaching is to have a genuine interest in the learner(s) and help them achieve what they would like to know and do.

To make sure that the sharing of skills goes both ways, let your friend know that you (and perhaps other youth in your group) are very interested in learning something from him/her. Once they have identified some topics they are prepared to present, work with your project leader to arrange time so everyone can share their skills. Help your older person obtain the needed supplies and materials.

If you or your friend need ideas, here are some to get you started:

- Dances
- Spinning or dyeing yarn
- Collecting stamps or coins
- Quilting
- Leather tooling
- Butter churning
- Candlemaking
- Dollmaking
- Woodworking
- Singing
- Playing an instrument
- Growing unusual plants
- Painting, drawing, or sculpting
- Making a pie
- Preserving fruits and vegetables
- Computer skills
- Storytelling

Activities Report

Name of my older friend and some things about him or her.

What I have learned from my older friend.

What I have learned about older people.

What I have learned about friendship.

Look over your answers from Session 1. Did you change any of your ideas by taking this project?

For Round-up or fair, exhibit your completed member guide.

Name

Address

Name of Club

Leader's Name

Name of Project

Project Checklist

Place a checkmark on the lines below as you finish each item. This will show you what needs to be done to finish your member's guide.

Session 1: Our Attitudes Toward Aging

- How Do We View Older Adults?
- What Does "Old" Mean?
- Jumping to Conclusions
- Fun with My Friend: "Getting to Know You" Card Game
- Stories about Youth and Older Adults

Session 2: Aging and the Media

- Spotlight on You
- Media Watch
- Advertising Watch
- Fun with My Friend: Sharing Fun Together
- or
- More Media Watch

Session 3: What about the Senses?

- How Aging Affects Our Senses
- or
- Three Views of Aging
- Fun with My Friend
- Coping with Challenges

Session 4: Storytelling

- Storytelling Ideas
- Fun with My Friend: Storytelling
- Story Report
- Alternate Interviewing Activity

Session 5: Making Visits Count

- Stimulate the Senses
 - Sight and Coordination
 - Hearing
 - Touch
 - Taste and Smell
- Celebrate with Your Friend

Session 6: Foxfire

- Learning New Skills
- Thoughts about Foxfire
- You and Your Friend in the Future

To finish the project, complete the following:

- Activities for Session 1–6
- Activities with My Older Friend
- Activities Report
- Project Checklist

For Roundup or fair, check your premium listing.



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