

Round Table 3- Age

Quotes

'Every generation laughs at the old fashions, but follows religiously the new'
Henry Thoreau

'In case you're worried about what's going to become of the younger generation, it's going to grow up and start worrying about the younger generation.'
Roger Allen

'Every generation imagines itself to be more intelligent than the one that went before it, and wiser than the one that comes after it'
George Orwell

What's new ...

1920s - the generation that had just fought in the Great War feel it is inappropriate that the next generation are going to dance halls ...

Questions to cover

How should young people approach their spiritual journey?

- The same spiritual journey the older generation took?
- Anything but the spiritual journey THEY took?
- New for each generation?
- New for every individual?

Should faiths reassess and adapt for a new generation?

- What are the advantages in adapting to the new?
- What are the disadvantages?
- Does one outweigh the other?
- Is there a compromise?

Can faiths adapt without losing core values?

- Who, or what, is the keeper of the core values?
- Do those core values ever change or adapt?

Should younger people always seek the approval of their elders?

- under what circumstances should they do this?
- are there any situations where elders should be seeking approval?

Is age – old or young – a bar to spirituality?

- is it easier to engage spiritually when you are older?
- Or is it easier when you are younger?

What is the responsibility of faith groups towards older members?

- Sages had a prominent position in many religions in the past - is the same true today?
- Are you happy with the way your cultural group treats the elderly members - especially those who are very dependent? Do the faith groups have a role to play in this?

From a Washington Post article on 'Generation Y'

[Generation Y = those born between 1980 and 2000]

The traditional religious establishment is failing to reach members of Generation Y. This generation has been raised with an unprecedented amount of choices surrounding every aspect of their life. This includes career, politics, education, and religion. And when one of these factors fail to deliver an acceptable amount of choices, this generation's trend has been to dissociate. This is an ongoing problem that exists between Gen Y and traditional religions.

Currently, a fairly large percentage of Gen Y fail to identify with a religious denomination. This is normal in that the people of Gen Y fall under the age of 30, a time that is often devoted to finding an identity. As Gen Y ages, there is a strong likelihood that many of them will strengthen their religious involvement. The difference between Gen Y and other generations is that even though they may eventually have a stronger interest in religion, there is the chance that it will be nothing like the generations before.

Ofcom research on religious broadcasting

Ofcom's research suggests that a broader definition of religion (to include spirituality and ethics) is the key to attracting a wider audience.

Commissioning editors are acknowledging the emergence of a secular spirituality: the BBC's The Heaven & Earth Show and Channel 4's Spirituality Shopper have addressed the trend. But programme-makers have a tough task ahead: extend religion's remit to entertain a new generation of viewers, while satisfying the genre's established audience.

War Stories

(From the Northern echo, November 5th 2008)

A GROUP of young people are visiting old people to learn about their experiences during the Second World War. As the nation prepares itself for Remembrance Day, the Hype War project, which aims to bring the community closer together, is performing seven weekly visits to tenants at Aspen Gardens in Hardwick, Stockton, who lived through the war ... tenants from Aspen Gardens will share their experiences on rationing, work, air raid shelters and the war itself to youngsters from the Hype War project, who will discover what life was like during that uncertain time.

The project's Charis Gracie said: "The Hype project has been running for a few years now and it aims to get kids involved with the local community in a positive way. For the tenants of Aspen Gardens, it's great to see them building a good relationship with the kids and sharing their experiences to a younger generation to help them understand what it was like during that time."

As part of the project, both tenants and youngsters will take a trip to Preston Park to visit the museum and will celebrate the end of the project with a party based around the street parties that marked the end of the war. There will also be a two minutes silence.

An 80-year age gap, but pair are great friends

Ripon Gazette - November 2008



A VOLUNTEER visitor from Boroughbridge has spoken of her surprise at being named Young Volunteer of the Year at a district-wide awards ceremony. Emma Walker, 23, from Mill Lane, Boroughbridge, was announced as the winner at the Mayor's Volunteering Awards, held in Harrogate last week.

"To be honest, I was just really surprised to win," she said. "I didn't expect it at all - I think there are a lot of people involved in community care locally that do a lot more than I do."

Emma has been a volunteer visitor with Boroughbridge and District Community Care for two-and-a-half years, striking up a special friendship with 103-year-old Ellen Worboys. She explained how she had got involved with the group. "I've had ME since I was 15, so I wasn't able to work, and this gave me the chance to do something worthwhile," Emma said.

At the time, Ellen was looking for a visitor, and the pair were matched up. "When I saw Emma, I thought: 'What's Ellen going to think about this?', because some older people do have set ideas about things," said David Allon, from Boroughbridge and District Community Care, "but they just gelled. "Emma's visited every week since then, come hail, rain or shine. They have a terrific relationship considering the 80 year age gap. I sat there and listened to them talk the other day: it's amazing the subjects they talk about."

Emma said she and Ellen had got along instantly. "We hit it off right away. We both like art, so that's something we have in common," she said. "We talk a lot about cooking, and Ellen likes to tell me about her life when she was younger: her family, her husband and her son."

Following a spell in hospital, where Emma continued to visit her, Ellen recently moved into a residential care home - the latest venue for their

meetings. The 23-year-old has also begun working as a volunteer at Oxfam in Boroughbridge.

"People say all sorts of things about youngsters these days, but when you see what Emma is doing, it's a credit to youngsters," Mr Allon said.