

15 Ideas for Celebrating Older Adults Month

Revised from a compilation by Rev Dr Richard H Gentzler, Jr,
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1. Arrange a meal to celebrate older adults and consider recognizing older members for their faith and service to the church.
2. Assign a younger person or family to each older person in your congregation. Ask the individual or family to pray for the older person throughout the week and to write a special note of appreciation to the older adult. The individual or family might also invite the older person into their home for a meal or to enjoy some community event together. Invite those people to sit together during the Older Adults Sunday worship service and/or at a recognition dinner.
3. Interview older people in anticipation of older adults recognition Sunday. A variety of media might be used for this interview: video, audio, printed, or pictures and stories on a bulletin board. In the interview, include ways that the person has been active in the church and community. Share parts of their stories with the congregation and on the celebration Sunday.
4. Encourage older adults and other storytellers to share their experiences, perhaps around a certain theme (e.g., their faith journey, the history of their local church, etc.).
5. Make banners and posters to inform the congregation of the celebration.
6. Involve older adults in planning and conducting the worship service. Invite older adults to serve as greeters, ushers, lay readers, and speakers on the Sunday designated as "Older Adults Recognition Sunday."
7. Send out special invitations to older adults for the Sunday of celebration. Make the invitations personal; arrange for rides, if necessary. If you plan to use ribbons to recognize older adults, send the ribbons and pins in the invitations.
8. Use live flowers and plants to decorate the sanctuary on the Sunday of celebration and give these to older adults. Some may need to be delivered to homebound and residents of long-term health care facilities.
9. Pin a flower or special ribbon on each older person. Be sure to make a statement in your worship bulletin to inform the congregation of the significance of the ribbon or flower.
10. Plan a "senior expo" or resource fair or workshops on an older adult recognition Sunday that provides services and resources available to older adults in your community.
11. Provide respite care volunteers to stay with homebound people in their home so the primary caregivers can attend the Sunday celebration.
12. Find out the number of years in church membership (in any church) of each older adult, and add these together. Announce or publish the total amount of years as a collective heritage that we receive from older people.
13. Check and correct accessibility problems in your church facilities.
14. Begin a homebound Sunday School class. Arrange for a conference call during the Sunday School hour.
15. Use social media to connect older adults with resources and one another.