



Gen X

1964 – 1981

Strengths

- Hold a realistic rather than an idealistic view of life.
- Demonstrate a streetwise, practical approach to problems.
- Prefer practical fields of study and careers.
- Accept personal evaluation and critique.
- Savvy and literate with multimedia and computer technology.
- Demonstrate courage and bravery on the battlefield.
- Highly value relationships with close friends and family.
- Believe in marriage.
- Desire clear, step-by-step procedures.
- Parallel thinkers-read, listen to music, talk at same time without losing train of thought.

Weaknesses

- Can be cautious, skeptical, and cynical.
- High abortion rate.
- High level of sexual activity and other at-risk behaviors.
- Unrealistic expectations desiring to match their parents' level of achievement at an early age.
- Ravenous consumers and technology junkies.
- View whatever works best as their philosophy of life.
- Truth is relative rather than absolute.

Opportunities for the Church

- Can be reached by providing relevant and useful Biblical messages.
- Fellowship and relationships will draw them to the church and Bible study groups.
- A church that cares for and protects their children will more likely reach them.
- Desire leaders who are transparent, vulnerable and real.
- Become involved when the activity is personal and local.
- Response to church proposal: Gen Xers likely are not present to ask questions or vote; but if they were, their question would be, "Who cares?"

Teaching the Gen Xer

- Though raised in church, many are Biblically illiterate.
- Learn best from Biblical characters rather than abstract theology.
- Receptive to the corrective dimension of learning from the Bible; Will change their behavior.
- Interested in Bible to discover practical and relevant handles for everyday experiences.
- Enjoys gender-based rather than coeducational Bible study classes.
- Demonstrate erratic Bible study attendance patterns.

GI Generation

1901 - 1924

Strengths

- Friendly and optimistic, reflect a strong community spirit.
- Family unit is important. Children grew up as the center of their homes.
- Defended their country in predictable self-sacrificing style.
- Left-brained. Led the world in recipients of Nobel Prizes.
- Built rockets, atomic bombs, interstates, suburbs. Landed man on the moon.
- Created "the American Dream." Passionate work ethic.

Weaknesses

- Intense focus on science and technology led away from God.
- Pursuit for success led to focus on the masses without regard for the individual.
- Provides economic rather than emotional support for grown children.
- Prefer to live in communities of their peers.

Opportunities for the Church

- Stable model for marriage and commitment.
- Most loyal financial givers in the church. Often tithe.
- Most mission-minded; strongly committed to the Cooperative Program.
- Prefer traditional classes; lecture method.
- Dislike change or breaking traditions.
- Response to church proposal: "How much will this cost?"

Teaching the GI Generation

- Has an insatiable, self-motivated passion to learn.
- Intense, left-brained rationalists, relying on reason rather than sense of perceptions.
- Prefers the lecture, memorization and drill as learning tools.
- Problem-solvers, using reason, inquiry, teamwork and cooperation to analyze and solve issues.
- May view truth and values as relative rather than absolute.
- Reinforces their theology through singing Christian hymns.
- King James Version as the best Bible translation.



Silent Generation

1926 - 1944

Strengths

- Concern for others and for their plight in life.
- Champions of a pluralistic, inclusive society.
- Excel in human relations skills; display sensitive, empathetic and polite attitude.
- Nonjudgmental and open, possess a strong collective social conscience.
- Strong in helping professions - teachers, doctors, ministers.

Weaknesses

- Low risk takers.
- Pluralistic attitudes create tolerance of all lifestyles and world views, resulting in liberal and conservative camps.
- Values-neutral position on life - "I'm OK, You're OK"
- Weak family values. High divorce rate. Advocates of "No fault" divorce laws.
- Gave birth to the phrase "Mid-life Crisis."

Opportunities for the Church

- Serve well as committee members.
- Encouraged churches to include divorced and broken families in their ministries.
- Committed to tithing.
- Prefer Bible study groups that allow discussion with teachers who act as facilitators.
- Respond to sermons that explore life's complexities, avoid extremes, and reflect careful preparation.
- Not particularly vocal or demonstrative. Hesitate to give a hearty "Amen" or applaud.
- Response to church proposal: "Did you get all the bids? Have you consulted the experts? Did you check all the possibilities?"

Teaching the Silent Generation

- Brings strong relational skills to the learning process.
- Has a strong sense of inclusion and tolerance.
- Enjoys intergenerational Bible study classes.
- Open to discussing new ideas.
- Values structured learning experiences.
- Develops highly organized class structures and roles.
- Intense pragmatists, valuing social action as the route to follow in bringing change to culture.
- Recognizes secular humanism and test truth by the practical consequences of what works.
- As teachers, are excellent facilitators of the leaning process.
- Dominant learning style in the auditory area--discussion and debate--and are creative and artistic.

Boomers

1945 - 1963

Strengths

- Possess a high spiritual sensitivity and desire for a spiritual awakening.
- Will challenge sex, profanity and violence in the media.
- Will grow more and more intolerant of immoral lifestyles and substance abuse.
- Will champion vision, principle and moral rightness.
- Strong work ethic; seeks satisfaction with career.
- Younger Boomers will demonstrate more concern for their families - strengthening families, protecting children from danger, punish criminals.

Weaknesses

- Emphasizes individuality over masses.
- Problems achieving consensus.
- Problems overcoming spoiled and indulged childhood, self-absorbed teenage years.
- Low marital stability; High divorce rate.
- Actions can be ruthless, selfish, arrogant and judgmental.

Opportunities for the Church

- Spiritual thirst opens door to evangelism.
- Critical key is authenticity from Pastor and staff.
- High moral point of view will drive them to influence culture and values of the church.
- Applause in worship is a natural expression.
- Bible studies must address personal concerns and have appearance of quality.
- Little concern for denominational labels. Focus on personal concerns and go where these concerns are met.
- Prefer simple models of structure rather than high levels of organization.
- Prefer personal choice and flexibility in the selection of topics for study.
- Response to church proposal: "What is the benefit or value for me? for my family?"

Teaching the Boomer

- Intense idealist, valuing the world of ideas, vision, and principles. They want to shape moral issues.
- Demonstrates a compelling search for spiritual satisfaction.
- Views ideals, truth, and values as absolute and fixed rather than relative and changing.
- Readily accepts Biblical truth but slower in putting truth into action.
- Shaped by the visual medium of television.
- Champions individualism over community.
- Requires high level of personal choices in learning methods, topics of study, and materials.
- As teachers are excellent communicators of Biblical truth.
- Prefers a learning style that is visual, motivated, and stimulated through visual formats.

