

## **Millennial Midrash**

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**Midrash-** an interpretive act seeking the answers both practical and theological usually in reference to the Torah, but for today's topic we are going to talk about why a "Midrashic stance" is a good stance to take when working with Millennials. As one definition of Midrash states "Midrash responds to contemporary problems and crafts new stories, making connections between new Jewish realities and the unchanging biblical text."<sup>1</sup> That is what the elusive millennial is looking for. Not the fancy things that church development experts suggested in the past. Attracting and keeping millennials requires a response to contemporary problems, crafting new stories and making connections between "the real world and faith."

***"The Millennial" seems to be the elusive church goer, but what is a Millennial? And what are Millennials looking for? How do we create authentic communities where all age brackets are present?***

### *A Case Study First United Methodist Church of Costa Mesa*

Millennial Age Bracket \*some say born between 1980-2000, others say 1981-2000

What is unique about this age group

- Prefer to work in teams. Learn best when participating.
- With unlimited access to information tend to be assertive with strong views.
- Are politically independent.
- Are optimistic even though they lived through constant reminders (tv shows, news reports) that the world is very dangerous.
- Podcasts, Online resources, Facebook, Instagram.... Millennials tend to get news and facts from quick sources.

### Church-

Here is some good news for Methodists

- Millennials like old buildings (churched and unchurched alike ranked a more traditional look as most appealing
- Millennials are looking for intergenerational settings
- Prefer things that are classic not trendy
- They prefer people to be able to look casual even in a traditional space

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<sup>1</sup> [www.myjewishlearning.com/article/midrash-101/](http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/midrash-101/)

Just like Re-claimed wood they like the idea of taking something old and making it new again. So much of Millennial culture is a reclaiming of spaces (citys, old warehouses, etc) a reclaimed church is also appealing.

This kind of work will require you to “get out of the boat” to fish. People aren’t going to just come to church from this age bracket they need you to go out to where they already are.

Ideas for connection

- 1) Podcasts- try and get invited on religious or community minded podcasts
- 2) Work out of a co-working space
- 3) An oldie but a goodie become a local in a local coffee shop
- 4) Civic committees

How can you alter your service or ministry to include millennials

- 1) Know that they can get a better sermon than yours any day online. So it has to be about the experience including community.
- 2) Explain liturgy- this generation loves the ancient modern mix, but don’t forget to explain the meaning behind the liturgy. Explaining the liturgy is helpful to also set an expectation that there will always be new people to the community and to the faith.
- 3) Storytelling- Millennials have learned a great deal through story. Being able to tell the stories of scripture as a narrative arc helps draw the entire congregation into the story allowing the story to come alive.

Great Resources

Stained Glass Millennial by Robert Lee

5 Key Millennial research findings Churches should know (UMC.com article)

[www.barna.com/research/designing-worship-spaces-with-millennials-in-mind/](http://www.barna.com/research/designing-worship-spaces-with-millennials-in-mind/)