



caritas

diocese of plymouth

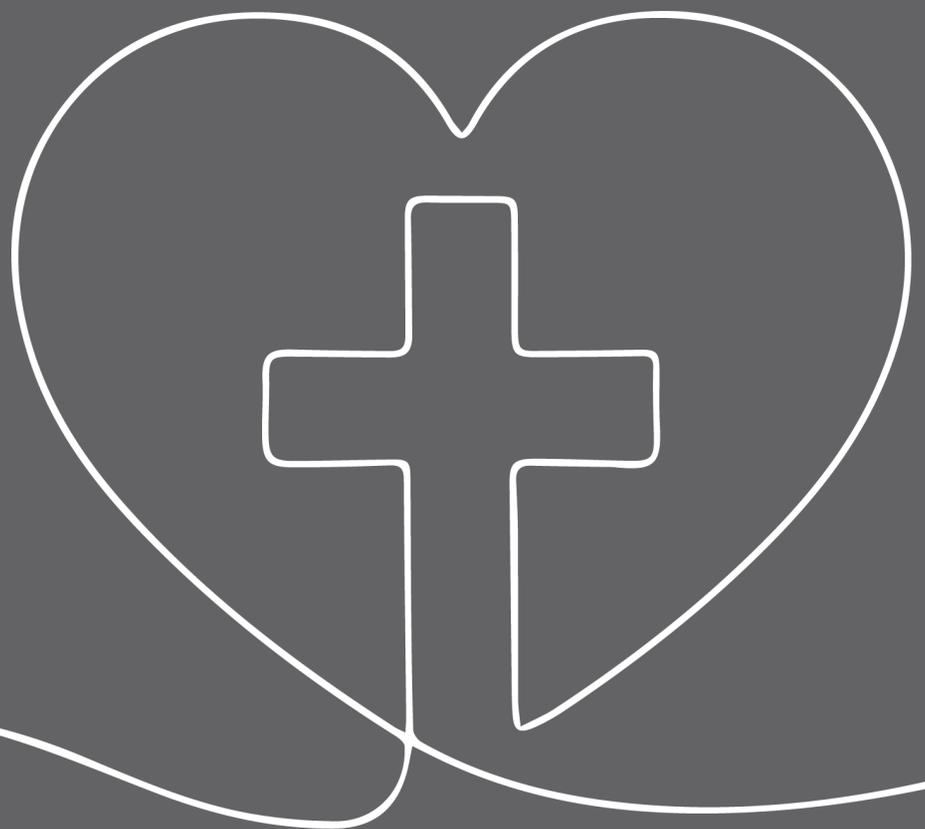
A photograph of an elderly woman with short brown hair, wearing a dark blue jacket, smiling warmly. She is holding a small, round, brown object in her hands. A young girl with blonde hair and a pink hair clip is looking at the object. The background is a blurred green forest.

“A new command I give you:
love one another. As I have
loved you, so must you love
one another” John 13:35

TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH

Intergenerational Linking

“The only thing that counts
is faith expressing itself
through love.” Galatians 5:6



What is Intergenerational Linking?

This is an exciting social action project that is linking together young people, schools, parishes and youth organisations with older people living in care homes. By giving younger and older people the opportunity to connect together and share in new experiences, learning, stories and laughter, we hope to strengthen community connection and deepen understanding of each other and how we all live together.

The intergenerational linking project is a Caritas Diocese of Plymouth initiative. The project is underpinned by Catholic Social Teaching. Pope Francis said old age is 'a precious treasure that takes shape in the journey of every man and woman's life, whatever their origins, background, or economic or social conditions.' The link is a unique opportunity to show Catholic Social Teaching in action.

The link aims to bring together younger people and care home residents to challenge stereotypes and foster positive relationships. The inherent dignity of the human person is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching and drives the ethos and culture behind this

project. Through projects like this, we hope that young people become 'agents of change' – educated and caring people who have the qualifications, knowledge and skills they need to flourish as human beings and make the world a better place.

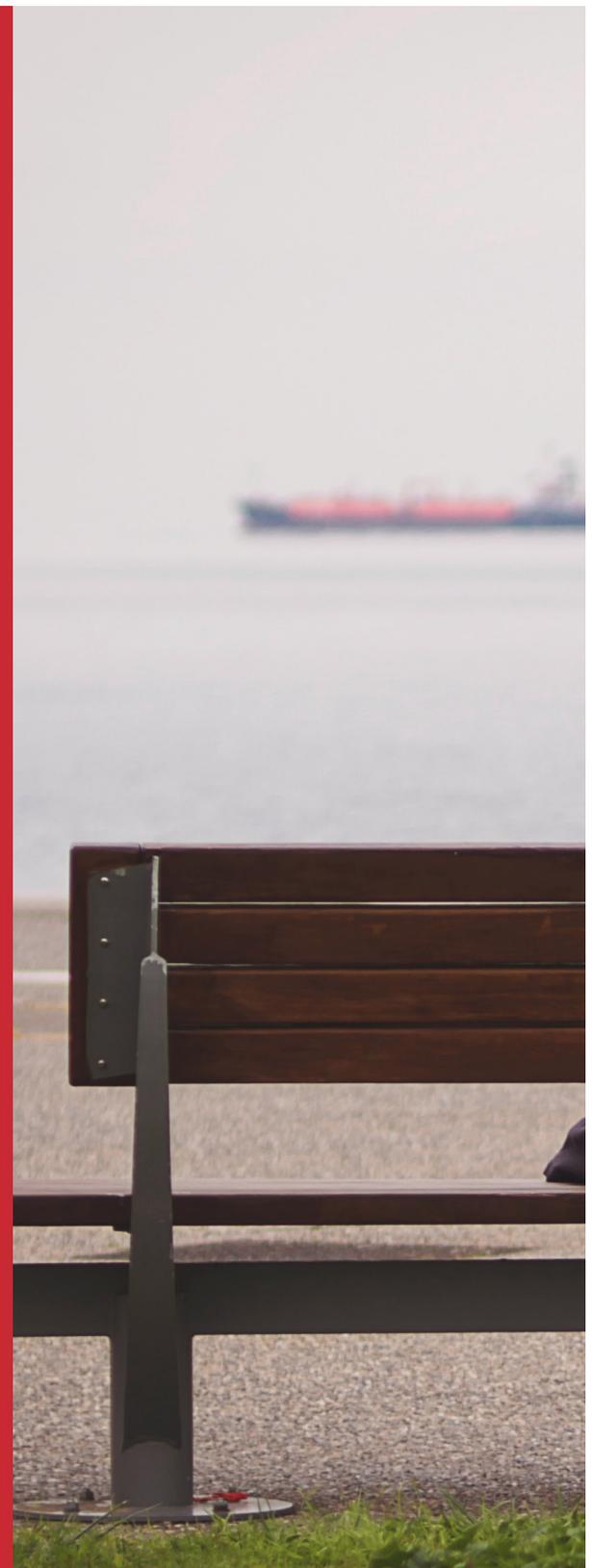


Image above: St Mary's Primary, Buckfast receiving a 'Caritas in Action' Award for their intergenerational work

What are the benefits of linking?

Pope Francis has spoken many times of the need to encourage a culture of encounter between people and linking is great way to foster new connections and relationships, following in the footsteps of Jesus. There are many benefits to intergenerational linking and the following are just a few:

- An opportunity for young people to live out Gospel values through social action and share their faith.
- A way to improve the confidence of our young people and enable them to develop new skills, such as leadership, empathy and communication.
- The possibility for people of all ages to expand their worldview and learn new skills.
- A way for people in care homes to make new friends and feel less lonely and isolated.
- A means to connect care homes to their communities, ensuring they are positive places to live and part of their local community.
- A chance for young participants and older people to know that their voice matters and is heard.
- New friendships and social connections which will boost self-confidence and mental wellness.
- The promotion of positivity towards care homes and ageing.
- Most important is the opportunity for people from across the generations to get to know each other and have fun!



“the richness of many years of life... is the richness of people, of every single person who has many years of life experience and history behind them”.

Pope Francis



*“Aspire not to have more but to be more”
St Oscar Romero, Patron Saint of Caritas*



What activities might the intergenerational linking involve?

This is ultimately a decision for the two partners to agree on and Caritas Diocese of Plymouth offers resources and training to all involved. Some examples of linking are:

Storytelling and swapping stories of personal experience and identity

Learning skills as both generations have skills or talents that would be interesting for the other

Reading to each other

Arts and crafts

Establishing **pen pals**

Sharing personal **history or heritage**

Planting seeds or **gardening**

Weather or **bird watching**

Telling jokes

Discussing and sharing **hobbies**

Exploring technology such as face filters, voice recording

Sharing special **events or festivals**

The Linking Process

The school or parish identifies a care home partner and a group of young people, they may be a class, First Holy Communion group etc. Caritas Diocese of Plymouth can help find a care home partner if needed. The most important factor is that the care home is keen to participate and has the capacity to get involved.

Once the partnership has been initiated, the young people and the older people will share some

information; this may be in the form of cards, video messages or photographs. This can help the partnership decide what activities it would like to develop.

Each link will be different. The main aim is that the young people and the care home residents agree between them what they would like to do. Links with sheltered accommodation or day centres would also be an option.

How does it work?

Caritas Diocese of Plymouth will help you to plan a programme of activity that creates meaningful intergenerational friendships between younger and older people. Over time we hope strong intergenerational links will form. We aim for these to become embedded and for you to continue these new friendships far into the future.

So far, eleven schools have participated in this programme and highly recommend it to others. Caritas Diocese of Plymouth has a project pack which offers everything you need to get started.



“The Church becomes a place where generations are called to share God’s loving plan, in a relationship of a mutual exchange of the gifts of the Holy Spirit”.
Pope Francis

What is the cost involved?

The cost will depend on the nature of the link. If the care home is within walking distance of the school or parish group, there could be very little cost involved. If the care home is further away, many of the activities can be done virtually but experience suggests that some face-to-face contact makes all the difference.

Caritas Diocese of Plymouth has small budget available to support intergenerational linking so please contact us to see if we can help.

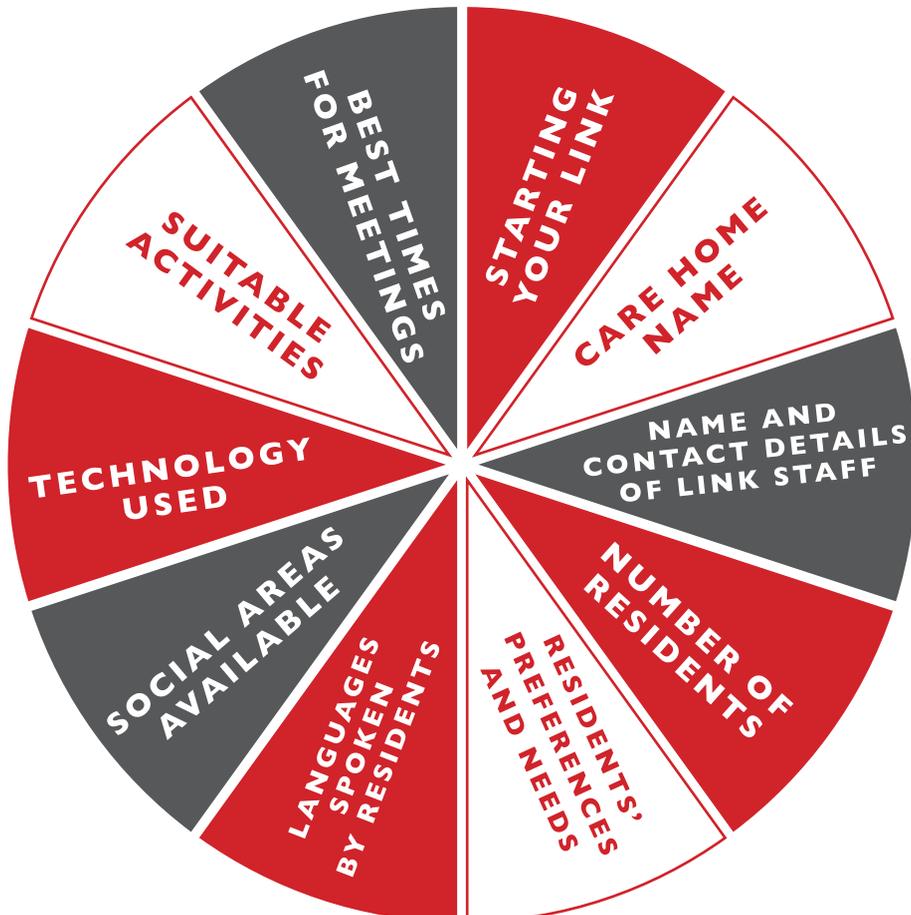
Visit our website www.plymouth-diocese.org.uk/intergenerational-linking

Resources

Caritas Diocese of Plymouth offers resources including:

- Template letters to send to care homes explaining what creating a link is
- Template letters to parents and carers
- The 'getting to know' you template
- PowerPoint presentations that help introduce young people to care homes
- Support with engaging a local care home
- School visits to discuss ideas
- A guide for schools on all they need to know about care homes
- A guide for care homes about all they need to know about schools
- Visits to the school and care home by Caritas to support the project
- Tried and tested approaches to remote engagement
- Recommended reading materials for young children

The wheel below offers a set of questions to ask your partner care home to get started.



Postcards of Kindness

To get to know the older people, why not write and send a Postcard of Kindness to a care home resident who may be feeling lonely. Your thoughtfulness will brighten their day!



How do I get involved?

To discover more about Intergenerational Linking and get a copy of the guidance pack please contact:

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