

7 ways to get along with those ... other ... generations

It's not surprising generations don't always see eye to eye. It's probably been that way since Adam and Eve. But that first couple never shook their heads and muttered about "the older generation."

Yes, most likely, they grumbled about the younger ones, but not the older. They had already more than strained their relationship with God the Father.

Why – to one degree or another – have peoples, tribes, clans, societies and families always been that way? You know the answer. It's because members of generations other than your own can be so ... you know.

That's not you? Uh huh. Sure. Let's try a very basic two-question test: A.) What style of music is best? And B.) What's one you just can't stand?

And there you have it.

So how can you – how can anyone, but especially how can you – get along with ... them? Here are some suggestions for using what could be called the Swiss Army knife of heavenly help.

All these various spiritual blades and doodads – which you may recognize – are just perfect when it comes to this generational ... tension.

1. Wisdom

Wisdom does come with age. Or maybe it should be said "can come with age."

Why? Because as the years roll by, life kicks one right in the teeth. The long-term effects of mistakes (and sins) come

sharply into focus. Then too, hard times and heartaches can bear rich fruit.

You – child, teen, young adult – can avoid a lot of trauma and drama, a lot of pain and strain, by paying attention to what your elders are saying, advising and suggesting based on some colossal screw-ups or painful experiences in their own life. Those middle-agers and seniors aren't going to go into the particular (juicy) details, but a lesson was learned.

On the other hand – listen up, old timers – seniors can learn from the childlike faith of the youngest and the tremendous hope and love-in-action of the middle-agers.

2. Understanding

This one just takes practice. Realize and remember: Seniors/middle-agers/young people can seem strange to one another because each grew up (or is still growing up) in a different time.

Same planet, different world.

Depression era and WW II. Sputnik and Vietnam war. Challenger and 9/11. Internet and social media. Perry Como, Beatles, Snoop Dogg. One generation had a skate key. One was thrilled to get a transistor radio. One can't imagine a time without smartphones. All children of God who chose them to be created and grow up in a particular era.

3. Counsel

This seems like an easy one because, boy, do you have some things to say to those other two groups!

Bad news. Yes, "instruct" others. With kindness and charity as you teach one to tie a shoe or you help another get rid of malware on their laptop.

But also, be humble enough to ask for and accept help. That can be tough, tough, tough – at any age. Perhaps it would be best to remember that when Simon of Cyrene was forced to assist Jesus on his way to Calvary, the Lord didn't protest. Didn't say, "I got this. Look, I got this!"

When it comes to counsel, be Simon-like and Christ-like.

4. Fortitude

Here's a gift that's like a cookie that has all kinds of good stuff in it. Chocolate chips, oatmeal, pecans, raisins, and on and on.

Fortitude is strength of mind and perseverance. Both can be needed because getting along with a person of any generation (including your own) can be no walk in the park. More a slog through the swamp.

Fortitude helps you patiently deal with that – let's say "overly opinionated" – individual. And helps you avoid becoming like him or her. The latter can be harder than the former.

5. Knowledge

This ties in with understanding. It's a gift that can make understanding easier. Yes, in the big picture, each person is a product of his or her time. Of that particular world of their childhood, middle-age and old age. But knowledge is more particular. More precise. More personal.

In the small picture, the events of our life can shape our time on earth in big ways. The death of a parent when we were at a tender age. A divorce in middle age. Chronic health problems as a senior.

This doesn't mean prying but making note after learning about what a person has faced or is facing. Has dealt with and, in

some if not many ways, is still dealing with.

Quick tip: You'll never go wrong assuming everyone is carrying a personal cross. Or two.

Knowledge can help you cut someone some slack, realizing it's not generational differences that are throwing sand in the gears of the relationship, it's the crippling events that have been a part of his or her life story.

6. Piety

It might surprise you to learn that one of the primary definitions of piety is showing reverence to one's parents and homeland. Being respectful to Mom and Dad, Grandma and Grandpa, and all those in your country and around the world.

Respectful even to teens and young adults who "know everything." To middle-agers who whine about old people and about young people. And to seniors who scoff at anyone under, oh, 50 or so.

But here's another facet of piety. It nudges you to worship God, the Father of all. And to do good to others because a deeper reverence for God includes paying closer attention to what Jesus said (taught) about how to treat others.

Paying attention and actually doing it.

The closer you are to God, the better you'll do his will for you and the easier it can be to get along with others. It makes all aspects of your life easier. Not easy. Easier.

7. Fear of the Lord

OK, this ties in with piety, although it's often interpreted as being a super fraidy-cat who's scared of God doing some smiting on your head if you don't straighten up and live right. Rather, Scripture scholars note, it's hating sin

because you're better aware – as his beloved child – what a horrible thing it is to turn from him.

Including bad-mouthing other generations or being impatient with them.

Yes, you know how they are, or can be, but you also know how God is and always will be: infinitely in love with you. And with every human being since our first parents.

There you have it. Seven blades and doodads, the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. Always available. Always free. Never lost even when, at times, we are.

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GIFTS ... AND FRUITS!

The moral life of Christians is sustained by the gifts of the Holy Spirit. These are permanent dispositions that make man docile in following the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

The seven gifts of the Holy Spirit are wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord. They belong in their fullness to Christ, Son of David. They complete and perfect the virtues of those who receive them.

They make the faithful docile in readily obeying divine inspirations.

“May your kind spirit guide me on ground that is level” (Ps 143:10).

“For those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. ... And if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ” (Rom 8:14, 17).

“The fruits of the Spirit are perfections that the Holy Spirit forms in us as the first fruits of eternal glory. The tradition of the Church lists 12 of them: ‘charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, chastity” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 1832).