

COMMUNITY TOOLS

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ICEBREAKERS

“Where Do You Stand?”

Explanation: Choose some multiple choice questions (What is your favorite genre of movie? A. Action, B. Comedy, C. Drama, D. Romantic) and ask people to get up and go to a particular part of the room representing that choice. At times, you can have the participants stop and share with each other about that choice (I like “Avatar” because...)

Purpose: This lets the group get up and moving as well as see similarities and differences.

Two Truths and a Lie

Explanation: Have everyone write or say 3 statements, two of which are true and one of which is false. The other participants try to guess which one is a lie. Once identified, the person can explain, tell a story or give some background.

Purpose: To learn new and interesting things about people in the group. This also lets every person, even those who are quiet have a voice in the group.

Postcard Game

Explanation: Every person writes a question on a card. Then, you turn to another person in the group, and each person asks and answers the questions. Then, they switch cards and move to another person. This can continue until the leader ends the game.

Purpose: This allows for one-on-one interactions with people who may not otherwise talk. This also allows for interesting dialogue as you are asking and answering questions from a variety of people.

Geography Biography

Explanation: Each person in the group shares where they have lived and the group can ask questions about the circumstances.

Purpose: Allows people to share their story and be interviewed about their life. People may also find interesting connections as they have lived in the same place.

People Bingo

Explanation: Make a bingo sheet with random questions (i.e. “Someone who has never been out of the USA”). Each person must go around the room asking questions to fill up their sheet to get BINGO.

Purpose: Fun and interactive where people learn new facts about other participants.

People Scavenger Hunt

Explanation: E-mail participants ahead of time to find out specific statements of interest (“I play seven musical instruments”). List each statement without the names on a sheet of paper. Participants interview each other to find out which statement matches each person.

Purpose: Fun and interactive where people learn new facts about other participants.

Websites for More

<http://www.icebreakers.ws/>

<http://wilderdom.com/games/Icebreakers.html>

<http://www.egadideas.com>

COMMUNITY BUILDING

The Questions Funnel

In most groups, starting out with intimate questions will cause people to close up rather than open up. Structure you questions like a funnel (starting general and non-threatening down to specific and committal) as follows:

Events – Experiences, culture, and activities. These center on general thoughts, attitudes and feelings of the person.

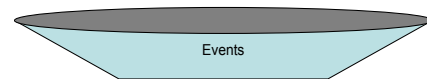
Life – Ideas, values, and beliefs. These questions begin to get to the core of a person’s worldview and thinking.

Spiritual – Beliefs/Experiences with God, church community and doctrinal issues. These questions, particularly in a faith setting, can be seen as potentially isolating. Seek connection before noting differences.

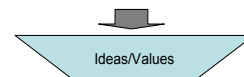
Decision – Asking a person to act, commit, or believe. This requires not only mental assent, but a decision to do something or think differently.

The Questions Funnel

Introductory Questions:



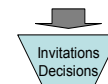
Life Questions:



Spiritual Questions:



Decision Questions:



Tips

- When a person shares a thought, do not be quick to offer advice/correction. Listen, ask questions and make sure you understand by restating what that person has said in your own words.
- Thank the person for sharing, even if you don't agree with what is shared. Openness and honesty is to be affirmed in groups.
- Answer the question first or second when it seems appropriate. People tend to become vulnerable to the extent that the leader is vulnerable.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

A conflict resolved can create a stronger unity than was present before. Conflict as an opportunity to grow as a group. The question is not whether conflict will happen, but how will we resolve it as a group. I suggest the following method:

PAUSE

Prepare

Take some time to prepare your heart, think through the issues, and bring them before God

Affirm

Affirm the other person(s) first by stating your desire for the relationship, what you appreciate, etc.

Understand

Don't seek to express your hurt feelings first, but instead ask question and seek to understand the other. Once you have a clear understanding of their position, take the time to express your own concerns and know they hear and understand you.

Seek Solutions Together

Brainstorm on ways that you could resolve each of the concerns raised. Rather than choosing one and moving forward, let this be a time to come up with workable ideas without judgment; even if a party doesn't like a particular idea.

Evaluate

Spend some time considering the options and evaluate which are comprehensive and most agreeable to both people involved.

As a note, sometimes people will not need to go beyond "Affirm" or "Understand" because that is what is at the heart of the conflict.

STAGES OF COMMUNITY

Take some time to think about where is your group in the stages of community:

Pseudo Community

Testing the waters; the group members may be tentative about opening up and sharing their own story. They are asking “Will I be accepted by the group?” “How will they respond to me if I share my heart/struggles?” “Can I trust the people of this group?” Testing relational waters for safety is OK and wise.

Crisis

A particular crisis or challenge arises and the group has to make a choice as to whether or not they will grow closer, break apart or remain stagnant. These crises may be manufactured, organic, or imposed by an outside force.

Conflict

No matter what, conflicts will arise as groups grow closer together. The question is not whether or not there will be conflict, but will it be resolved in a way that honors God. When resolved, confrontation can draw groups closer together.

Connection

Getting past the superficial to the real, accountable, and safe community where people are accepted as they are and able to share needs (Acts 4:32).

Ask yourself the following questions to ask about your group:

- Where is my group on the stages of community?
- What roles do people play in our community? What roles need to be filled? Who is really connecting and who is distancing? Why?
- What would it take to see your group go to a deeper level? What steps would need to happen?
- What can you do this week to lead the group in that direction?

ALTERNATIVE COMMUNITY TIMES

Coffee Break Devotionals

Have one person prepare a devotional to share as a ‘coffee break’ during a busy time in the semester. This is a low-commitment community time for people to meet even during rough patches.

Media Discussion Night

Watch a movie, song, or YouTube video and discuss it from a Christian perspective (great thoughts and discussion on www.ransomfellowship.org). Consider using Truefaced or Tim Keller’s materials for a more focused discussion.

Service Project

Identify a need on campus or in the area and go as a group to meet that need.

Potluck Pride

Ask each person to bring a dish that represents a story. As you enjoy your meal, share the story behind the dish you chose.

Prayer Walk

Meet one morning to go on a walk on campus and pray for the students, faculty and God's work.