

Teambuilding Ideas

Shallow things break the ice easier then, as trust builds deeper questions are more readily received and people are willing to be vulnerable and disclose more about who they are.

The leader's role: to create situations where love can be expressed.

In building a sense of community I see myself sitting in a circle. Actually it's really important to physically be in a circle. People need to see each other's eyes and not wonder what expression is on the face of the person over my shoulder.

I always explain to the group that “we know we are in a circle when everyone can see each other's eyes... Look around, and move to a place where you can see everyone's eyes.”

When someone shares something of themselves they are in a very real way are putting themselves into the middle of the circle. What follows, how this gesture is responded to makes all the difference to me and to others in the group, whether we continue and go deeper or whether we drawback and put up our guard. The leader of the group has to ensure that whenever someone puts themselves out there that they get treated with respect and hopefully loving affirmation.

Good questions are like keys on a keychain and I try to collect them. Different ones are better for different situations and some work better than others for teambuilding. Avoid asking “yes/no” questions. They yield little and are usually dead ends.

The objective is to move toward depth and significance. But you have to work your way there. Trust has to be developed. Normal people don't just jump in to the deep end; they first dip their toe in to test the water. The leader must have a feel for where the group is and not move faster than the group can endure. So, factual information (nonthreatening type) and things that lend toward humor are the place to start. Begin with things that get EVERYONE engaged, leave no one behind. Group building games, exercises, questions, should be easy to find. Youth ministry and small group resource materials are all over the Internet, Christian bookstores, and church libraries. Below I've jotted down a few keys from my chain.

Remember that big groups are for excitement and small groups are for intimacy. Therefore in order to move toward intimacy and depth it is often better to break a larger group down into smaller groups..... less scary, more opportunity for individuals to have a chance to speak, amount of time available for everyone to share.....

Always be discerning the level of disclosure

I think of it in 3 levels or depths

facts about me

By Tim Tam, updated 2/27/2013

my **thoughts**
my **feelings**

“fact” questions are generally the shallow end of the pool..... e.g. Number of children, how many years have you been a Christian etc.

What I **think** is a little more personal

What I **feel** is a lot more personal

Fact = I have one living parent

Thoughts = there are lots of issues in dealing with aging parents that I never considered

Feeling = I'm emotionally exhausted, I'm so sad for my mom, I struggle to hold back the tears.

Fact = I have one brother

Thoughts = he doesn't have a job, he's on permanent vacation yet doesn't have “time” to help with his mother..... I think he's selfish

Feeling = lots of anger toward him and can't stand to talk to him on the phone.

Also, what gets put out in a circle often presents us with an opportunity for affirmation, praise, encouragement, prayer, expressing love.

It is a vulnerable moment, someone has exposed themselves, so it is important that a response happens and someone isn't left hanging out there in silence.

This is why after someone tells their life story I ask of those who heard to share what they appreciated about the person

Also, one reason a life story is followed by a prayer request is so the group can give an immediate loving response.

Another way to look at levels of communication is: information versus values

information = God has blessed me with 3 children or lots of money

values = God is important to me so I surrender my money to him for missions..... or perhaps money is more important to me.

Some Questions and Disclosure Ideas

1. Epitaph..... write on an index card what you would like to see written on your tombstone. This can be fun and funny and often tells you what a person values.

2. Draw a picture of how you currently see your relationship with God once everyone has finished their artwork, go around the circle explaining your drawing and what various things symbolize. you should give examples to demonstrate how you can graphically symbolize your relationship with God using the venue of a farm, airport, weather system, a garden

3. Share of time in your life where spiritually you felt closest to God.

Then a time when you felt farthest away.

4. Share a time when God's love for you was the most real

5. Buy a bunch of apples that look almost identical. Pass them in a big bowl around the room and ask everyone to take one but not to eat it. Have them study their Apple closely and then put it back in the bowl.

Then, mix them up and have each person trying to pick out the same Apple again. Explain about apples and how they are like people, similar yet individual differences. Rub the Apple on your shirt sleeve really fast and then ask each person to share one area in their life that shines and one area that needs polishing.....

This exercise lends itself to praying for one another for both giving thanks and supplication.

6. "I confess"? It's a fun icebreaker and it can be done meaningfully if you insist that what they confess as to reveal information about themselves.

7. Pass around a roll of toilet paper asking people to tear off the number of squares they would normally take when they use the toilet. Have a wastebasket in the center of the circle and ask them to share something about themselves unknown to the group thus far. "Share one thing for each square of toilet paper", tossing the squares into the wastebasket as they go.

8. What quality do you have that makes you a good friend to others?

9. Scars..... ask people to show body scars and tell the story of how they got them..... usually very interesting things are revealed

If there is enough trust in the group you can follow this with asking to share mental or emotional scars..... now we're in the deep end of the pool. Because, it is true that you really don't know someone until you know their scars.

there you go

a spectrum from the sublime to the ridiculous!