

Transformation

2. Transforming Community

To explore:

'By this all men will know you are my disciples - if you love one another.' John 13.35

Aim: These activities are designed to help people think about our strengths and weaknesses as we try to build a community. The aim is for people to appreciate what we are blessed with - but also to take responsibility for playing their part in contributing to the community and keeping it open to newcomers and new believers.

Note to leaders:

It also has some activities designed to help people get to know a bit about those they don't currently know. Again, chose 2 or 3 you think would be most helpful for your group.

A. Facts and Figures

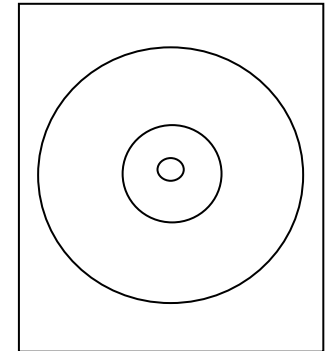
1. Have a look at the following statistics; what strikes you about them?

- 51% of Britain's 13 million single people cite loneliness as their greatest source of stress.
- Help the Aged say TV is the main source of company for 50% of UK pensioners.
- 25% of Americans claim to have no one with whom they can discuss important matters.
- The average British person has three good friends (excluding family).
- Social Networking sites have been accused of weakening interpersonal skills and raising teenage isolation and depression.

2. In the light of the above how do you feel about what God has blessed us with as a community?
3. In what ways is a church community different from a friendship group or biological family?
4. How can we make sure we stay open to passing that blessing on to those currently beyond our church family?

B. Fitting In

Draw up a large version of the attached diagram of concentric circles, give people a small piece of card with their name on and ask them to put it on the chart where they would place themselves in terms of being part of the church community.



Ask them to explain why they put it there - and perhaps where they would **like** it to be.

(N.B. This gives people the chance to hear each other in terms of the things they love and struggle with about our community . You may be surprised - the chances are that many people probably feel on the edges, even though they don't look it. It's good to point out that making people feel isolated or useless is one of the enemy's main tactics and it gives a chance for people to consciously make the effort to build relationships with each other and encourage/affirm each other to contribute and use their gifts.)

C. King's Church Guess Who

Either:

- Go through the list of names on the residents' address list
- Who do/don't you know... try to help each other fill in the blanks in your corporate knowledge.

Or: You could do this as a game - in teams.

- Produce cards with a selection of residents names on from the current address list. (see attached)
- Ask 'Tell me 3 things about X.'
- If the team can do that then they keep the card, if not the next team gets a go.
- The winner is the team with the most cards.

(N.B Obviously you will need to mix the teams up to make sure there is a fair cross section, but it's a good way for people to learn about others in the church they may not know! It's also good to point out that this is based on the existing address list - so it doesn't include everyone who has joined the resident congregation recently.)

D. Trouble Shooting

People often talk about friendliness and community as being one of our strengths as a congregation, but we need to not be complacent.

When it comes to community:

- What do you think we do well/badly? (You could make two lists on big paper)
- What do you think people new to our community observe?
- What do you think the students observe?
- What do you think are the experiences of those who are minorities in the congregation? (In whatever way - you might like to list who the minorities are!)
- How does the 'term time/holiday' shape of our year impact this in your view?

Typically as churches grow in size less people serve/contribute.

- Why do you think that is the case and how might we avoid that pattern?

- How far do you think we are in danger of becoming cliquey/ breaking down into groups of 'similar' people as we grow in size?
- How might we/you be part of the solution? What might you need to make a priority to help with this?