

Celebrating your church and community: Activity 1



Purpose

To help the group think positively about both their church and community, as well as the things they have achieved and the things that they appreciate.



Materials you need

- Pack of coloured balloons
- Marker pens
- String to tie balloons to washing line or long piece of string
- Flipchart paper to write up the answers to the questions



Step by step

1. Split the group into pairs to discuss the things they are proud of in their church and community
2. Each pair blows up a balloon.
3. Ask each pair to write one thing they are proud of on the balloon.
4. The pair feedback their balloon to the main group. Write down the feedback on a flipchart or on cards.
5. The facilitator groups the main themes and discusses the 3 questions below with the group, before everyone bats the balloons in the air as an energiser.



Questions

1. What are the common themes?
2. What could we build on?
3. What areas give us most energy?



Hints and tips

Check everyone is happy blowing up balloons. You might need to have some balloons already blown up.

Make sure you have enough marker pens that work properly.

This activity can also be used to get participants to review something they've learnt from another activity or project.

Celebrating your church and community: Activity 2



Purpose

To help the group appreciate the good things about their church and community.



Materials you need

- Pile of varied magazines and newspapers
- Glue and scissors and marker pens
- Sheets of A3 or A2 paper to stick the pictures on
- Washing line and clothes pegs to hang up collages



Step by step

1. Split into small groups to discuss what they appreciate about their church and community.
2. Provide a selection of magazines and newspapers for the groups to look through.
3. The participants cut out suitable pictures which reflect the things they appreciate and create a collage.
4. Each group shares their pictures with the other groups.
5. The facilitator groups the pictures and then everyone discusses the three questions below.
6. Summarise the activity and help the group identify 3 actions they could do as a result of this exercise.



Questions

1. What are the common themes?
2. What could we build on?
3. What areas give us most energy?



Hints and tips

Make sure the small groups have had time to discuss the things they are proud of before they have the magazines.

If possible try to put the small groups around tables, not more than 4-5 in a group.

Monitor the progress of the groups and give them a 5 minute warning before the time of giving feedback.

Invite the groups to comment on each other's posters.

Celebrating your church and community: Activity 3



Purpose

To use our own personal stories to reflect on truths that apply to our church and community.



Materials you need

- Cards or paper with questions on
- Candles or wooden spoon
- Food and drink



Step by step

1. Write the story-telling openers below on pieces of paper or card and lay out on the floor. Form a circle and invite people to choose the opener that best fits their story.
2. Give everyone a few minutes to think about their story and then invite someone to kick off, invite comments or questions from the circle.
3. When everyone has told their story, reflect together as a group on what truths you have heard in the different stories.
4. Spend 5 minutes doing individual spiritual reflection in whichever way works best for your group. This might be sitting in silence, listening to music, writing, reading the bible or a pre-prepared reflection from the facilitator.



Openers

My best moment in this community was...

I am proud of my church because...

The person I most admire in this community is...

The best day with my church was when...

I feel safe when...

The funniest thing that happened to me in church was...



Hints and tips

If possible, tell people in advance about this session so they will have time to prepare their stories.

Try to create a cosy, relaxed atmosphere with comfortable chairs and low lighting and food and drink. Jesus always shared the deepest moments over some food!

Think of an object that could be passed from storyteller to storyteller. Whilst they are holding the object, no-one else can speak.

Encourage anyone who is shy or reluctant to tell their story, and explain why storytelling is so effective. Stories stay in the memory whereas hard facts are often forgotten.

Celebrating your church and community: Activity 4



Purpose

To look back at the key events that have shaped both our church and the local community and to see what to build on for the future.



Materials you need

- Long piece of paper
- Marker pens
- Newspapers and/or magazines



Step by step

1. Get a long piece of paper and lay it across some tables with enough room for people to walk round it.
2. Draw a line from one end of the paper to the other and decide the length of time this represents it could be 1 year, 10 years or more.
3. As a group, decide the key events in the order in which they occurred and mark them on the line. Write the things that went well above the line and the things that did not go so well below the line.
4. Discuss why things went well and other things didn't go so well.
5. Spend 5 minutes doing individual spiritual reflection in whichever way works best for your group. This might be sitting in silence, listening to music, writing, reading the bible or a pre-prepared reflection from the facilitator.



Hints and tips

You could use pictures from magazines or newspapers to illustrate the events on the timeline.

If there is a large group (more than 10) make sure everyone can see the timeline and can contribute. Otherwise do 2 or 3 groups and compare timelines at the end of the session.

It is important as a facilitator to keep the momentum of the activity going and don't get too stuck on one particular event. It is also important to explore with the group why an event was good or bad and what lessons or insights have they gained from it to apply to the future.