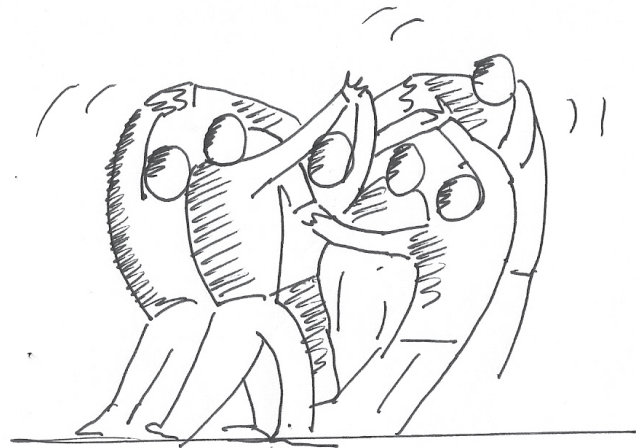




Engaging the Community:
Energisers
and Learning
Games



mosaic
creative

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ENERGISERS

Circle games

Zip zap boing

Stand in a circle. Put your hands in the praying position. Point them to the right and say zip, point to the left and say zap and point to someone across the circle when you say boing. Whoever is pointed to has to continue. You are out if you say the wrong word for your action.

5 and 7

Stand in a circle and count in turn as you go round. When you get to a number that is a multiple of 5, clap instead of speaking; when you get to a number that is a multiple of 7 you turn around instead of speaking. If anyone fails to do so they are out.

1-21

The idea of this game is to avoid being the person who says 21 so as in the last game count round the circle and each person can say 1, 2 or 3 numbers until someone has no choice but to say 21 and then that person is out.

Elephant giraffe toaster

The group stands in a circle. Demonstrate the different positions for three people. For elephant, the middle person uses an arm for the trunk and those on either side raise their elbows for ears. For the giraffe, the middle person puts an arm up in the air and those on either side put one leg forward. For the toaster, those on either side join hands and the one in the middle jumps up and down like toast.

Stand in the middle of the circle. Turn around, point to someone and say either elephant, giraffe or toaster. The person appointed is the middle person, so that person and the two either side of him/her then act out the word. Any one of the three who hesitates or gets it wrong takes your place in the middle.

All move who...

Stand or sit in a circle. One person stands in the middle and says all move who.. and then add for example:

Are wearing something blue
Can speak two languages
Got up before 6.00am this morning
Had eggs for breakfast
Passed their driving test first time etc etc

Those concerned move to a place vacated by someone else and the person in the middle also tries to get a spare seat. The person left in the middle gives another 'all move who'..

The Rename Game

Have a laugh by getting everyone to rename themselves: their first name becomes the name of their pet, or family pet (most families have had a pet at some time), and their second name becomes the name of the street they live on. For example, I would be Dexter Gipsy.

Throwing the ball

Stand in a circle and throw a ball to someone, who then throws the ball to someone else until everyone has received the ball. Each person must remember the person they threw the ball to and the person they received the ball from. Then try to do the same thing again and time how long it takes to throw the ball to everyone. Keep repeating and trying to beat your time.

If this is a new group of people you could ask people to introduce themselves first and then everyone names the person they are throwing the ball to. This would be a good way of learning names as well as having fun.

Throwing the ball is also a good way to review a training session/day. As the ball is thrown, the person who receives then says one thing they have learned during the day/session before throwing the ball to the next person.

No teeth

This is a 'you only lose when you laugh' game. The group sits in a circle and you tell them they may not show their teeth. To speak they must pull their lips inward around their teeth to hide them. One person says to the person next to them,

"Is Mrs Mangle home?"

The person responds, "I don't know, I'll ask her neighbour."

This keeps going around the circle. When someone's teeth show due to laughter, they are out.

Alphabet game

Go round the group – and each person in turn names something in the room that begins with a letter of the alphabet, starting with 'A'. You may have to be creative with some letters.

Like throwing the ball, this is also a good game for reviewing a training session. Each person thinks of relevant words relating to the training they have just received. Again these phrases or words must correspond to the appropriate letter of the alphabet.

Post-it on the forehead game

You could use biblical characters or famous people for this game. Write the names of the biblical characters or famous people on post-it notes, one for each person. Then go round the group placing the post-it notes on each person's forehead so they can't see them. Each person in turn asks a question about their person that requires a yes or no answer. They keep asking questions until they get a no and then the next person asks questions about his person until he/she gets a no answer.

This game can be played in a circle or with everyone walking round the room.

Drama energisers

Individually

Ask people to walk round the room, then after a few seconds ask them to walk in different ways, eg

As if they are being followed
As if they have just had their first date
As if there is a bee buzzing round them
As if they need the toilet
As if they are on hot coals
Make up your own

Exercises to do in pairs

Put each pair at the opposite end of the room to each other. Then ask them to greet each other as if they are meeting someone at the airport who they haven't seen for years.

One of the pair must be a parent and the other a toddler in a supermarket. The toddler has a tantrum

In groups of 4 or 5

Ask people to form a tableau to represent:

A washing machine
A video game
A tractor
A wheelbarrow
Make up your own

Then you could make the tableaux biblical by suggesting:

The parable of the sower
The prodigal son
Peter walking on water
David and Goliath
The feeding of the 5000
Think of your own

Story telling

Give your group the first and last lines of a story. They can be completely random. Such as:

1st line – It was a lovely day and so John and Sarah decided to go for a walk

Last line – To this day they still don't understand what the old man was doing in the tree.

You say the first line and then each person in turn adds a sentence until someone can logically say the last line of the story.

Getting people into groups

Fruit salad, jungle, vegetable stew, fish soup

All sit on chairs in a circle, with no empty chairs. You stand in the centre. Participants name fruits (or wild animals, vegetable or fish) in sequence going round the circle up to the number of groups desired. The names are then repeated in sequence as you go round the rest of the participants. Then you name a fruit (animal, vegetable, fish) and all those who are that fruit have to move and sit elsewhere. You also try to sit on a vacated seat. The person left in the middle then says the name of another fruit and so on. When fruit salad (jungle, vegetable stew, fish soup) is shouted, everyone has to move. When there has been enough activity, end up in the middle yourself and then ask participants to form groups according to their fruit etc.

Picture jigsaw

Fun, active and can give a humorous group identity. Cut up as many postcards or pictures as there are groups to be formed, with one piece for each member. Jumble these up. Participants are each given or asked to take one piece each then try to find their counterparts to make the picture. The group can take its name from the picture.

Farm yard

This is similar to Picture jigsaw in that you write the name of farm yard animals on pieces of paper – as many animals as the number of groups you want and then ask everyone to take a piece of paper and make the noise of that animal. Then allow people to find the people who making the same animal sound as they are. They then name the group after their animal.

The grabbing game

Decide how many people you want in each group and then ask everyone to walk around the room. At regular intervals shout a number and ask people to get into groups of that number. There will be people left over but that doesn't matter. Keep going and then make the last number you call out the one with the ideal number per group. Assign any spares to the formed groups and then ask each group to give themselves a name.

The birthday line

Indicate an imaginary line down the middle of the room. One end of the line is January 1st and the other end is December 31st. Ask people to arrange themselves along the line according to their birthday. Then divide the line up into the number of groups you want. As an extra challenge you could ask them to do the birthday line without speaking.

LEARNING GAMES

Lowering/raising the stick

This would be a good game for the first module, 'Discovering our Vision' in 'Stories on the Street'



Purpose

The importance of working together on a common vision

Materials

1 straight stick – bamboo or broom handle

Method

Ask two rows of participants to stand either side of the stick.

Hold the stick in the air and ask the participants to balance it on their fingers so that it is horizontal.

Ask one participant to stand at one end to supervise.

The participants must then lower the stick to the ground making sure it stays horizontal all the way down.

If the supervisor judges the stick is not horizontal – they must start again.

Variations

For big groups, arrange participants in a line or in a star shape and ask them to all lower their sticks at the same time. This is a good exercise for mission areas or groups of churches all working towards a common goal. This exercise is a good way of exploring some of the tensions between churches.

Questions

- What was difficult about this exercise?
- What helped make it successful?
- What hindered?
- How did you feel?

Application:

- For the stick to stay horizontal everyone needs to work together
- Achieving a task always requires an element of leadership and co-ordination.
- When you are working on a project there is more than one goal – to achieve the task and keep everyone together and involved.
- Doing your own thing regardless of others upsets the equilibrium.
- We need to keep everyone together and involved to have a real sense of achievement.
- Going at someone else's pace can be frustrating but is worth it in the end. What do you have to do to make sure everyone is going at the same pace?
- For some people achieving the task is more important than keeping the team together – for others belonging to a team is the most important thing. If one overpowers the other – the goals are not achieved either because nothing gets done or achieving the task has left no sense of teamwork or ownership.

The Knotty Problem

Purpose

This is a good activity for thinking about having an attitude of humility and how we create ownership in the way we identify and solve problems with our community.

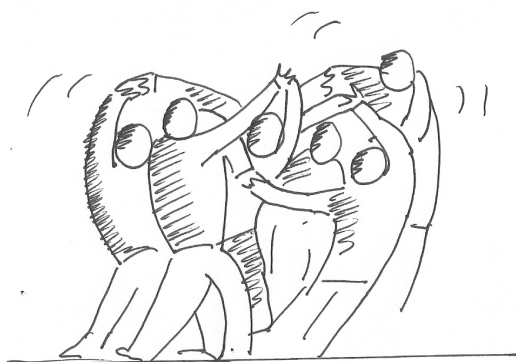
Materials

all participants

Method

Ask one person or two people to leave the room, depending on the size of the group (1 facilitator for up to 12 people and 2 facilitators for a larger group). When they have gone out, all the other participants join hands and tie themselves up in as complex a knot as possible. Then the person/people who have left the room is/are invited back again and asked to untie the knot without touching them – just by issuing instructions. When this has been achieved, everyone joins hands and ties themselves up again. Then the facilitator tells the group to unravel itself.

You should find that the unravelling is a lot quicker the second time.



Questions

To the unraveller

- What were some of the challenges to unravelling the group?
- What was frustrating?

To the group:

- Why was the unravelling easier the second time?

To everyone:

- What does this exercise tell us about how church and community addressing issues together?
- What challenges do they face?
- What is the role of the church when working with the community to address issues?

Application:

- Communities are the best solvers of their own problems.
- Outsiders can have a role but do not always see the whole picture.
- Outsiders need to work with the community and not be dependant on their own experience.
- Sometimes as Christians we may think we may know the answers to some of the issues in our communities but we need to build relationships with our community in a spirit of humility and together discover ways of addressing our issues.

The Bottle Game

Purpose

The value of working together and being alert and responsive to changing situations and threats.

Materials

One bottle

Method

Ask the participants to form a tight circle with one person in the middle.

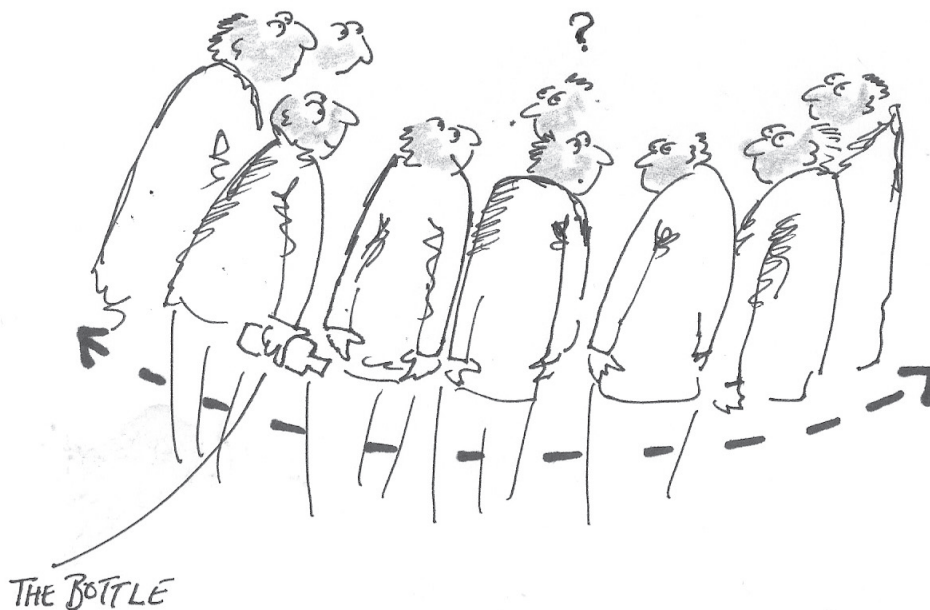
They then pass the bottle behind their backs and the person in the middle has to try to guess who has it. If he/she guesses correctly, the person with the bottle has to go into the middle.

Questions

- What helped achieve the task?
- What hindered?

Application:

- The ring of people represent the community and how they respond to changing situations and threats.
- We need to work closely together to achieve anything.
- We need be prepared and responsive and alert in working together.
- The person in the middle represents a threat or disaster to the community.



Chairs

Purpose

To show participants how to manage conflict by turning it into cooperation

Materials

10 chairs in a random pile in the middle of the room

Slips of paper with three instructions (see below)

Method

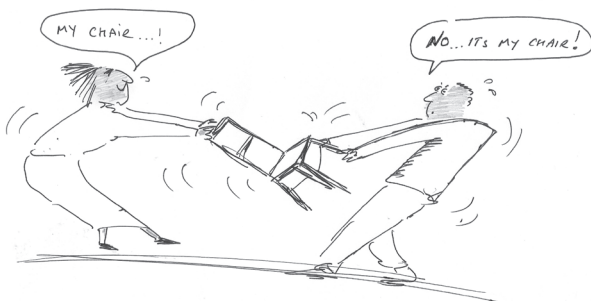
1. Give a third of the participants instruction A, a third, instruction B and the final third instruction C. Tell them not to show their slip of paper to anyone. The three instructions are as follows:

A Put the 10 chairs in a circle in the middle of the room

B Put the 10 chairs by the door

C Put the 10 chairs by the window

2. Tell everyone to start the exercise, following the instructions they have been given. Let the exercise run until the participants have found a solution. Stop after 15 mins if no solution has been reached.



Reflections

Quite often there are three phases to this exercise

First phase: initial burst of activity as people look to their own interests and people are defensive over their particular task

Second phase: As people realise they are acting against each other, people either become thoughtful and stand back and try to work out a solution or else become aggressive in a competitive way.

Third phase: One or two people initiate a compromise.

Application:

- Are there times in your experience of conflict when you have noticed these phases?
- What things can we do to address these situations so that the pulling in different directions doesn't last too long?
- Churches may be in competition with other churches for scarce resources and this creates tension and reduces the possibility of them working together to achieving something significant in the community. Or different denominations may not want to work together as they see the other as wrong.
- Individuals in the church often have different agendas and are not interested in helping anyone else and just want to focus on what they want to do. This creates conflict and cliques and prevents the church from working together to address a number of problems in a unified way.