

Tool #36: Creativity Exercises

The following exercises can serve as ice-breakers and discussion-starters at ministry development team meetings. Come up with new exercises of your own!

Dream Ministry: Divide people into three groups. Each group is assigned one of the following questions to discuss among themselves, then share with the whole team:

What kind of community ministry would you design if you had ...

- ❖ unlimited volunteer support (but limited funds and other resources)?
- ❖ unlimited funds (but limited volunteer support and other resources)?
- ❖ an unlimited supply of volunteers and funds?

Future-Perfect Vision: Imagine that you have moved away and are returning for a visit to your church after five years. You check out the progress the church has made in the arena of local missions, and you are absolutely thrilled. Describe in as much detail what you hear and see.

Variation: Assign different groups to answer the question based on different amounts of time elapsed: one year, five years, ten years.

Website Design (if your church does not already have a site): Divide into small groups and set a timer for 10 minutes. Using both sides of the brain, dream up a website for your church, including items such as a logo image ... ministry pages ... links ... updated features (sermons, daily devotionals, etc.) ... audio/video features ... message to seekers ... an artistic theme to hold it together. Don't get hung up on the technical realities — remember, the point is to be creative. Try to think from the point of view of someone who has never attended the church before. Compare notes between groups and give rewards for the best ideas.

Variation: If your church already has a website, design a set of pages for your new community ministry.

Ship Shape: Draw an outline of a hull on a large paper pad or whiteboard, to represent your church. One person at a time, add symbols, names and drawings to compose a picture that answers the question, "Where is our church in relation to community ministry?" As you are drawing, discuss questions such as:

- ❖ What kind of vessel are you sailing? (Luxury cruiser, fishing boat, submarine, lifeboat?)
- ❖ Which way is your boat headed? (Toward community ministry? Away from it? Backing into it?)
- ❖ Who's on your crew? (Who is at the helm? Who is the visionary lookout? Who is feeding the crew?)
- ❖ What's the weather like? (Are the waters calm or choppy? What storms might be on the horizon?)
- ❖ Who else is on the sea with you? (Other churches, nonprofits, community leaders and organizations?) Are you moving toward the same goal? How might you sail better together?
- ❖ Why are you sailing? (Fishing expedition? Seeking sunken treasure? Rescuing people lost at sea?)

After you have spent time on the drawing, discuss:

- ❖ Is there anything in this picture you wish were different? What would it take to change the picture?

Footprints: Give everyone five blank papers, cut in the shape of a footprint or with an outline of a footprint. Read Ephesians 2:10: "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." This verse indicates that the ministry team's work depends on the advance work of the Spirit to prepare the way. The church's ministry journey follows in these "footprints" of God's influence.

Ask each person to think about the people, programs, experiences, resources, role models, etc. that God has used to prepare them for the work of community ministry; then write these down, one per footprint. Set up a trail on the wall or floor leading to a goal (a heart with the name of the community on it, or other symbol of local ministry). Invite each person to select one footprint to share with the group as they tape it onto the trail. Discuss how God is now using the ministry team to prepare a ministry trail for others to follow. Close with a prayer of thanksgiving for these trailblazing gifts.

Variation: To add an element of competition, divide the team into two groups, each with a pile of blank footprints. Create two paths of equal length, meeting at the goal. Each team fills in the footprints as above, taping each completed footprint onto their trail (heel-toe). The first team to complete their trail wins a prize.