



Build a Strong Group Identity within your class or ABF – April 03

Many adult midsize groups are suffering from an identity crisis. That's right! They are either confused or at a loss over figuring out who and what they are. They are existing without a purpose. They would tell you their class was dead if they could hear you, but they linger in their comatose state. Other classes have just lost their focus. They have forgotten what made them a group in the first place. If your group is suffering with an identity ailment then following are four key issues that help contribute to an ABF or midsize class having a strong and healthy "group identity."

1. The group's make-up affects its identity

What brings people together to form the class? What do they have in common? Most churches use four basic classifications: Age Span (A range of ages such as couples and singles in their 20s and 30s); Life-stage (A specific stage such as young married, empty nesters or Parents of Teens); Mutual interest (A specific interest such as a worship ministries community, a multi-generational class, women's class); and Geographical Boundaries (For those who live south of the church, in a specific school district, or from a particular town or city). Whatever it is that brings your together rally around it! Make it an issue that unites you.

2. The group's personality affects its identity

Each ABF has a personality. What types of personalities and attitudes are prevalent in your group? What words do people use to describe your group? Do they use terms such as friendly, warm, fun, active, or cliquish, cold, unorganized, or even dead? Work and strategize to bring out (or refocus) your ABFs personality.

3. The group's vision affects its identity

Where is the group going? Where does it want to go? What is it trying to accomplish? What potential is there with the current mix of talents, gifts, passions, etc. of the group members? I encourage ABFs to develop their own one sentence mission statements to give them direction and purpose. Check out a Ford car dealership and read their mission statement on the wall, every ABF should have one too!

4. The group's name affects its identity

Does the name of your group reflect who is in the group? Or who it is trying to reach? Some ABFs do not realize it, but their group name can a positive or negative affect when it comes to building a strong group identity. Most names reflect either the life-stage of the group (Home Builders, Family Matters) , the goal of the group (Ambassadors, Fresh Start) or some just have a cool or different name (Synergy, Impact) or a biblical word or phrase (Emmaus, Living Water, Potter's Clay). What does your ABFs name reflect? Some groups need to change their name because their group make up or focus of the group has changed. For those of you who have the teacher's name as your class name you will probably struggle with building a strong group identity.

This material was adapted from the ABF Class Leader Training Course by Stephen T. Lizzio. You can purchase this material through this website. Send comments to steve@abfresources.com