

Module 1: Come On In! Gathering Activities - Autograph Alley

Autograph Alley is designed to be one of three entry points for engaging participants as they gather. It invites participants to clarify and affirm their sense of belonging to God's Family and your own congregation or church family. Participants are invited to initiate an ongoing opportunity for people of all ages to affirm their identity and sense of belonging to God's Family and their own congregation by placing their autograph on a designed bulletin board display. Young children may be encouraged to draw a simple self-portrait.

The Leader's Notes for this activity, along with any needed preparations and supplies are outlined below. A Program Planning Grid (PDF File) is available to assist you in coordinating the details and/or tasks involved. You may want to display a sign to distinguish the Come On In! Gathering Activities from the other Hide-n- Seek Discovery Centers.

Approximate time: 1-5 minutes.

Equipment and Supplies:

- Autograph Alley info sheet A-B (PDF file)
- A copy of the Bulletin Board designs: A-E (PDF)
- A large bulletin board or display area
- Newsprint or large white paper roll
- Overhead projector, transparencies and markers
- Stapler
- Markers

Leader's Notes:

Photocopy Bulletin Board designs, B-E onto overhead transparencies. Then, use an overhead projector to enlarge the designs for display on a bulletin board. Design A provides a sample layout for Designs B-E.

You might initiate this activity by placing your own signature or self-portrait on the board prior to the event. Encourage participants of all ages to make their "mark" on the board to express their commitment to membership and participation in the Family of God and their own congregation or church family.

Prepare a sample of the "All Ye, All Come Free" Community I.D. and Discovery card. The Check-in Center, A Come On in! Gathering Activity, provides a pattern for duplicating them and an outline for introducing the role they will play in this event.

Lay out a variety of colored markers so that participants can express their own individuality and creativity.

Activity:

Encourage participants to go to the Check-in Center first. There, they will receive a Community I.D. and Discovery Card that will be beneficial to their participation in other event components. .

Refer to the Community ID as you invite participants to identify some communities in which they indicated a sense of belonging or identity, e.g. clubs, organizations, school or work affiliation, family associations. Suggest that there are various reasons why we have an association with them, e.g. family-birth, athletic involvement-interest in recreation.

Draw their attentions to the bulletin board design. Point out that there are at least two communities that exist to nurture our sense of belonging and identity to God. In fact, they were both initially God's idea!

It is God's desire that we be in a relationship or community with God. The Prophet Isaiah affirms God's intent in Isaiah 43:1b, "I have called you by name and you are mine." (You might want to display this text on Autograph Alley info sheet - A as you give reference to it.) In Baptism, we celebrate the fact that we are one of God's kids and a lifelong member of God's Family. God also provides us with people to live and grow with in faith and community. Churches or congregations equip and inspire people of all ages to live their lives with God in heart and mind. They provide occasions for worship, education and encouragement and support. They also provide opportunities for us to share the many talents, gifts and resources that God has given us through leadership and service. Display the Colossians 3:16 text on Autograph Alley info sheet - B and, if time permits, ask participants to identify some the opportunities you have to gather and give in your congregation.

Invite participants to indicate their involvement and participation in both communities of faith. Encourage them to sign their name or draw a picture of themselves.

You might consider expanding this activity to include others in your congregation who are not in attendance at this program or event.