
Bonding
Section B

MORE BONDING ACTIVITIES

INTRODUCTION

In a fraternity, one of the most important processes that occurs is that of bonding. For bonding to take place, it is vital that all Brothers participate in an on-going process of developing mutual experiences.

Such experiences provide a feeling of being welcome and secure in the group and with individual Brothers, promote pride in the Chapter and in each other, and help each Brother to understand and appreciate the differences between the men they call Brothers.

In this section, we have provided examples of a variety of types of bonding exercises. Additional bonding activities may be found by asking your campus Greek Adviser, Psychology Department, etc..

Ideas that you discover from those sources that are not included here should be forwarded to the AΓP Headquarters for inclusion in updates of this section.

GOLDEN CRESCENT BROTHER'S MANUAL

The *Golden Crescent Brother's Manual* has been designed to replace the "pledge book" or signature book used by many Chapters to facilitate bonding and exchanging of basic personal information between new and older Brothers.

Each book has had pages added for each Brother in that Chapter for Brothers to exchange basic personal information. A format for the exchange of informal Chapter history items is also included in each book.

One format is the "Interview" format, where Brothers interview each other given some basic questions. The interviewing Brother records the results of the interview (which should last at least 1/2 hour), and gets the Brother's signature as "proof" of completion of that interview.

When new Brothers are initiated, all other Brothers seek out their signatures as well, and the process continues anew.

When a Brother graduates, he will have his *Golden Crescent* as a keepsake, and as a journal for his time in the Chapter.

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The purpose of educational activities is to get the Brothers together to

learn about personal development, learn about and discuss important issues that affect them as fraternity men or members of the college or general community, to learn more about AΓP, to learn about each other, and to learn or relearn about topics necessary to have a safe AΓP environment (risk management, etc).

While this list is certainly not a complete list of educational activities, it will give sufficient good examples for the VNR-Membership Development to use.

Activity: Society and Greeks:

Invite the fraternity adviser to make a presentation to the Chapter about how social climate, attitudes, and behavior have affected the founding, growth, and problems with, the local or international greek system.

This activity not only provides the Brothers with insight on why problems exist and, perhaps, possible solutions, but also helps the chapter to get to know the fraternity adviser. Such a positive relationship with the Brothers is also very helpful.

Activity: Tools for Academic Success:

Schedule workshops on time management, study skills, library use, dealing with stress, etc.. Be sure to use on-campus resources, who will be happy, at no charge, to do such sessions for the Brothers.

The presenter should also be asked to discuss those other resources available for a Brother who needs help.

These workshops provide valuable assistance to Brothers who may be having trouble and are wary of getting help on their own.

Activity: Greek Awareness:

Invite the presidents of the several greek umbrella organizations, the greek advisor, and the dean of students to serve as a panel and give a presentation on the various types of greek organizations -- how they are alike, how they differ. The Chapter may want to sponsor this for the

entire greek community.

This event will promote better understanding about how other groups work, and promote the need for interfraternal cooperation.

Activity: Recruitment Seminar:

Conduct a recruitment seminar for the Chapter, prior to a formal recruitment period.

This session can be conducted by the Chapter's VNR-Recruitment, or an outside speaker such as an alumnus, Adviser, Reg

Subjects discussed should include:

1. How to approach a person to start a conversation;
2. What type of things to talk about;
3. What qualities and attributes to look for;
4. How to determine his interest;
5. How to talk about your Fraternity;
6. "Closing" - getting the prospect to commit to ATP.

These are all great for role playing exercises. Refer to the VNR-Recruitment's Manual and the "Teaching Techniques" section of the VNR-Membership manual appendix for advice on role playing.

The biggest problem Chapters have with recruitment is lack of knowledge about how to recruit, and the resulting apprehension about being involved when recruitment starts. This session helps to solve that problem.

Activity: Discussion Groups:

Discussion groups, or "bull sessions", provide an important forum for the Chapter membership to discuss issues that affect them and ATP.

The VNR-Membership Development or Noble Ruler should act as a moderator, and simple rules of courtesy should be followed. Everyone should be encouraged to contribute.

The goal is to gain a better understanding of each other's way of thinking, and, hopefully, to create ways to improve Chapter life.

Subjects to discuss may include:

1. What is good about our Chapter?
2. Why is it good?
3. What is less than perfect about our Chapter? Why? What can we do to improve it?
4. What constitutes a "good" alumnus?
5. What are the ideals of AΓP? How can we live up to them?
6. What is Brotherhood? What are examples of a "good Brother"?
7. How do you respond to a friend who says "frats are horrible"? Why do people have that perception? What can we do to change it?
8. What about AΓP are you most proud of? Is there anything about the Fraternity that embarrasses you?
9. What Chapter programs are the best? What should we do that is new? What should we get rid of?
10. Why is the IFC important? What can we do to improve it?
11. How is Brotherhood different from simple friendship? How do we demonstrate that difference?

12. What is our image on campus? Is it accurate? What can we do to improve our image?

HELPFUL ACTIVITIES

These activities are designed to provide a bonding experience through helping others.

Many Chapters already do a great deal of this type of programming, and are to be commended.

Those who don't must seriously investigate getting so involved.

We have not listed here the many philanthropic fund raising activities that are available. While certainly as valuable as bonding activities, such events are usually very elaborate, and need much more planning and involvement than can be accurately described here, and are beyond the scope of what the VNR-Membership Development can do alone.

Chapters interested in philanthropic activities should organize a separate committee to investigate such service.

Activity: Visiting Those Less Fortunate Than Us:

Schedule a visit to a retirement home or a home for underprivileged children. Brothers may want to bring gifts, or entertain the residents by playing games with them, singing, or just talking.

Activity: Neighborhood Cleanup:

Schedule, through the appropriate local government organization, for the Chapter to clean up a block or a larger area.

Activity: Canned Food Drive:

Working either on campus, at a local supermarket, or both, Brothers publicize and then collect canned food for distribution to the needy.

Activity: Etiquette Training:

While one may chuckle about this activity, the fact is that too many people do not receive training in this important area.

One's future business or professional success may be negatively affected without a knowledge of how gentlemen behave in public.

Parents or home economics professors can be helpful in conducting such a session.

Activity: Blood Drive:

On campus or in the community, have the Chapter work with the local Red Cross to conduct a blood drive. Brothers would provide logistical support - signing people up, cleanup afterwards, etc. If the Chapter is housed, offer use of the house.

Activity: House Maintenance:

Chapters should schedule regular and frequent "work days",

under the supervision of the VNR-Management & Operations and/or the Alumni Corporation Board, to do routine maintenance, minor repairs, and overall cleanup.

BONDING OF BROTHERS AS A RESULT OF PERSONAL PROBLEMS

This bonding is the type that occurs when the Chapter or individual Brothers are dealing with pain in their lives.

At that time, bonding occurs when the Brothers are sensitive to the problem and help those with a problem to cope with and or work through the problem.

Things that can be done include:

1. Bringing in counselors from campus to teach the Brothers how to console and counsel other Brothers, how to spot a problem or dangerous symptoms, and where to get them help.
2. Confronting a Brother who has done something wrong, by condemning the action without condemning the Brother as a human being, and helping him to correct that wrong (hate the sin, but not the sinner).
3. Paying a condolence call and attending the funeral of a Brother's family member who has passed away.
4. Reassuring a Brother that a recent problem (grades, girlfriend, money problems, etc) are not the end of the world, and being of whatever help you can be.
5. Taking a Brother for counseling when he is afraid of going on his own.
6. Discussing, honestly and openly, as a Chapter, a recent failure of the Chapter, and how it can be remedied and avoided in the future.
7. Helping a Brother get help for an alcohol, drug, or legal problem.

FUN BONDING

These are the types of activities that everyone likes -- a good time for all. Many fun activities are scheduled under the auspices of other Chapter committees -- social, sports, etc..

We have avoided listing the activities that would normally be on a Chapter's calendar in other areas -- social schedule, intramural, etc., etc. to avoid redundancy.

This listing includes events and activities that might not normally be elsewhere on a Chapter's schedule, but would still provide fun bonding to the Brothers.

Activity: Chapter Study Break:

During exam periods, sponsor pizza parties, dessert breaks, or similar activities to give the Brothers a brief break from studying. Food functions are always popular.

In some cases, sports activities are also popular to take the Brothers' minds briefly off of the burden of studying. Such events should be brief -- an hour or two at most, so that Brothers won't feel they are giving up too much time.

Activity: Skit Night:

The VNR-Membership Development should split the Chapter randomly into smaller groups -- seven to ten men each. Each group prepares a skit that highlights, in an amusing (but not offensive!) light, various aspects of chapter life and personalities within the Chapter.

During an evening, the skits are presented to the rest of the

Chapter. Refreshments should be provided afterwards.

To heighten the anticipation, the VNR-Membership Development may want to keep who is in what group a secret from the rest, so that their preparations and skit are a surprise the night it is presented.

Activity: College Bowl:

With the VNR-Membership Development serving as Master of Ceremonies, teams of Brothers compete to answer questions about the Fraternity, the Chapter, the campus, etc..

To make it really interesting, prizes should be given to the winning team, consisting perhaps of services provided by losing teams -- x hours of work to clean rooms, do laundry, wash cars, etc.

Activity: Serenading:

The Chapter goes to the sororities (either at their houses or, if there is no housing, at a time and place prearranged with the sororities) and sings to them tasteful songs.

Local traditions may also dictate that other events occur along with the singing.

Activity: Brothers Only Night:

Too often, Chapters spend a lot of time entertaining everyone else. Every once in a while, the Chapter should schedule a "Brothers Only Night", perhaps starting with a nice dinner, then a special activity -- going to a sporting event, bringing in a wide screen TV and watching movies or sports, etc., followed by a special Good and Welfare, and the singing of the Fraternity song and/or other songs and chants.

GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

This section details exercises compiled by the Fraternity that, on a formal basis, facilitate interaction between the Brothers to cause bonding. All Brothers should be involved in these exercises.

There are two types of Getting to Know Each Other Exercises:

1. Icebreakers:

These should be used when new Brothers have just been initiated or have only been in the Fraternity for a few weeks or months.

2. General Program:

When the group has been through icebreakers, these exercises continue the process of learning about each other.

Icebreakers:

Title: "Brother to Brother"

Focus: Initial knowledge about each other

Length: One hour

Procedure: The VNR-Membership Development serves as facilitator for this exercise.

Have the Brothers pair off, but not with their best friends in the Chapter.

Big and Little Brothers should be separated.

Provide each Brother with pencil and paper.

The VNR-Membership Development then asks each Brother to write the answers to the following questions, emphasizing that this is currently not a discussion, but a reflective exercise:

1. What is an obscure fact about yourself that no one or very few people know?
2. What is your most significant academic experience so far?
3. What was your greatest fear in coming to college?
4. What is your strongest skill?
5. What is the characteristic or personality trait that you would most like to improve?

6. What has been your worst failure so far?
 7. How has the Fraternity most helped you to grow?
 8. What do you dislike, if anything, about the Fraternity?
- After each Brother has completed his answers, ask the teams to share their responses with each other.

Allow plenty of time for sharing, since sharing will help them learn more about each other, and therefore allow a stronger relationship to occur.

After the teams have shared, ask some teams to share with the entire group what they have come up with. This helps the group bonding process.

Closure: To finish the exercise, ask the Brothers how the Fraternity might better help them become better people. Be sure to note those good ideas that result.

Title: "Taking a Chance"

Focus: Tests the willingness of Brothers to take an unidentified risk.

Length: 30 to 45 minutes

Procedure: The VNR-Membership Development begins by saying "I need volunteers to take part in an exercise that carries potentially very high risks for the participants. Would anyone like to volunteer?"

If anyone asks questions, the VNR-Membership Development simply responds with "Just trust me." (Most likely, the VNR-Membership Development will receive few, if any, volunteers.)

The VNR-Membership Development then waits for several minutes and then says "You have just completed the exercise."

If any Brothers did volunteer, the VNR-Membership Development then asks them to explain their reasons for offering themselves as participants in what was stated to be a high risk activity.

Closure: The VNR-Membership Development concludes with a group discussion of risk-taking, trust - why it is important in a fraternity, **and its limits**, and the potential problems with blind faith rather than trust.

Title: "I Expect"

Focus: To understand what others are looking for in AΓP

Length: 45 minutes to one hour

Procedure: After distributing paper and pencils to the Brothers, the VNR-Membership Development asks each Brother to write down the following statement:

"From the Chapter, I expect,"

"From my Big Brother, I expect,"

"From myself, I expect,"

The group is then given ten minutes to complete all three statements.

When the ten-minute period has elapsed, the VNR-Membership Development collects the papers. Then, without revealing the identities of the writers, he reads all the first statements out loud.

He then starts a discussion of the Brothers expectations, if they are reasonable, and how the Chapter does or can achieve those expectations.

Ten to fifteen minutes should be allowed for this discussion.

The next two statements are handled in the same way.

Closure: The VNR-Membership Development summarizes the top three or four frequently stated expectations, and the solutions, if any, that the Chapter has offered to meet those expectations.

Title: "Dimensions of Trust"

Focus: To brainstorm and discuss those actions that create trust

Length: 30 minutes

Procedure: A blackboard or flip chart, masking tape, and something to write with, are needed.

The VNR-Membership Development begins by requesting the Brothers think about what the word "trust" means.

The VNR-Membership Development then asks the Brothers to brainstorm for those actions or personal characteristics that they feel build or promote trust. The VNR-Membership Development writes down all answers.

It should be pointed out to the Brothers that the rules of brainstorming are that no one may comment on another's idea, no idea is too crazy or out of line for inclusion, and that all are encouraged to offer their ideas. This should be about 10 minutes.

Then, the VNR-Membership Development asks the Brothers to brainstorm specific actions and characteristics that can help them build trust in one another. He writes down their answers. This should be about ten minutes.

The group then spends five minutes discussing each list, specifically if the items listed are reasonable and how best to include them in one's life.

Closure: The VNR-Membership Development then asks the group to consider the importance of incorporating the ideas they have discussed into their dealings with each other and with other people.

Title: "Human Scavenger Hunt"

Focus: To get the Brothers to mix while learning a little about each other.

Length: About an hour

Procedure: Prior to the event, the VNR-Membership Development surveys the Brothers and develops a list of:

1. Hobbies;
2. Personal quirks;
3. Favorite bands;
4. Hometowns;
5. Famous relatives;
6. Nicknames;
7. Other interesting facts.

From this, the VNR-Membership Development creates a list of ten or more questions that are unique to a Brother or group of Brothers, for example:

1. Which Brothers are from Pike County?
2. Which Brother spent junior year in England?
3. Who is called "Bozo" and why?

At the event, the VNR-Membership Development passes out the questions to each Brother, explaining that the Brother who gets the highest score gets a prize. (That prize is at the discretion of the VNR-Membership Development, and should

be meaningful but not extravagant.)

They must then spend the next 45 minutes questioning the other Brothers to come up with the correct answers.

After 45 minutes, the VNR-Membership Development calls time, and asks Brothers standing next to each other to exchange papers for grading.

The VNR-Membership Development then goes over the answers, and Brothers correct the paper they have, write the number of correct answers on the page, and return it to its owner.

The VNR-Membership Development then asks those Brothers who got one right to raise their hands, two right, three right, and so on until the Brother(s) with the highest score is revealed.

Closure: Awarding of a prize to the Brother(s) who got the highest score.

GENERAL PROGRAM

Title: "Autobiography"

Focus: Sharing perceptions of each other

Length: One hour

Materials: Supply of old newspapers, rolls of tape, and, for each participant, a blank sheet of newsprint and a pair of scissors; also, a large enough room to spread out in.

Procedure: The VNR-Membership Development explains that the Brothers will be helping each other compose brief biographies of each other.

The group is split into groups of four to six people. Each group is given a stack of newspapers and a roll of tape. Each Brother receives a sheet of blank newsprint and a pair of scissors.

Each group member writes his name at the top of the newsprint.

All the blank sheets are taped to a wall to allow unrestricted access to each sheet.

From the newspapers, each Brother clips key words, phrases, or sentences that they feel describe other Brothers in his group.

Each Brother must select at least five clippings for each Brother in his group. Those clippings are added to the appropriate Brother's sheet.

If desired, Brothers can add to sheets from Brothers in other groups.

Closure: Brothers volunteer to read from the sheets prepared about them.

- Title:** "Run for Office"
- Focus:** Sharing perceptions of each other, thoughts about qualifications needed to hold office.
- Length:** 45 minutes
- Materials:** Pad and pencil for each Brother.
- Procedure:** After giving each Brother pad and pencil, the VNR-Membership Development explains that in this exercise each Brother is running for Noble Ruler of the Chapter.
- The VNR-Membership Development then asks the Brothers to list their qualifications for office, basing their comments upon their self-perceptions, so that their campaign manager can begin to prepare their campaign.
- After five minutes the VNR-Membership Development asks a volunteer to assume the role of his own campaign manager, and read his list of qualifications to the group.
- The VNR-Membership Development seeks volunteers until all have read their lists.
- The group then discusses how, in general terms, the Brothers presented themselves -- how their self perception matches or doesn't match what others think of them.
- The group then discusses their perceptions of what makes a good Chapter Noble Ruler or Chapter leader.
- Closure:** With the current Noble Ruler being excused, based on the lists and their presentation, the group votes on who would make a good Noble Ruler.

Title: "Trust Me"

Focus: Reinforcing previous exercise on trust

Length: 45 minutes

Materials: Blindfolds for half of the Chapter members.

Procedure: The VNR-Membership Development explains that this exercise will require each Brother to trust another Brother.

The VNR-Membership Development instructs the Brothers to select another Brother as a partner whom he feels he can trust.

Once all Brothers are paired off, each pair receives one blindfold.

One Brother blindfolds his partner, so that the partner cannot see.

Without talking, each sighted partner then takes his partner for a walk around the room or the building.

The sighted partner guides the blind partner in touching various objects.

After ten minutes, the partners change roles and repeat the exercise.

Closure: After this process is finished, the group reassembles and discusses their feelings about the experience of being both the sighted and blindfolded partner, and how trust is factored into their feelings.

Title: "Creative Team Building"

Focus: To create team building exercises for the Chapter

Length: 45 minutes

Needed: Large area with free movement, several semi-private locations.

Procedure: The VNR-Membership Development divides the group into work groups of 4 or 5. He then explains that the Brothers will be taking part in an activity that will challenge their creativity. Each work group is to create an exercise or game that the work group members feel will promote or build group spirit.

After explaining that the game or exercise should be less than five minutes in length and that it should involve all the participants, the VNR-Membership Development tells each work group to find an area where its members can work with some degree of privacy.

The work groups have ten minutes in which to devise their creative, team building activities.

When the ten minutes have elapsed, the VNR-Membership Development calls the work groups together.

Each work group then leads the group in its team building exercise.

Closure: After all of the work groups have presented their team builders, the VNR-Membership Development asks the Chapter to vote on its favorite exercise after allowing some limited debate from each work group about why theirs is the best.