

BRAINSTORMING ONE OF THE VERY BEST PROBLEM-SOLVING TECHNIQUES

Suggestion: read through this entire sheet with your group before you brainstorming session begins.

Lots of people feel this exercise is just producing a bunch of off-the-wall-ideas that everybody can argue about. They misunderstand that the volume of ideas is spawned by not arguing about each one as it comes up. There will be time later to debate strengths and weaknesses, but not yet.

This is similar to the shopping for a car and visiting five dealers who each show you ten cars. By looking at 50 vehicles you learn which features you do want or don't want.

If the only car you look at is your uncle's because "the price is right," chances are you may be disappointed three months later when you find out what that same money could have bought you.

1. Strengths

Having many ideas sheds far more light. "To have a good ideas, have lots of them." *Edison*
Bad ideas spawn better ideas—spawn even better ideas—often spawning a great idea.

2. Weaknesses

Stopping at 5 or 10 possible solutions is easy, but almost always less productive. Your best ideas may **OFTEN** come after 25 or 30 suggestions have been put forth.
Selecting "committee" members who are impatient. Creative people are often very patient.
Stopping too soon when you think you have reached a feasible solution.
Passing judgment in early stage is foolish.

3. Tips

Write every idea on the board or huge pad of paper for everyone to see.
Explain the "rules" below—tell them that the **GOAL** is to find the best solutions.
THE **GOAL**: we want to think of 5 effective solutions [not just 1 great one] to such-and-such a problem [difficult situation, snafu, complication, divisive issue, maybe even a personality conflict, etc.]
In Round One criticism is forbidden until we have at least 25 fresh ideas on the board.
Wild ideas [even expensive or irrational] ones go on the list.
Hitch-hike on the last suggestion: *adapt, modify, magnify, substitute, rearrange, reverse.*
NO ONE EVER SAYS ANYTHING NEGATIVE ABOUT ANYONE'S IDEAS until after an hour of thinking, and then everyone is expected to think negatively about every suggestion.
When you strongly disagree with an idea set forth, say, "Oo-oo, that made me think about blah-blah-blah!" There will be time later to explain blatant weaknesses, or disastrous results.
Distracting dissenters and negative parties must be kindly asked to dismiss themselves.
Learn to pick out people, creative thinkers, outside-the-box people.
If a member realizes that he/she can't stand this kind of thinking, let him remove himself.

4. Examples of problems to be solved

Reaching every child in 2-mile radius with invitations to VBS 6 different times.
Starting a Spanish radio broadcast or Spanish-interpretor ministry in morning worship.
Paying for building improvements.
Recruiting & training new Sunday School teachers.
Stopping the exit of families who go to _____ Church.
Getting more kids out to youth meetings.
Raising scholarship money for camp [or trip to Haiti, feed the poor neighbors, paving the parking lot, etc.]

On the next page are the results a session I led starting with experienced, creative people and a blank sheet of paper. Many suggestions were cost or time prohibitive. Most were never employed. Many were tried in outreach programs throughout nearby communities and thousands of kids were touched. This took more than one hour-long session. Population of town = 125,000.

Brainstorming Idea File

Reaching every kid within 7 miles of our church.

Actual results

KID'S BIBLE CLUBHOUSES

1. Go to beach
2. Talent Night
3. Parents' Night/Awards Nite
4. Pool party
5. Hang posters in schools
6. Invite principal to Clubhouse
7. Invite parents to music recitals
8. Open house for bros & sis
9. Music groups by earning pts

ACTIVITIES & PARTY IDEAS

1. Pie eating contest
2. Picnic
3. Slumber party
4. In the projects camp-in
5. Scavenger hunt
6. Pizza party
7. Donut Day: dangle, relay, eating
8. Ice cream Blast
9. Circus Day: booths: bean bag sponge throw, cake walk, stilts...
10. Acrobatics or karate demo
11. Magic Show
12. Pretzel, sno-cone, Bubblegum, Cotton candy, or Watermelon Day
13. Drama or Hillbilly Day
14. Neighborhood hike
15. Visit a factory
16. Fishing trip
17. Pet Show
18. Tricycle Derby
19. Bowling Party
20. Hay Ride
21. Hot dog roast
22. Arts or Craft Contest
23. Pancake breakfast
24. Trip to fire or train station, airport or harbor
25. Skating party
26. Backwards Day
27. Campout at a park

ON SCHOOL PROPERTY

1. Special assemblies
2. Sports events
3. Go to carnivals, bake sales, etc.
4. Flyers thru school kids

FOR TOURISTS' KIDS

1. Tracts on the beach
2. Babysitting services on the beach
3. "Chalk Talks" on the beach
3. Clubhouse on the beach

SERVICE PROJECTS

1. Clean a park
2. Clean a shut-ins' yard, rake leaves
3. Wash her car

4. Clean pastor's yard [*shine his shoes*] AT PARKS

1. Chalk talks
2. Clubhouse monthly
3. Clown ministry
4. Teach classes: human pyramids, elementary gymnastics, crafts, kite building, etc.
5. Marshmallow roast

HOLIDAY IDEAS

1. Birthday Party for Jesus
2. Christmas celebration
3. Caroling in hospital or mall
4. Decorate store windows, Chr or Halloween—kids submit drawings first and then locate stores to cooperate or decorate windows on a street
5. Lincoln's birthday party
6. Sweetheart community project
7. Easter play about birth and rez
8. Green parade on St. Pat's Day
9. Easter egg hunt
10. Father's day all day sports event
11. 4th of July parade around block
12. Halloween Party or Trail
13. Trick or treat and pass out tracts
14. Babysit on election day
15. Thanksgiving dinner or parade

FOOD THEMES

Probably at the church

1. Popcorn
2. Longest bananananana split
3. Watermelon eating contest
4. Apple bobbing contest
5. Popcorn balls
6. Taffy pull
7. Hot choc & marshmallow nite
8. Deliver a plate of choc chip cookies to Church neighbors. *Kids can make the cookies on location, or every kid has to bring a plate with 25 cookies to give away.*

FIELD TRIPS

1. Zoo
2. Disney
3. Parrot Jungle
4. Sea World
5. Planetarium
6. Airport
7. Wax museum
8. State parks
9. Keys
10. Air boat ride
11. Everglades
12. Tour of McDonalds

Kids pay full price
Parents are invited

SPECIAL EVENTS

1. Kite flying contest
2. Baseball, kickball, softball
3. Sidewalk roller skating
4. Library trip
5. Kids' art show
6. Balloon day
7. Horseback riding
8. Missionary day (invite a miss)
9. Visit a farm
10. School's out party
11. Water pistol day
12. Yo-yo day
13. Jump rope day
14. Clubhouse Olympics
15. Marshmallow Olympics
16. Lemonade stand—tract w/ glass or explain the Wordless Book or Evang-i-cube
17. Christian film on side of house—moonless summer evenings
18. Puppet production
19. Magic show
20. Chalk artist
21. Invite the mayor to come to your Clubhouse
22. Seasonal or monthly birthday parties
23. Scavenger hunt
24. Clubhouse Olympics (nerf ball shotput, pencil javelin, Frisbee discus, etc.)
25. Pool party games
26. Crazy Hat night
27. Hobo night
28. T-shirts w/ logo = prizes, awards, fund-raisers, staff only

117 semi-reasonable ideas

Many can be used for Spring & Fall Parents' Nights

Many of these can be used as evangelism events.

RULE: You can only come if you bring an unchurched friend. Your friend is free (or half price.)

Many can be used as rewards for verse memorization.

Pull off at least one event a month during summers whether you have meetings or not.

Keep meticulous records of emails so you can invite every kid who has come in the last 3 years.

Thirty people produced this in two hours with a week in-between in order to cull out Pdfs on Serving