

LOVE LISTS

A good Valentine's Day exercise for a group would be to spend some time reading various Scripture texts that deal with the subject of love. Possible choices might be the Cain and Abel story (Genesis 4), the words of Jesus concerning "the least of these" (Matthew 25), or numerous other passages that deal with relationships.

Then divide into small groups and supply each person with pencil and paper. Each person should make four columns on the paper with the following headings: (1) Intimate, (2) Close, (3) Acquaintances, and (4) Distant. Under each column names of people should be listed according to how "intimate" or "distant" they might be to the person making the list. Maximum for any column should be about five names. The names can be friends and acquaintances at church, school, work, family, or elsewhere.

After each person has listed names in each column, have a time for sharing in the small groups. Each person should explain why certain people were listed under the various column headings and whether or not he is satisfied with his list as it stands. Here he may share feelings, experiences, and school or living situations that contributed to the list choices. In addition, have each person examine his list again and pick out one name from the "acquaintances" or "distant" columns. Have him think specifically about ways to become closer to that person so that he might move up one column. Close with a chance for people in the group to share feelings of closeness or distance that they feel with other members of the group.