

Red Light Green Light Question #3 for Fall Assembly 2017

Where can information be found concerning acceptable names for an Al-Anon Family Group? Would “Double Winner AFG” or “Holy Trinity AFG” be considered acceptable group names?

In doing our research we found answers from the clearly written *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual 2014-2017*.

Regarding the first part of the question concerning acceptable names for an Al-Anon Family Group we relied on pp. 35-36 of the *Service Manual* quoted verbatim as follows:

Naming the Group

Tradition Four

Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or Al-Anon or AA as a whole.

A group's name is often included in meeting directories (both printed and on-line) and may be a potential member's first impression of Al-Anon/Alateen. Therefore, having an appropriate group name is very important. A name that includes the town or section of the town, the meeting day, a slogan, or another phrase from our program is inviting to all and conforms to Al-Anon/Alateen principles. As stated in Tradition Eleven, “ Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion...” A group would be promoting Al-Anon if the group name appeared to offer promises, guarantees, personal advice, or gave the impression that the meeting has experts who know what is best for all family members and friends of alcoholics.

A group's name should not imply affiliation with any other organization, including A.A. or any Twelve Step group, self-help

group, commercial venture, agency, religious or rehabilitation facility, philosophy, religious principle or belief, or any outside literature or enterprise. To help avoid confusion, it is suggested that groups spell out the group's complete name including any specific format or designation. Nicknames or attempts at humorous names may turn away or confuse potential members. In the spirit of our primary purpose of being welcoming and giving comfort to families and friends of alcoholics, such names are to be avoided.

Things to discuss when choosing a group name include:

- How is this name reflective of Al-Anon's principles?
- Is the name inviting to potential members? Could it be confusing or offensive to potential members?
- Does the name imply a promise, requirement for attending, or an affiliation with an entity outside of Al-Anon?

Some relatives and friends of alcoholics find it easier to address their common problems in dealing with the effects of someone else's drinking with those in similar life situations. These members have formed Al-Anon groups for men, women, parents, adult children, and gays and lesbians (LGBT). The group may include these designations in its group name, with the understanding that, as with all Al-Anon groups, membership remains open to anyone affected by someone else's drinking. Members of these groups are encouraged to attend other Al-Anon meetings as well.

The WSO reviews new group names for adherence to these guidelines and may ask a group to choose another name if it is not in keeping with Al-Anon/Alateen principles. (See also "Group Names" in the "Digest of Al-Anon and Alateen Policies" section of the *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual* [p-24/27].)

As the group's Current Mailing Address (CMA) is often a member's home, to protect the CMA's anonymity, all Al-Anon

groups are registered with the letter AFG (for Al-Anon Family Group).

In response to the second question, that is, **‘Would “Double Winner AFG” or “Holy Trinity AFG” be considered acceptable group names?’** we relied on more specific information found in that same *Al-Anon/Alateen Service Manual 2014-2017*, pp. 81-82.

Choosing a Group’s Name

Having an appropriate group name is very important because it is included in local and on-line meeting directories and may be a potential member’s first impression of Al-Anon. The group’s name should be inviting to all and reflect Al-Anon principles. A group’s name should not imply affiliation with any other Twelve Step group, rehabilitation facility, or other outside enterprise even if the name is associated with its location—e.g., the _____ Church AFG or the _____ Hospital AFG.