

# **Ice Breakers**

## *Who Am I?*

My favorite Ice-Breaker game is when you get a few members of the group to sit at the front of the room and write celebrity names on the board behind them. The people facing them have to answer questions with yes or no answers only to help the person find out who they are. Eg: "Am I tall?", "Am I a singer?", "Am I an athlete?" This game encourages people to speak out in a group.

## *Icebreaker Bingo*

I've played this at work functions (when two branches merged and people didn't know each other) and also in high school. It would work for middle school, high school or young adult. Each player gets a piece of paper with a 5x5 grid. In each square of the grid is written an experience or a description. Examples could be things like "was born outside the US", "is wearing a green shirt", "plays guitar", "wears glasses", "has more than 2 siblings", etc. Each player can have the same bingo grid. Each person has to find people who match the descriptions. No person can be used for more than one square. The first person to complete a row yells bingo and gets a prize. You can let people keep playing and award a prize for filling in all the squares, or the most squares. It's a good way to get people to talk to a large number of people, and learn facts about them. You also have to know their names since you have to write them down.

## *Circle Toss*

I remember this game from when I went to camp. In it, the leader has the group get in a circle, and then brings out several random objects, it really doesn't matter what, as long as they can be thrown. The leader starts with one of the objects, saying one of the kids names, and throwing it to them. That kid throws it to someone else, saying their name, and so on and so forth. When it gets back to the leader, he/she brings out another object and repeats the process. This can be repeated as many times as objects you have. For added fun, you can time it, and see how fast they can get it while still clearly saying the next persons name. You can challenge them to see how they can change the way they are standing to make the process faster, also.

## *Group Juggle*

Group passes objects through the air and says the name of person with whom you are throwing. Add objects, go faster, and/or no talking will increase the difficulty of additional rounds. Koosh balls, small stuffed animals, and bean bags work well for this activity. (Underhand throws only, please.)

### **TO LEAD ACTIVITY:**

1. Stand in a circle with hands out to catch the object. When you catch the object, put your hands down so you can tell who still needs to receive it once. As leader, you start it and also catch it last.
2. Leader starts by calling a person's name, making eye contact, and throwing them the object. That person then catches the object and says "Thank you, \_\_\_\_". They then throw to someone else by calling their name and making eye contact. Again, they say "Thank you, \_\_\_\_". The "thank you's" help the group learn names.
3. As the leader sizes up the group, they can add more objects into the mix. This gets several objects flying at the same time. Sometimes it's easier if you stop the thank you's at this point or it gets too

crazy. Other options... go backwards or send one backwards and one forward at the same time.

## *Come to Order*

My favorite "get to know each other game" is standing in line. I was introduced to it as a girl guide and have used it often when we met in a new group of people and as a high school teacher with new classes. It only takes a few minutes, but you suddenly know a lot about people, if you can remember :-)

This game is good for all ages, if you give a little thought to the criteria you line up after. Preschoolers, for example, won't know the alphabet. A Captain calls out what the rule for the line up is, for instance by height, and people line up. When the line has been formed everybody introduces themselves and shakes hands with their neighbors in the line. Repeat four or five times with new rules.

Criteria for forming the line can be:

- Age, youngest first
- Height, smallest first
- Alphabetically by given name, family name, town you come from, street you live in, ...
- Shoe size,
- Length of hair
- Size of nose (great discussions arise :-)
- Height you can jump etc.

## *Candy Bar Matching*

Write clue on paper and have the group individually or in teams attempt to match up the candy name with the clue. (Answers are next to the clue.)

Bumpy Street-----Rocky Road

Famous Baseball Player-----Babe Ruth

Feminine Pronoun-----Hershey

Charlie's Girlfriend---Peppermint Patty

Happy Nut----Almond Joy

Our Galaxy-----Milky Way

King's Ransom-----100 Grand

Toe Attendance---Tootsie Roll

Funny Laugh---Snickers

Relaxed Automobile-----Carromallow

## *Group Scrabble*

Use a white board, overhead, or chart paper. Start the group off with a word that ties into the location, purpose, or theme of the day. Then turn the pen over to a group member and see if they can hook each group member somewhere into the board like a Scrabble game. Can be with participant's name, school, or a word that describes them.

## *In the Bag*

This activity is one that is performed without rehearsal or preparation. The student relies on personal knowledge and experience to give a quick, impromptu speech to the group/class. Decorate a bag with

the words "In The Bag" and make it look fun and creative. Copy phrases on strips of paper and place them in the bag. Students draw their topics from the bag and give a quick speech to the class. let each student pick a topic and remind them that they have 30 seconds or less to talk.

Examples of phrases that can be used as topics for a speech:

Why students should never have homework

1. An unusual animal
2. The ideal age should be
3. How to be happy
4. My idea of a perfect day
5. The worst type of pollution
6. A fun way to travel
7. The best bargain
8. The best job in the world
9. The greatest book ever written
10. My favorite Olympic sport
11. How to avoid doing the dishes
12. How I view the future
13. The worst habit to have
14. How to clean a bedroom in ten minutes
15. How to mess up a bedroom in five minutes
16. The best place in the world to live
17. A great gift
18. The most important invention
19. Something I couldn't live without

### *Two Truths and a Lie*

Each group member shares two things about themselves that are true and one thing that is a lie. The rest of the group tries to guess which is the untrue statement.