

# Ice Breakers

## Draw a vacation

Everyone needs a pen and a paper. Place a blank sheet of paper in front of you, in the landscape direction. We are all going on a vacation. Close your eyes keep them closed, and I will tell you when it is okay to open them. We are going on a vacation to a tropical island, so draw an island in the middle of your paper.

To the left of the island, draw a ship.

You are surrounded by water, so put some fish in the sea.

This is a tropical island, so put a palm tree on the island.

It is a nice day, so put some birds in the air.

That ship didn't get there by itself, so put a sailor on the ship.

The sailor might get hungry, so put some coconuts on the palm tree.

Sailors like to see where they are going, so put portholes on the ship

Sailors like to see entertainment, so draw a hula dancer on the island.

It is a sunny day, so put a sun in the sky.

Okay everyone open your eyes and see how you did...

*To score your artwork:*

10 points if your island is in the middle

10 points if your ship is to the left of the island, but not touching it

15 points if you have more than one fish

20 points if the base of the palm tree is on the island

15 points if more than two of the birds are in the air

20 points if the sailor is on the ship, not swimming

15 points if any coconut is on the tree

25 points if any porthole is on the ship

25 points if the hula dancer is dancing on the island

20 points if the sun is to the left

15 points if the sun is to the right

10 points if the sun is in the middle

200 points possible. Person with the most points wins a prize.

## Autographs\* (see attached worksheet)

Pass a sheet that has 20-25 statements on it. Have each participant meet others and ask them to sign their sheet on a line that applies to that person. Encourage participants to have a different person sign each line. At the end, the participant can sign his/her sheet. Award prize to person who has the most autographs.

## All My Friends

Put chairs in the circle equal to the number of participants, minus one. The person in the center begins by selecting something that he/she has done, is wearing, etc. and says "All my friends \_\_\_\_\_." Those who meet those criteria must get up and move to a new seat, not one that is to either side of them. The person left standing is the next one to decide on the criteria!

(Example: “All my friends are wearing tennis shoes” or “All my friends have been to Europe.”, etc). Keep playing until the group’s energy is up, and everyone has moved at least 5-6 times.

*Variation:* If you don’t have chairs, pass out a paper plate to each participant!

### **Play Dough-tionary**

Break the group into two teams (5-7 each). Each team gets a container of Play Dough. Each team will be making an object. In the spirit of Pictionary, one person from each team comes to the leader for the name of the object they are supposed to form with the Play Dough. (It helps to narrow down the categories-books, movies, cars, etc.) The teams rotate from who is shaping the clay to who is guessing. After each team has successfully completed 7 objects, they are declared the winners.

### **Silent introductions**

Have participants get into pairs. In silence, using pantomime only, each participant is to act out three things that are important to them. The person "listening" needs to remember them but does not ask questions either during the acting out or during the group introductions. The first time the interpretations are shared is when the pair introduces one another to the larger group. It is fun to hear what each member of the pair understood the three items to be!

### **Human BINGO\*** (see attached worksheet)

Using a grid like the one attached, develop twenty-five items related to your group. Ask participants to mill around the group and meet other participants. When they meet, ask them to share one thing on the list that relates to them. Have them sign that square and move on to another person. Each person should sign each sheet one time only. (Participants can sign their own sheet!) At the end, award a prize to the person who has the most squares signed.

*Variation:* Use the attached game, or make up your own.

### **Four Corners**

Decide on a topic that can be divided into four subgroups. Designate four corners of the room where each of the subgroups will meet. Each person selects which of the four options they prefer, and go to that area of the room. Once there, they introduce themselves and answer a question presented by the leader. Some examples: Favorite type of movie: romance, comedy, action/adventure, drama. Favorite place to take a vacation: mountains, beach, desert, and amusement park.

*Variation:* You can make this more related to the training topic by using four items that relate to your organization. For example: of the following, what do you think is the greatest reason to get involved with this organization? Choices: The opportunity to get involved, the people you meet on the job, the job experience you are gaining, the money you are paid. Once in the four groups, share one thing they hope to gain by their membership in the organization.

### **My Gift To You**

Each person begins with an imaginary piece of clay. This clay can be shaped into any prized possession. As you shape the clay, you extend your hands and while explaining the item, give it to another person in the group. The receiver of the gift thanks the giver and reshapes the clay into another prized possession for another member of the group, and so on.

### Concentric Circles

Divide the group in two. Have one group form a circle inside a larger circle, so that each participant is facing another person. Begin by having each person introduce themselves to the person they are facing and answer a question. After two minutes, have the inner circle move, one or two people to their left, while the outer circle remains where they are. Depending on the size of the group, have the inner circle move several people, or just a few. Sample questions are listed, but be creative and make up your own!

- Who is a leader you admire and why?
- What is your wildest career fantasy?
- What is one goal you hope to accomplish this year?
- If you were a street sign, what would you be? Why?
- Who would you trade places with in history?

### Skittles and M&M's

This activity uses the colors of the skittles or M&M's to determine which question a participant will answer for the group. It is best to use peanut M&M's so you can tell the difference between M&M's and Skittles! Make a sheet with the colors of each candy and the corresponding question. (see samples below.) After the participant answers the questions, let them eat their treats! Make up questions related to the organization.

<b>M&amp;M's</b>	Yellow	If you were president, which one policy would you change?
	Red	If you could travel anywhere with all expenses paid for two weeks, where would you go?
	Orange	Would you eat a bowl of crickets for \$10,000?
	Green	What color represents love and why?
	Brown	Who would you like to trade places with in history?
<b>Skittles</b>	Red	What magazine cover would you like to be on and why?
	Orange	If you could use a voodoo doll on someone, would you?
	Purple	If you could do anything without repercussion, what would you do?
	Green	If you could change one thing about your working conditions, what would it be?
	Yellow	If you could have any talent, what would it be?

### Introduction Cards

Pass out a 5x8 card and a piece of masking tape to each participant. Have them divide the card into four squares. In the first, list a hero/heroine of theirs; in the second, share a gift they possess that is important to them; in the third, identify the social cause that they are willing to work for; and, in the fourth, list something they are proud of. Now ask the participants to tape the card to their chest and in silence, roam around the room, reading the other participants' cards. After a few minutes, invite the participants to return to an individual with whom they would like to share their information.

*Variation:* Use any four topics for this activity.

## **Martian Name Game**

Pass out a piece of colored paper or a 5 x 8-index card to each participant. Have them write their first and last name on the card, only they must write it backwards! When the participants introduce themselves, they must say their name backwards and also what the meaning of their name is. Example: nhoJ htimS (John Smith) may mean “builder of teams!” Encourage them to be creative!

## **Personal Shield\*** (See attached worksheet)

There are a variety of ways to do this activity. Either have each participant draw a shield on a piece of paper or photocopy the attached shield and hand it out. Determine what question will be asked for each quadrant. You can either share these verbally or write down the answers. Encourage participants to write or draw their response, or use a combination of words, symbols and pictures. After everyone is finished, have them share with the group and post their shield for all to see!

- Sample quadrants:**
- 1. All about you:**  
Name, hometown, major, etc.
  - 2. Important places:**  
The place you go to see a spectacular view of nature.  
The place you most often go to be alone.  
The place where you spent your best three days this year.
  - 3. Important dates:**  
When you made an important decision.  
A date you would like to relive.  
The date you came closest to death.
  - 4. Important people:**  
Who you most respect and admire.  
Who brings you joy every time you see them  
The first person you fell in love with.
  - 5. Personal sharing:**  
Two benefits you will achieve by participation in the group.  
Two characteristics that will make you an asset to the group.  
Two concerns you have about your membership in the group.
  - 6. More personal information**  
Share three items you possess that you cherish (tangible or not!).

There are as many variations of this as your imagination can create! Determine what information will be most helpful to the group and design your own quadrants.

## **Incorporation**

The goal is to meet as many people as possible in groups of various sizes. Introduce the activity by saying: "I am going to call out a criteria and a number. When I do, you need to find the stated number of people who fit the criteria. Once in a group, you will be given a question to answer."

When I say "go", find four people with the same color eyes as you. When you find them introduce yourself and tell them your greatest accomplishment of the summer. Go!

Find a group of eight people who, if given a chance, would see the following types of movies: comedy, drama, romance, or science fiction. When you find them introduce yourselves and move your bodies into the shape of an elephant! Now share one goal you have for your group this year. Go!

Find a group of three who share your love of desserts! Either cakes and cookies, ice cream, candy or fruit. When you find them share the three most important characteristics of leaders in your organization. Go!

Find seven people who were born in the same month as you. When you find them, do 5 jumping jacks, sit down, and share two adjectives that describe you. Go!

## **Opinion Continuum**

Create a list of questions, where the responses will vary. Identify one end of the room as one end of the continuum and the other as the extreme end. Ask participants to go to the spot on the continuum they most identify with. The participants then share why they are at a particular spot and what it would take to get them to move!

Hint: [The Book of Questions](#) is a great resource for sample questions.

*Example:* You are at the library working on a term project. The copier is broken and you need a graph that is in the periodical you are using. Go to one end of the room if you tear out the graph and use it in your project. Go to the opposite end of the room if you don't. Middle of the road people may respond that "it depends"! Ask participants to share their reasoning.

## **Scrambled Words**

Identify 10-15 words related to your topic or to your organization. Scramble them up and type them on a sheet of paper. Distribute them to the participants and have them unscramble the words as quickly as they can.

## **Blanket Down**

This is best for larger groups that need to learn each others names. Divide the group in two. Suspend a blanket between the groups so that no faces are visible to the other side. Each team will put one person near the front of the blanket, and when the blanket is dropped, the first team to shout out the name of the person at the front of the line gets that person on their team. The leader holds the blanket up in between each round, and the group can put any member of their team in the front spot. The leader lowers the blanket while saying "blanket down" until the correct name of the participant is shouted. (You will need one other person to hold up the blanket!).

### **Best Friend Introductions\*** (see attached worksheet)

Distribute a copy of the Best Friend Introduction sheet to each participant. Have participants complete the sheet about themselves. After a few minutes, ask each person to introduce their "best friend".

### **Secrets\*** (see attached worksheet)

Distribute a copy of the Secrets sheet to each participant. As they go about the room meeting new people, have them share something about themselves that nobody else in the room knows. They are to share up to five new things. When everyone has finished, ask for a volunteer to begin. As each person stands before the group, individuals share what "secret" they learned about the person.

### **Alike and Different\*** (see attached worksheet)

Distribute a copy of Alike and Different to each participant. They are to move about the room meeting new people and finding out what they have in common or what is different about each other. Ask participants to write the information on the sheet provided. When everyone has finished, ask one person at a time to stand up and share how they are alike or different from the other.

### **The following seven Ice Breakers are from Lou Bergholz, The Warren Conference Center and Inn, Training and Consulting Group:**

#### **Circle Crossing (Subway, Formal, "Waz'up?!", 10 Year Reunion, Ramsamsam)**

Each group member crosses the circle using a different style of handshake to meet group members, meeting at least 3 new people in each crossing. *Subway Style:* Make polite eye contact, but no touching. *Formal Style:* Pretend you are at a stuffy dinner party. *Waz'up:* Self-explanatory. *10 Year Reunion Style:* You are greeting people you haven't seen in 10 years. *Ramsamsam Style:* Bend down in front of your partner and clap your hands to your thighs three times while you say, "Ramsamsam, ramsamsam." Tickle each other's chins while you say, "Gooley, gooley, gooley-goo." Then link arms and swing around in a circle, saying "Yee-haaa!"

#### **Back to Back Interviews**

In pairs, group members discuss various topics (determined by facilitator) for brief amounts of time. After time is over for each topic, participants change partners and meet someone else.

#### **Mingles**

Standing in a circle, participants turn to the person on either side of them and repeat a phrase. Then everyone closes their eyes and "mingles" about, with their hands up for protection. With eyes still closed, the group must find their way back to a circle, standing next to the same people they were before, only repeating the phrase they stated in the beginning of the exercise.

#### **Big Question**

Hand out pencil with rubber band on it and note card. Take the rubber band off the pencil and put it on your wrist. Collect pencils during the Big Question.

Write a question on your card, one that you would be comfortable answering. Try to be creative. When time begins, go up to someone you don't know, introduce yourself and ask/answer each

other's questions. Then, exchange question cards with your partner, find a new partner and continue the activity.

### **All My Neighbors/Have You Ever**

Everyone stands on a spot on the ground in a big circle. There is one less spot than there are participants. The person without a spot stands in the middle and asks a question starting with "All my neighbors..." or "Have you Ever..." If the statement is true for others in the circle, they leave their spot and find another open spot in the circle, as does the person who started in the middle.

### **Commonalities**

With a partner find three things that you have in common (not obvious or apparent). Then with your partner, find another pair and in that group of four, find three new things in common. Repeat for a group of eight, but this time every time you find something all eight have in common, do some kind of cheer to let everyone know.

### **Music Box**

Each group has 2-3 minutes to come up with a way to introduce themselves musically. Then, conduct the groups through an orchestral introduction.

## Autograph Worksheet

Interview people to find one person who fits each category listed. Ask them to autograph your sheet on the appropriate line. You must have a different autograph for each item.

Likes adventure

---

Is not a business major

---

Runs/jogs at least three times per week

---

Has a GPA of 3.5 or higher

---

Plays a musical instrument

---

Looks like someone I could learn from

---

Was born in September

---

Reads the newspaper every day

---

Enjoys sports

---

Has traveled outside the US

---

Speaks more than one language

---

Has ridden a motorcycle

---

Has more than four siblings

---

Is not a freshman

---

Has had their picture in the newspaper

---

Plays the lottery on occasion

---

Enjoys watching television talk shows

---

Has driven across the country

---

## Human Bingo

Born a Military Brat	Native Californian	Have Grandchildren	Worked at more than 3 Universities	Drive a Honda
Never Had a Speeding Ticket	Have Taken a Mud Bath	Born in Oregon	Speak a Second Language	Play a Musical Instrument
Have More than 2 Children	Have Seen a Movie More Than 3 Times	Spent 24 Hours or More in Silence	Like to Ballroom Dance	Have Never Had a Car Accident
Have Traveled Overseas	Have Had a Broken Limb	Biggest Fan Calls me "Daa...Daa"	First Generation Born in the USA	Am a Single Parent
Have Competed in 10K's	Was Born East of the Mississippi	Was a Boy/Girl Scout	Know How to Knit or Crochet	Born in Washington State

# Personal Shield

A shield-shaped form divided into six numbered sections for personal information. The shield has a decorative top with inward-curving corners and a decorative bottom with outward-curving corners. A vertical line runs down the center, and two horizontal lines divide the shield into three rows of two sections each.

1.	2.
3.	4.
5.	6.

## Best Friend Introductions

Answer the following questions as you would expect your best friend (outside of this group) to describe you.

I would like to introduce: \_\_\_\_\_

Name

He/She is the kind of person who likes:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

He/She greatly appreciates and values:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Some of his/her dislikes or pet peeves are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Someday he/she would like to:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

## Secrets

You must spend several minutes with five people. It is your mission to find out a "secret" from each person - something that no one else in the room knows about that person. In turn, you must share a different "secret" about yourself with the other person; you cannot share the same secret with more than one person.

Name:	_____	Secret:	_____
			_____
			_____
Name:	_____	Secret:	_____
			_____
			_____
Name:	_____	Secret:	_____
			_____
			_____
Name:	_____	Secret:	_____
			_____
			_____
Name:	_____	Secret:	_____
			_____
			_____



## **Closing Activity**

### **Back Feedback**

This activity is best used at the end of a longer program.

Have each participant help each other tape a piece of paper to their back. In silence, the participants go around the room and write some piece of positive feedback to another group, some insight they have received from an individual or group. The idea is to have them write something to each participant. After the activity, invite the participants to share.