

Fall 2013 Alternative Spring Break Class

Site Leader Resource Guide for Ice Breakers and Team Builders

Ice Breakers

Describe your middle school backpack.

Directions: This is a lighter ice breaker where people go around in a circle and share a description of the backpack(s) they had in middle school. It can make for a really interesting conversation about who they were in middle school and the phases they have gone through.

Pterodactyl

Directions: This is a good ice breaker for getting more comfortable around one another. All participants stand in a circle and are instructed to cover their teeth with their lips. Each person goes to the person on their right and says "pterodactyl" without showing their teeth. If someone wants to switch circle's direction they have to make a pterodactyl noise to the person on the side they are receiving the pterodactyl from. If participants show their teeth at any point in the game they have to sit out in the center of the circle.

Animal Name Game

Directions: This is a good ice breaker for getting to know each person's name. Participants stand in a circle and the first person starts by saying an animal that starts with the same letter as their name while doing a motion representing that animal, as well as their name, for example, Aardvark Ashlin or Velociraptor Viral. Each person that follows has to say the names and animals, and does the motions of those who preceded them before presenting their own. If they are having trouble people can supply hints in the form of animal motions.

Speed-Friending

1. Have one moderator with a set of topics/questions for discussion
2. Half of the group form an inner circle, and half of the group form an outer circle that encloses the inner circle. Now, each person should be paired up.
3. The moderator then yells out the first topic (e.g. "Favorite movie and why") and the pairs will discuss this topic for approximately 1-2 minutes.
4. When the time is up, the outer circle rotates to the right so that they are now with a different partner.
5. The moderator yells out a different topic, and this process repeats until time is up or you return to your original partner.

Dragon Tails

1. Split the group in half
2. Everyone in the designated group must hold hands to form a line (If the hands separate then the group is eliminated)
3. The last person in the line will have a bandana/flag/scarf that symbolizes the "dragon tail"
4. The groups must move as a team/dragon to try and grab the other group's tail before losing their own
5. The group with the tail in the end wins the game

Sherlock Holmes

We will select a volunteer from our group to be Sherlock Holmes. We will then tell that person to memorize everything that the rest of the group is wearing. Sherlock will leave the group/close their eyes, and a few people will switch around what they are wearing. When he comes back, Sherlock will be asked to guess who has changed into what item.

What's In Your Wallet?

This is a fun and easy activity that only requires participants to have a wallet or bag. We will ask participants to pull out two items in their wallet/bag that is significant, in anyway, to them. We will then take turns and explain our items and why it is important to us. This is a great way to learn something about participants that would otherwise not have been stated. It is a great conversation facilitator and allows participants to get to know each other a little better.

Bunny Bunny

This is a unique icebreaker that allows participants a way to break out of their comfort zone and have fun doing so. The game involves everyone standing in a circle facing each other. There are three roles in the game. All roles involve a physical action and a phrase. One person starts off with the bunny. This person starts the game off by saying "bunny bunny" and then passes off the "bunny bunny" to someone else at random in the circle. This person receiving the bunny, then does the same action and passes the bunny off to someone else. The two people adjacent to the person with the bunny are the gucci's. They turn toward to the person and wave their body while saying "gucci, gucci/..." until the bunny is passed to someone else. Everyone else should all be saying "carrot, carrot..." The game involves a lot of overlapping voices, and silly gestures, so it turns into a fun and very interactive activity.

My new best friend!

Have the group break up into partners and give them the instructions to talk about themselves to each other with the goal of uncovering at least three commonalities/common interests. Encourage them try and find more obscure relationships. At the end of the activity, each pair should present about their partner and their commonalities. This icebreaker not only helps people get to know each other, but also helps build connections between participants and encourages good listening practices.

Key swapping

To begin, everyone should place their keys in a central location (on a table). At the count of three everyone grabs one of the sets of keys (not their own) quickly. After everyone has a set of keys, go around the circle and each person must say two things that they can deduce from the keys that they chose. After each person does that, the owner of the keys confirms or denies what has been said, and tells a story about something on their keychain. The purpose of this is to open a conversation about stereotypes and judgment about people and help people to understand others on a deeper level.

Order game

In this game a leader asks everyone in the group to arrange themselves in a specific order. This could be birth order, or by zip code, or by telephone number. As the game progresses, the leader can ask the group to do it silently, or with their eyes closed.

Do you love your neighbor?

This icebreaker functions both as get to know you and a name game. Have the group sit in a circle with one less chairs than person. The person in the middle starts by asking someone (their choice) sitting down, "Hi _____, do you love your neighbors?" To which the person asks responds, "Yes, I love my neighbors (name of person to the left) and (name of person to the right). But I especially love my neighbors who are wearing glasses". They can fill in the underlined part of the statement with physical characteristics, personality traits, things they've done, hobbies, etc. At this point everyone who is described by the statement stands up and must find a new chair. The person originally in the middle also must find a new seat. Moving people cannot sit in the same seat or move only one to either side of them. Eventually there will be (hopefully) someone new stuck in the middle, and it becomes their turn to ask someone new if they love their neighbor. This icebreaker is meant to be an energizer and is somewhat physical and fun.

Skittle introductions:

Number of participants: 10-15

Preparation:

2 bags of skittles on table when attendees enter into meeting room.

Ask each person to grab some skittles (however many they would like—making sure to leave some for others).

Ice Breaker:

Assign a question/topic for each skittle color: red=personal weakness/challenge, green=personal strength, yellow=goal for future, orange= fun fact about self, purple=pet peeve

Go through one color at a time and whoever has that color has to share their response(s) with the group. 1 response per skittle of that color. For example: if someone chose 3 red skittle they would have to share three of their personal weaknesses.

People may eat their skittles at the end if they would like. ☺

Person Bingo

Before playing you need to create a bingo board (for example a 5x5 grid) and fill each box with facts and superlatives. Some examples might be: someone who is taller than you, the person whose hometown is closest to your own, the person who has the next closest birthday, etc. Give each team member a bingo board and have them start asking other participants questions to start filling out their board (squares are filled with the name of the person that is described by that square). Ideally they will be able to fill out the entire board, and the first person to successfully complete the activity can be named the "winner" if an element of competition is desirable. This icebreaker is about getting to know each other as a group.

Tele-pictionary:

Prep: 6-30 people, 1 sheet of paper and writing utensil per person, (different color utensil for each person is fun if possible), flat surface.

Directions: Players sit in a circle, each with their own writing utensil & paper.

Each person writes a sentence on the top of their paper and passes it to their right.

Each player will read the sentence that was just passed to them and attempt to draw a picture to illustrate the sentence. Then they will fold the paper over so that only the image they just drew is visible. Then they will pass to the right.

Upon receiving this image, each person will write a sentence that describes the picture. Then they will fold the paper so that only their sentence is visible, the pass to the right.

This continues until the papers are nearly full (sentence-picture-sentence-picture-sentence). Each paper must end with a sentence.

Once completed, everyone finds their original paper.

Each player reads their original sentences and shares the illustrations and the sentences that follow (showing how their idea has transformed).

Favorite Memory

Give each participant a small sheet of paper, have them write a memorable moment in their childhood. The memory can be funny or sentimental (although funnier memories tend to work better). Make sure that the participants do not write their names on the sheet. Then collect all the sheets and read each memory out loud individually. Have participants guess who that memory belongs to (they can do this by just shouting out who they think wrote it). Estimated time- 5 min

Four corners

Give each participant a pen and a sheet of paper. Have each participant divide their piece of paper into four squares by folding. For each square, each person will describe themselves in the form of drawings. These can vary, For example, in each of the different squares everyone could draw their favorite hobbies, favorite place on earth for vacation, what animal they would be, and what are the most important things in their life. When everyone is finished drawing (should take around 5 min), have everyone share present their drawings to the group and share what makes them unique! Estimate Time: 15 min

Blanket Name Game:

This is a fun, active exercise that helps everyone in the group to learn everyone else's names. The group members divide into 2 teams. The team leaders hold up a blanket between the two teams. Each team selects a member to go up to the blanket, facing the opposing team. The team leaders then drop the blanket and the selected members race to yell the name of the other member first. The person who loses goes to the side of the opposing team.

Assassin

The leader of the group must choose one person to be the "assassin." The group should be arranged in a circle. When the game begins, everyone should look around the room into each other's eyes. When the assassin winks at someone, that person must wait 4 or 5 seconds and then shout out "I've been killed" or die in some creative fashion. The point of the game is for someone to realize who the assassin is by catching them in the act of winking. If someone guesses wrong, they are out. The game is over whenever someone figures out who the assassin is or whenever the assassin has killed everyone but the very last person. Obvious/Not Obvious Fact:

This simple activity allows participants to learn interesting facts about others in the group. Each person in the group tells one obvious fact about themselves and one less obvious or surprising fact about themselves.

Don't Break the Ice

Break up into 2 teams and literally play the Hasbro classic "Don't Break the Ice" where people take turns removing the maximum number of individual blocks from the board while attempting to keep the bear afloat. This game forces individuals within each team to communicate with each other to take turns and forming strategies revealing personality types within a context of jovial lighthearted fun. Required items: Don't Break the Ice. Approximate time 10 minutes.

Grab a Finger:

This activity is a good way to break the touch barrier and make the group more relaxed. Everyone sits in a circle with their left hand open in front of them and their right finger pointing up. One of the team leaders counts to 3 and then each person tries to grab the finger of the person to their left, while keeping the person on their right from grabbing their finger.

Two truths one lie (creative, fun, somewhat serious)

- a. Materials: None. Just remember the instructions!
- b. Number of people: 5-15
- c. Type of Space: Any space that can accommodate a circle of your participants
- d. Instructions: With everyone circled up, go around the room and focus on each person individually. That person must make three statements – two true, one false – about themselves. It is up to the rest of the group to determine which of the three is the lie.

Desert Island (creative, fun)

- a. Materials: None. Just remember the instructions!
- b. Number of people: 5-15
- c. Type of space: Any space that can accommodate a circle of your participants.
- d. Instructions: With everyone circled up, state that they are now stranded on a desert island and can only have three objects of their choosing (essentials are already included). These objects must be tangible, real things. Have everyone go around the room and state which objects they would bring and why.
- e. Variations: Feel free to make the game a little more interesting by adding limitations – maybe things that can fit in a backpack, or things that start with the letters "A, S, or B".

Name Switch (creative, fun, dynamic)

- a. Materials: Nametags!
- b. Number of people: 10-30
- c. Type of Space: Somewhere for your participants to move around a little bit – this is an active/interactive game!
- d. Instructions: Have everyone write their name down on their nametag. Tell your participants to brainstorm (but don't write down) two interesting facts about themselves. Once everyone has come up with two facts, your participants should go around the room switching nametags and their facts. Once they have switched nametags, they have now assumed that person's identity and facts, which means next time they meet another participant, they will introduce themselves as their nametag and their nametag's facts. In the end, go around and have everyone share who they are (who their nametags say they are) and the two interesting facts about themselves (the person on their nametag).

My name is...?

Materials: None! Time: around 3-5 minutes

Method: Participants must choose an adjective that shares the same first letter to their first name, for example "Adventurous Alex". The participants will go around the circle and say their name and adjective twice.

Never Have I Ever

1. Everyone holds up 10 fingers so that everyone can clearly see each other's hands.
2. One person starts off by saying "Never have I ever..." and finishes the sentence with something that he or she has never done (e.g. "Never have I ever been to Colorado.")
3. If anyone in the group has been to Colorado, then they clap their hands once, and they put down one finger.
4. The next person in the circle goes, and the process repeats until everybody has 0 fingers left except for one person.

Team Builders

Fear in a hat

Everyone writes a fear down and puts it in the pile; we each pick one randomly and speak as though we had written it

Blind Polygon:

This is an active exercise that requires coordination, verbal communication, and teamwork. Participants are blindfolded and there is a long rope for the participants to hold on to. The participants then try to arrange themselves so that the rope forms the shape of some polygon: a square, a pentagon, etc.

Human Knot:

This is also an active exercise that requires teamwork and problem solving as a group. The participants stand in a circle facing inward. Each person places their right hand in the middle of the circle and grabs the hand of someone who is not directly to their left or right. The participants then do the same with their left hands. Then the participants have to work together to untangle to knot.

Electric Fence:

This activity gives the group an opportunity to work together toward a common goal and helps to break the touch barrier. The team leaders tie a rope 5 feet off the ground between 2 trees. The members of the group have to work together to get each person over the rope without touching it. If someone touches the rope, then the whole team has to go back to the original side of the rope and start over.

Count to twenty (creative, fun, dynamic)

- a. Materials: None. Just remember the instructions!
- b. Number of people: 5-15
- c. Type of Space: Any space! The best part about this game is how versatile it is!
- d. Instructions: As a team, start from the number one and count all the way up to twenty, with different people saying different numbers. Everyone must speak once and nobody can go twice in a row. Additionally, nobody can speak over each other. If any of these rules are broken, start over at one and keep going until you get there!
- e. Variations: Accommodate more participants (and make it more difficult) by counting to larger numbers!

Tall stories (creative, fun)

- a. Materials: None. Just remember the instructions!
- b. Number of people: 5-15
- c. Type of Space: Any space! The best part about this game is how versatile it is!
- d. Instructions: The team leader (or anyone, really) starts with a sentence that ends with the word SUDDENLY. The next person must then finish the sentence with another phrase that ends with the word SUDDENLY. This should be a quick-moving ad-libbing game! For example: "I was walking around Rice's inner loop when SUDDENLY... (person 2 chimes in) the inner loop bus became a giant submarine and SUDDENLY... (person 3 chimes in).

Pass the orange (or other similarly awkward fruit) - (fun, dynamic, physical)

- a. Materials: An orange (or similarly sized fruit of your choice) or two.
- b. Number of people: 5-10 per team
- c. Type of space: Room for each team to line up comfortably!
- d. Instructions: Most of the instructions are in the title – one person starts with an orange tucked under their neck and passes it (no using your hands!) to the person next to them. If you drop it, you need to start back at the beginning of the line! If you have more than 10 people, try splitting into teams and make some friendly competition! If you have a camera for pictures, it becomes even funnier! Great way to build camaraderie and break down some comfort barriers among your team.
- e. Possible Problems: This activity invades the touch barrier – make sure your group is truly 100% comfortable with each other before trying this activity!

In Common

1. Materials: two pieces of paper, two writing utensils, Time: around 10 – 15 minutes
2. Method: Divide the team into two, with one site leader in each group. Site leader explains that this activity is to find things that all members of each group have in common. Pick a scribe in each group.
 - a. First Round: 10 things that all members of the group have in common
 - b. Second Round: 10 things that all members of the group have in common, restricting all physical characteristics and anything having to do with Rice University
 - c. Third Round: 10 things that all members of the group have in common, further restricting anything related to growing up (family/relatives, place of origin/hometowns/home countries, language, etc.)
 - d. Fourth Round: 10 things that all members of the group have in common, further restricting the categories of anything that is not a strong self-identifier
 - e. At the end of the fourth round, have the scribe from each group share out the fourth round list.
 - f. Debrief with participants about how the activity felt, and what they learned about others.

Room obstacle course with eyes/ears/hands

- a. Materials: Whatever can be used to create an obstacle course! Chairs, backpacks, tables, writing utensils, luggage
- b. Time: around 20 minutes
- c. Method: Divide the team into two, with one site leader in each group. Site leader explains that this activity is to work together in your teams!
 - i. Ask everyone in both teams to turn their backs.
 - ii. Site leaders set up an obstacle course using whatever tools available behind the teams' backs.
 - iii. Both teams pick one person to step forward. This person becomes the "eyes," and *faces the obstacle course*.
 - iv. Both teams pick one person to step forward to stand exactly in front of the "eyes." This person becomes the "mouth," and *faces the "eyes," away from the obstacle course*.
 - v. Both teams pick one last person to be blindfolded, and become the "hands."
 - vi. The "eyes" cannot speak or mouth words, and uses any other method to communicate to the "mouth." The "mouth" may not look at the obstacle course, and verbalizes what the "eyes" communicates. The "hands" is blindfolded and must rely on what the "eyes" sees and the "mouth" speaks to get through the obstacle course.
 - vii. After finishing, the two "hands" get to rearrange the obstacle course and then everyone rotates through all the positions.

Paper Telephone

- Directions:
- Everyone sits in a circle around the room and writes a phrase at the top of their paper – but very tiny, no more than one line tall. The phrase doesn't have to be magical or witty, something simple like "My cat chases mice" is good, or you can get a little creative like, "Bon Scott wears his pants too tight." Once everyone has their phrase written down, you pass the paper one person over in one direction.
- The second person's job is to draw out the phrase they read. Just make sure you draw the picture far enough below the phrase that you can fold the paper over from the top, hiding only the phrase. You should also make sure you don't draw too big because you'll need as much room as possible for future drawings, especially if you have a large group of people.
- So the second person draws the phrase out and then folds over the top of the paper so the phrase is hidden and only the drawing is showing. Then pass the paper to the next person. Now that person has to write the phrase that the picture is showing. See where this is going?
- Once the person describes what they see in words, they fold the paper over so the picture is hidden and only their phrase (the second phrase) is showing. Then pass and the next person once again has to draw the phrase.
- Just like regular telephone, paper telephone results in a phrase that is severely altered by the time it finishes its route. Once you get your paper back the round is over. However, it is best to end the game so that the last thing on the paper is a phrase, so it may need to go one more person.
- Then once the paper has made its way around, you open it up from its numerous folds and read aloud how the phrase changed from beginning to end. Laughter shall ensue because even the simplest phrase will change.
- Adapted from: <http://www.morningtoast.com/2009/12/paper-telephone-can-save-your-party/>

Blind numerical order

- a) The overseer assigns a number out-loud to each person (ranging from negatives to very high positive numbers) so that everyone knows each other's number assignment.
- b) Everyone is then immediately blindfolded and spatially scrambled.
- c) The team has to put themselves in numerical order without talking and without sight.
- d) After the team has lined-up, the overseer will tell the team which members are out of order, if any.

Survival Scenario

- a) A nuclear bomb has been dropped, but a fallout shelter is available for 6 people within the group...
- b) Site leaders create multiple roles that include different professions, ages, and defining characteristics (e.g. grumpy 65 year old professor).
- c) Have the participants draw a role in the beginning, and have them announce their role to the group.
- d) In 2 minutes, have each individual write down his or her decision for the 6 people who should be kept inside the fallout shelter and the reason.
- e) Then, everyone has 1 minute to tell the rest of the group his/her decision and reason.
- f) Afterwards, as a group, we vote with yes/no on whether or not each person gets to stay in the bunker. Majority vote wins, and the participant who has been voted out is no longer allowed to contribute to the subsequent votes. Participants voted to stay can no longer be thrown out. Thus, the group must choose carefully on the 6 survivors.

Around the World

The first participant starts by saying the name of any place that can be found on a map. The next person then has to say another name that begins with the last letter of the word just given. Each person only has three seconds to answer or else the chain will be broken.

Ex. Houston, Norway, Yellowstone

Word Link

Our group will sit in a circle (if possible, if not it doesn't really matter), and the first participant will say a word. The next person will repeat the word and add another word that links the second to the first. The following person will repeat the previous word and then add another word. Only five seconds will be given or else the chain will be broken.

Orange – basketball, basketball – sports, sports – tennis

Poster Making

This task is a fun way of teaching the team to delegate tasks, work together, and come up with and execute creative ideas. It requires markers and a large piece of paper. The siteleaders should lay the paper flat, give the team the markers, and simply tell them to make a poster, with no other prompt. This will enable the team to come up with an idea for a poster and decide who draws what aspects of the poster. The end product is a fun manifestation of the group dynamic.

Shoulder Taps

This team builder is best executed after the group has already bonded to some extent. One of the later nights on the trip would likely be a good time to use it. The team assembles in two circles, one inside another. Everyone on the inside circle closes their eyes and faces inside. The siteleaders list off prompts and participants on the outside circle each touch the shoulder of someone on the inside circle that they feel the statement applies to. These prompts can start off lighthearted (ex: tap someone who makes you laugh) and grow more profound (ex: tap someone you believe in). After all prompts have been read off, the team switches who is on the inside and outside of the circle. This activity is designed to build up participants as well as show them that their group cares about them.

Scavenger Hunt

This is a fun and active team builder that teaches the team effective communication and delegation of tasks. To begin, the siteleaders will take ten or so minutes to survey the surroundings and come up with some items that their participants might be able to find nearby or activities they may be able to do. They will compile them into a list. The participants will be given the list and a certain amount of time (depending on how much is available) to complete as much of the list as possible. They will work in teams of 4 or 5. The team that completes the most tasks off of the list wins.

Helium Hula Hoop

Have the group stand in a circle. Place a hula hoop in the middle and have the group hold it up by balancing it on one finger per person (as in each person will be supporting the hoop with one extended finger). Start with two smaller groups (5-6 people). Tell them the goal is to lower the hoop to the ground and that everyone must keep their finger on the hoop at all times. In the small group this should be a very easy task. Next, combine the group (you need at least 10 people for the activity to work and the more the better). Suddenly the task of lowering the hoop becomes impossible. Due to the number of people providing a small upwards force, the hoop will start to move upwards despite everyone "trying" to move it downwards. Let the group work on this for a few minutes before explaining that it is physically impossible. The activity should encourage collaboration and communication. When facilitating watch out for participants that become frustrated; you can cut the group off early if people are getting upset.

Diagrams

Give each person three sheets of paper and have the pairs sit on the floor with their backs to each other. They should find a place with ample room so other teams won't interfere. The teams will work independently of each other and are to remain in this position throughout the process, each unable to see what the other is doing. Instruct partner A of each team to draw three simple line diagrams, one on each piece of paper. The drawings can be different. Give about three minutes for this activity. In the first stage, partner B tries to correctly draw the same diagram by receiving instructions from partner A without being able to ask questions. Only partner A can speak. Partner B cannot speak or ask any questions. Allow five minutes for this stage. In the second stage, partner B attempts to duplicate the second drawing, but this time is able to ask yes-or-no questions only. Again allow five minutes for this stage. In the third stage, the task is repeated with the final drawing, and the partners are able to talk freely. Allow five minutes again for this stage. After all three stages, allow the partners to look together at each other's drawings.

Traveling Teams

Allow the entire group to determine the path through the obstacle course. Divide the group into teams of three and give each a blindfold. At this point, describe CbC, and tell the teams that they will determine how their members will travel the obstacle course. Also explain that while the course is the same for everyone, each team determines what it means to them. They might imagine it's another planet or that they're going across an ocean. Or it may be more realistic, such as doing a group project. Whatever the course represents, as the guides are leading the Traveler, create a metaphor for each obstacle they must get through. (Example: A table represents an island in the ocean.) Each team works together to get all members through the course, one at a time. The sighted members verbally guide the blindfolded Traveler safely through the obstacle course. Guides should describe the surroundings in as much detail as possible, including sounds, smells, colors, or movement. Instruct each group to focus on their own team and not be distracted by the other groups. The course is done at walking speed, and guides are responsible for knowing where other groups are around their Traveler. Each member gets to be the Traveler, so once the team finishes guiding one person through, they switch roles and guide another member through. Each team will go through the course three times.

Magic Carpet

Preparation: lay two beach towels on the ground, split group up evenly

Option: entire group does activity together with a larger "magic carpet" (maybe a sheet).

Directions:

The whole Group stands on the towel

The group must flip the towel over without a single person stepping off.

If a person steps off of towel, then the group must start over (all get off, lay out towel, get back on and start new attempt to flip carpet).

The first small group to finish (if activity done in separate teams) wins.

Trust-Walk

Preparation: Divide groups in to pairs (asking them to pair themselves with someone they are unfamiliar with).

One partner will be blindfolded and the other will be the guider.

Directions:

The guider hides an object somewhere in the room and then returns to blindfolded person and spins them around gently 5 times.

Then the guider directs their partner to the hidden objects with only verbal directions.

Once object is found, switch roles.

Reflection: After activity, reflect upon the challenges of this group builder and how it can be applied to what we will be experiencing on the trip/the social issue.

Cocoon the Platoon

Divide your group into even teams with 6 to 12 in each team. Have each team line up relay style, fairly close to the person in front of them, with everyone facing forward. Place identical, new rolls of masking tape on the floor in front of the first person in each line. At the exact same time, the first person in each line picks up the roll of tape, and begins removing a strip of tape. They stick the first foot or two of the roll across their stomachs, and pass the roll to the person next to them, who continues passing, and unrolling the tape to the next one in line. When the tape reaches the last person in line, she passes the roll behind her back, sticking a stretch of it to her back, then sends the roll back up the line, on the opposite side. This cocooning of the team continues until the roll of tape is used up. The first team to raise an empty tape tube gives a cheer! Estimate time: 10 min

Group Juggle

Everyone stands in a circle and the first player throws a crushed paper ball to someone. Then that person throws it to someone different and you keep doing this until everyone has gotten the ball once and it returns to the person who started with it. Each person will remember who they threw the ball to and the group will keep on repeating this pattern. Then you can add a second, third, even all the way to seventh paper ball and have them all going at once! Make it a challenge to see how many balls your team can have going at one time. You can chant something like "pass the ball, not the wall" to keep a rhythm going. Estimated time: 10 min

Balloon Games

In one variation everyone has a balloon tied to their ankle with a 1.5 foot long string. You have to try to protect your own balloon while walking around trying to pop other people's balloons. This can be made into more of a team game where the last team standing wins or where each team is tied together while having to complete the same task. Estimated time: 10 min

Another balloon game involves dividing the group into two teams. Each team can choose a name and then every person must sit facing a person from the other team with their feet touching their opponent's. Let everyone know that the object of the game is to score the most points. In order to score, you must try to get a balloon to hit the floor behind the other team while keeping your feet in contact with your opponent at all times. You can keep adding more balloons between the teams and continue until one team has reached a certain score or until a time limit is reached. This is also great upper body exercise! Estimated time: 10 min

All Tied Up

The whole group must learn how to work together while being tied to each other to complete a task. Ask the group to stand in a circle face each other and hold out their arms. Tie the group together so that each person is tied to both neighbor's wrists. Now the group is "all tied up" and can perform a task together such as eat lunch, make root beer floats, wrap a package with gift wrap, create an art project, or anything else fun. Estimated time: varies depending on task

Miniature Tanks

Directions: People separate into two teams of miniature tanks. Everyone then has to crawl around on their hands and knees pretending to be miniature tanks. The objective is to topple over as many members of the opposing team as possible without letting your arms or legs leave the ground. Whichever group tips the most tanks wins.

Flashlight Reflection

Directions: This is an activity groups should do once everyone is already quite comfortable with one another.

Everyone sits in a circle in the dark with a singular flashlight that is held by the person that is speaking. The facilitator introduces questions people answer by going around the circle. Participants who do not want to answer simply respond with "Pass." Questions can be anything from "What's your favorite color?" to "Who's your hero?"

Spectrum

Directions: This is a good getting to know you group builder. Everyone stands in the middle of the room and instructed that one side of the group is disagree strongly and the other side of the room is strongly agree. Then the facilitator says a mix of light things like "Breakfast is my favorite meal of the day" or more personal things, such as "I am very close to my family," and people place themselves along the spectrum according to their own personal beliefs.

Birdie on a perch

Every person in the group has a partner. A leader tells everyone to mill around in an open space with their heads down. No one is allowed to track their partner's movements. When the leader yells "Birdie on a perch" the partners find each other and one of them jumps into the other's arms. The last pair to find each other is eliminated. The last team standing wins.

This team builder allows people to get out of their comfort zones with people they probably don't know very well, and bond on a more intimate level.

Crossing the river

The purpose of this team builder is to get across a certain expanse of space with limited supplies. There could be a piece of paper that only one person can stand on, a log that two people can stand on, and a ribbon that three people can stand on. The group then tries to cross the gap using these and not stepping in the "water."

Body English

The group splits up into 2 separate groups and comes up with one word that they would like to spell out. They spell out the word using only their body (and can't use sign language) and the other group must guess what word they are spelling.

Candlelight.

We talked in class about how setting can be important or influential in creating a safe environment for sharing and being comfortable with each other. We will be in a dark room/classroom and have a flashlight with us while sitting in a circle. The person with the flashlight will be the only person allowed to talk and give insight. We would ask them questions such as "What is something that people don't know about you, but you wish they did?" or "What is your biggest fear? Or "What is a time when you felt the most alone?" After answering a question, the flashlight would be passed down and the next person would share. We believe that building trust is crucial in team building and learning about the strengths and weaknesses of our individual members.

Back-to-back drawing

The group splits up into pairs. Each pair sits back to back (physical contact). One person has a piece of paper and a pencil. The other person describes a shape verbally, and the person with a paper and pencil has to draw it (creative/fun). For example, one person could describe a square, but they would have to describe it like: "4 lines, two sets of two parallel lines. All at right angles, and one connects to two other lines." The shapes will be more difficult than a square (star, pentagon, octagon, trapezoid, diamond, etc.). Afterwards, the people will switch roles. Each person will get ~2 minutes to describe/draw, 1 minute to see what the other person drew according to the instructions given, and then they will switch. At the end, we will have a short reflection (~5 minutes) and discuss what difficulties we had with communication. This activity should be an exercise to improve communication and form bonds between people (i.e. group members can laugh at the ridiculous things that their partners drew, or the ridiculous things their partners said).

Oracle

Have the group sit in a circle

One person starts by asking a question and the next three people to the right act as the "oracle" and answer the question

Each person who is the "oracle" can only say one word and the three people must string their words together to make an answer to the question

Once the question is answered, the person to the immediate right of the question-asker becomes the new question-asker and the next three people to the right act as the "oracle"

Repeat