

Ice Breakers & Team Builders

Name Game: Sit in a circle. One person starts by using an adjective starting with the same letter as their first name, followed by their first name (i.e. Clever Claire, Kind Karen) the next person and following has to repeat the first person's adjective and name and then add their own. It goes around the circle and the last person has to repeat all other names in order and end with their own.

Human Knot: Have a group of 10-15 stand very close together. Tell them to reach out their arms so all hands are jumbled and intertwined. Tell them to grab one hand for each of their hands, but not the one of the person's next to them. Now they are a human knot and must use teamwork to untangle themselves into one circle without letting go of their hands.

Two Truths and a Lie: Go around group and everyone has to say two true statements about themselves and one false. The rest of the group has to guess which one is false. You may be surprised. You can learn some crazy things about each other!

Balloon Game #1: Have everyone put one piece of information about them in a balloon, then blow up the balloon and throw the balloon in the middle of the circle of participants. Then one by one, pop the balloons and guess to whom that piece of information belongs.

Balloon Game #2: Pass one balloon around the circle and have each person write a question on that balloon. Then pass the balloon around the circle and each person has to answer three questions on the balloon.

Fruit Basket Turn Over: Seat players in a circle. One person stands in the center. Each player is given the name of a fruit. The person in the middle calls out the name of two fruits. The two people must quickly change seats. The person in the middle also tries to reach one of the seats. The one left standing then calls the name of two other fruits. He or she may also call "fruit basket turnover" and everyone must change seats.

Human Machines: Each group acts out a machine with sound effects (i.e. telephone, fax, washing machine, dryer, blender, typewriter, stereo, airplane).

Bridge Game: There are 4 people acting as the bridge goblins. Two people are standing on the same side, about 4 feet apart, and then on the other side there are two people facing them. Now the point of the game is for the rest of the group to cross this bridge as many times as possible, without going off the bridge. The trick is that each person cannot walk the same walk; they each have to be different. And if they're not, the bridge goblins eat them.

If You Love Me Baby Smile: Everyone sits in a circle, and one person goes up to somebody in the group and tries to make them smile by saying, "if you love me baby, smile" and they are not allowed touching the person at all. They may make funny faces or whatnot. If the person does not smile or laugh, they will reply, "I love you baby, but I just can't smile". And if the person succeeds, the person they made smile moves on, and if they lose, they have to go to another person.

Movie Ball Game: Everyone stands in a circle and bounces a ball to somebody else, and has a five second limit to do so. But before bouncing the ball they must say a name of a movie. When somebody repeats a movie name, they are out of the game. It eventually ends up being a competition between two people, and then there's a winner. As a prize, you can give them a chocolate bar, or something else.

Digging Game: The members sit in a circle of chairs and there is one person standing and does not have a chair. The person in the middle asks a question, like "who has brown hair?" and everyone who does has to get up and switch seats. The person in the middle has to go and find a seat, which in turn will leave somebody else in the middle without a chair to ask a question. The catch is that the people changing seats (this applies to each individual round) cannot move to the seat on either side of them, or if they get up and can't find a seat, they cannot return to the seat where they just sat. This is a great way to "dig" up some information, on people you don't know.

Seeing the Future: Give each person a piece of paper (11x17 preferred), folded into 4 squares. Have them draw in one square how their life is now. In another square, how their life would be in a year. In another square, how their life would be in 5 years; in the last square, their life in 10 years. Have them share with the group about all 4 squares. The time frame of each square can be adjusted as desired by the facilitator.

Where Were You: Take little slips of paper; write a different year on each of them; put in a jar. People pull one out and tell what they were doing/"where they were" that year.

Line Up: Have group line up in some fashion (see examples given). Particularly good when needing to mix up a group.

- Shoe Size
- Alphabetically by favorite color
- Number of siblings
- Hair color, lightest to darkest
- Age, youngest to oldest
- Alphabetically, by first name or by last name
- Number of pets owned
- Hair length, longest to shortest
- Birthday
- Height

Reception Line: Have group divide in half, making 2 lines facing each other. Ask a question (see examples in "Icebreaker Questions" section); people discuss with their partner across from them. Then ONE PERSON from ONE LINE moves to the other end and all in that one line scoot down one so everyone has a new partner. Ask another question and repeat.

Unique Similarities: Break group into small groups (generally 4-5 people). Find 4 things that you all have in common (carry a visa, saw X movie, have a brother, love snow, visited London, wearing green, etc.) Then each individual finds one thing that is unique to them (no one else in their group has/does) [I collect buttons]. Share with larger group.

Balloon Tower: Have teams (generally 4-6 people) build the tallest free-standing (only touching the floor) balloon tower with the supplies they are given. Supplies needed: masking tape and 20-30 various sized balloons.

Legos: Before the activity, build a structure with Legos (the more complex the structure, the more difficult the activity). Then put participants in small groups. Each group is given a bag of Legos (each bag contains the same size, color, and quantity of Legos and has identical stock as that of the structure you built). The group has to exactly replicate the structure you already built. But, the structure to replicate is located outside the room or behind a screen, only one person from each group may look at the structure at a time. They cannot draw or take a picture of the structure to communicate it - they have to use their memory. Each team can look at the structure as many times as they want, but only one person can look at it at a time. The first to replicate the structure - exactly with the same size and color Legos wins. This activity works best with Lego sets (i.e. a specialized set to build a car).

Family Mealtime: Have the group prepare a meal together. Assign different small groups the different portions of the meal (salad, dessert, main dish, drinks, etc). This activity helps learn to support each other and work together, especially because creating a meal is a goal most students are usually pretty invested in.

Autograph Sheet: Participants are given a sheet with various traits on it. The objective is to find a person in the group who fits one of the descriptions and get that person's autograph next to the trait. When making up the list, be creative, but include traits pertinent to the group. Each person may sign each sheet only once. Here are some examples: Likes broccoli, Balances his/her checkbook, Has been to a fortune teller, Speaks another language.

Bite the Bag: The team is instructed to form a large circle. The facilitator then places a brown grocery bag in the center of the circle. Each member must pick up the bag with his/her teeth while standing on one foot with both hands held behind his/her back. After the entire group has successfully completed this task, the facilitator cuts one to two inches off the top of the bag. If a team member touches the floor with his/her foot (or any other part of the body), the

member is disqualified. After each round, more of the bag is cut. The last team member, who successfully picks up the bag without falling, wins! This exercise, similar to a reversed limbo contest, can be a lot of fun and a great icebreaker for new team members.

Catch Me If You Can: Players should be paired up. All players divide into two lines (facing in) shoulder to shoulder, with partners facing each other. Participants should be given approximately 30 seconds to look at their partners, taking in all details about the individual. The leader then instructs the two lines to turn and face away from the center. One or both lines has 15-20 seconds to change something about their appearance (i.e. change a watch to different wrist, unbutton a button, remove a belt, etc.). The change must be discrete, but visible to the partner. The players again turn in to face each other and have 30 seconds to discover the physical changes that have been made. Players get to interact with each other and have fun!

Comic Strip Chaos: Each participant takes a turn at picking a comic frame out of the large container. After the entire group has each chosen one, the participants begin to search for others with the same comic strip sequence. After the participants have found everyone in their group, they must arrange themselves so that the sequence of frames are in chronological order to form the comic strip correctly. Upon completion of sequence, the newly formed group sits down together. Great game to break large group into smaller groups.

Confusion: Great high energy game to help participants begin to feel more comfortable in new group. Give each participant a sheet with various tasks and ask them to complete it when you say, "GO!" Here is a sample:

- Get a male to do five push-ups and sign here
- Stand on one foot with your arms outstretched for 20 seconds. Have someone time you and sign here.
- Leap frog over someone 5 times
- Get someone to whisper the pledge of allegiance and sign here
- Play "Ring around the Rosy" with two other people and have them sign here
- Get a female to recite a nursery rhyme
- Shake hands with someone you do not know and continue holding hands while debating the merits of your favorite ice cream flavor
- Have someone teach you a dance step (even if they make it up)

First person to complete the entire sheet wins.

Do You Love Your Neighbor: The group stands in a circle with room in the center. (Best if played with groups of 20 or more.) One person begins in the circle and says to an individual in the group, "_____, do you love your neighbor?" The individual pointed out can either say, "Yes I love my neighbors _____ and _____, but I REALLY love people _____ (wearing green, from CO, etc.);" or "No, I do not love my neighbors _____ and _____." If the individual uses the first phrase, all members of the group with that characteristic must find a new spot in the circle at least three spaces from they are standing. The person with no space (last person remaining) becomes the caller. If the individual uses the second phrase, his/her two "neighbors" must switch places with one another. The group members move in quickly to "lose" their spaces. The last of the two becomes the caller.

Geographic Location: Each group member is from a different geographic location, but together they will form a map. Once a map has been established by the group, each group member will stand where he/she thinks they belong to make the map as close to scale as possible.

Hog Call: Break the group into pairs. Each pair must choose two things; a machine and an animal. They then have to decide who is which. The pairs then divide up on opposite sides of the room. Everyone must close their eyes (if they feel comfortable), and by making only the noise that their character would make, they must find their partner. When they find their partner, they can open their eyes and wait until everyone else is done. Note: When conducting an activity with eyes closed, have the group raise their hands in front of their chests as "bumpers," and have at least one person (facilitator) acting as a spotter.

Hometown: Post a large outline of a state or the country on the wall. Leave border space for those born outside of the USA. Have participants put their hometown and first name on the map. Then ask them to share about their hometown and how they decided to go to Maryville.

Hum That Tune: Each person in the group is given a small piece of paper with the name of a nursery rhyme or other song written on the paper. (i.e. "Row, row, row your boat," "Rock-a-bye baby," etc.) All of the people who are given the song must hum that tune and find everyone else singing the song. They then form a group.

Human Scavenger Hunt/Human Bingo: The paper will have a series of questions on it (in a bingo format - in squares). Participants are required to find another participant who can answer "yes" to a question. They must have that person sign their name within the square. The object is to meet as many people as you can, and fill a "BINGO!" (A complete line either horizontally, vertically, or diagonally) You can only use each participant once. Note: The center circle should be a freebie. Here are some samples: Knows their zodiac sign, From a northern state, Knows when Martin Luther King's birthday is, Member of a sorority or fraternity, Has been a competitive athlete, Has traveled abroad, Knows how to polka .

Human Taco: Stick labeled note card (with taco ingredient) on the back of everyone's shirt. (i.e. the word meat printed on a note card) Have each player mingle around asking yes/no questions to find out the taco ingredient that is on their back. Explain the correct order of ingredients in a Human Taco: shell, meat, cheese, lettuce, tomato, salsa and then give the start command, "I'm hungry! Let's eat! Run for the Border!" Each individual must find out which ingredient they are and then find enough to form a complete Human Taco.

Important Item: Have each person bring something to the meeting that means something special to them or that they would not have left home without, and then ask them to take turns sharing.

Lollipop: Pass out dum-dum lollipops to the group. For every letter that appears in the flavor, the participant has to share something about him/her with the group.

M & M Game: This activity is very similar to the Toilet Paper Game, but instead of using a roll of toilet paper, you may use a bag of M & M's. Make sure the group members do not eat their M & M's until their turn has passed.

Make a Date: Give each participant a paper plate. Have them draw the face of a clock on their plate with a line next to each number (no digitals!). Then have participants walk around and find a "date" for each hour, writing their name by the hour. The catch is no one can make a "date" with more than one person per hour. After everyone has made their dates, speed up time and allow 1-3 minutes for each hour. The facilitator then asks a question for discussion on each date. The pairs will have a chance to get to know one another.

Mumble Jumble: Before the activity begins, the leader will cut up a few pictures into puzzle pieces. Each group member will grab a piece of a puzzle from a bag. The group members will keep their puzzle piece to themselves until the leader says, "GO!" At this point, the group members will try to locate the other members of the group with the pieces to form the appropriate pictures. Whichever group does it first, wins. Good activity for breaking into retreat/activity groups.

Self Introduction Exercise: The objective of this exercise is for members of the team to become acquainted with one another to work more effectively as a team. Each individual needs to complete the paragraph below and then, if they feel comfortable disclosing, may be asked to share answers with the rest of the group.

Hello, my name is _____. I am _____ years old and I am majoring in _____. My hometown is _____ and I really _____ it there because _____. I always dreamed that someday I would _____, and that dream has _____ true. I feel _____ about it now! Some things I like to do include _____. There are many things I am good at and one of them is _____. I did a really interesting thing once and that was _____. My family consists of _____. If I could change one thing about myself it would be _____. Still, I am really glad to be here right now because _____. I would really like to get together

with anyone who be interested in _____. The one thing I want to be remembered for is _____. As far as future plans are concerned, I hope to be _____ someday.

Sentence Stems: Form dyads (2) or triads (3) and have participants complete the rest of the sentence. The leader can read the sentence to all of the participants or all participants can have sheets of paper with these listed and take their own time in covering them. (Excellent for roommates!) Here are some examples:

- Before I came to Maryville, my main interests were...
- The way I would describe my family is...
- The thing I remember most about high school...
- My fondest memories of another person are...
- My most unusual friend is...
- The things I value most are...
- My favorite pastimes are...
- Some of the things that make me happy are...
- Where I hope to be five years from now...
- The thing I would most like to accomplish this year...
- The thing that concerns me most about college is...

Good starters for roommates might be:

- The first day we met, the things I noticed about you were...
- Since then, some things that surprised me about you were...
- Something I like about you is...
- It appears to me that an important difference between us is...
- I think we might have to compromise on...
- What I think I will get out of having a roommate is...
- I think the most important thing I have learned from this discussion is...

Shoe Factory: Have the group stand in a large circle shoulder to shoulder. Then have everyone remove their shoes and put them in the center. After the group has formed a pile with their shoes, the leader has everyone choose two different shoes other than their own. They should put them on their feet (halfway if they are too small). The group then needs to successfully match the shoes and put them in proper pairs by standing next to the individual wearing the other shoe. This will probably result in a tangled mess - and lots of giggles!

Shoe Game: Have the group stand in a large circle shoulder to shoulder. Then have everyone remove their shoes, tie them together, and place in center. Have one volunteer choose a pair of shoes other than their own and make one statement about the owner of the shoes (i.e. "The owner of these shoes must be very thrifty and economical to wear shoes in this condition!"). The owner of the shoes then comes forward, introduces him/herself, and picks out another pair of shoes to introduce. Game continues until all participants have introduced themselves.

Solemn and Silent: The instructor explains that this exercise will take self control. Members pair back to back. On the count of three, everyone must face their partner, look each other in the eyes, and then try to remain solemn and serious. No speaking! The first to smile or laugh must sit down. All who remain standing then take a new partner and the activity continues until only one person has not smiled or laughed. (Second round of playing can involve two teams competing to outlast each other.) If you get a pair at the end who are both keeping a straight face, the rest of the group can act as hecklers to disrupt them.

Stinger: Have the group form a circle and close their eyes. Facilitator circles the group and selects a "stinger" by squeezing an individual's shoulder. The group then opens their eyes and spends time introducing themselves to others while shaking hands (and trying to spot the stinger). The stinger tries to eliminate everyone without getting caught. The stinger strikes by injecting poison with their index finger, while shaking hands. A person stung may not die until at least

five seconds after they are stung. The more dramatic the death, the better! When someone thinks they have discovered who the stinger is, they may announce that they know. If they get a “second” from someone else in the group within 10 seconds, the two of them may make an accusation. If the person does not get a second, he/she must wait to challenge again, after another person dies. If another person does step forward to second the challenge, both point to who they think it is on a count to three. If they do not point to the same person, or they both point to the wrong person, they both are automatically dead. If they select the correct person, the stinger is dead and the game is over.

String Game: Participants select pre-cut lengths of string from the group facilitator. Each member holds the string between his/her thumb and forefinger. For each “wrap” of the string around the finger, participants must share one thing about themselves.

Superlatives: Participants are asked to study the composition of the group quietly and to decide on a superlative adjective that describes themselves in reference to the others (youngest, tallest, most uptight, etc.). They then tell their adjectives, explain, and, if possible, test their accuracy.

Toilet Paper Game: Get a roll of toilet paper and explain to your group that they are going camping and need to take as much toilet paper as they think they may need for a three day trip. Once everyone has an ample supply, explain to the group that for every square in their possession, they must share something about themselves. NOTE: If anyone knows the activity, ask them not to give away the secret under any circumstances.

Uncle Fred’s Suitcase: The group forms a circle. The first person states their name and the reason they picked this college, group, etc. You continue going around the group, repeating the names of the people preceding their name and why they chose to come to Maryville. You also can substitute the “why you came here” with other things. Another version of the game is to begin with, “I packed Uncle Fred’s suitcase with.....” and continue around like that. The real trick is the last person in the group who has to name all the people and why they came, what they like, etc.

Who Am I...or...Famous Pairs: In this exercise, group members will be asked to identify the names of famous pairs or persons. The leader tapes the name of a famous person on the back of each participant. (i.e. Fred Flinstone, Mary Lou Retton, Bill Clinton, etc.) The group member is not to see who is taped to their back. Their task is to find out who they are. The participants mill around the room asking others yes/no questions. If the member receives a “yes” answer, they can continue to ask that individual questions until they receive a “no” answer. Then they must continue on to ask someone else. When a group member figures out who they are, they take off the tag, put it on the front of their shirt, and write their own name on it. The member then can help other members find out who they are. The exercise concludes when all members have discovered who they are.

Whose Story Is It: Pass out slips of paper and pens. Have everyone briefly write down a true story or experience that happened to them on the paper along with their name. The more bizarre, the better. Fold the slips of paper and put them into the container, shuffling them and mixing them up. A mediator picks out four slips of paper and calls out the names of the people. These people go and sit on chairs or a couch apart from the group. The mediator reads off the stories and then the group tries to figure out whose story is whose. The group does this by asking different people to tell different stories. The people on the couch try to convince the group that the story they tell really is theirs. After everyone on the couch has told a few different stories, the group votes. This repeats until everyone has gone up. The main goal of the game is to have fun telling stories and learn a few interesting or humorous facts about each other.

The Big Wind Blows Game: To set up the game, arrange several chairs facing inward into a medium sized circle. There should be one chair for each player, minus one. One person starts as the “Big Wind” in the center of the circle, with everyone else seated. The Big Wind raises both arms and spins around, while saying the following: “*The Big Wind blows _____*”. The blank must be filled with a true statement about himself or herself, such as “The Big Wind blows everyone who has been to Canada” or any other true fact. At this point, any of the players who share this characteristic (including the person who is currently the Big Wind) must stand up and quickly find a new seat. For each statement, no player is allowed to sit in the same seat or a seat directly adjacent to his or her previous seat. One person will be left without a seat. This person becomes the new “Big Wind” for the next round.

Blanket Name Game: The Blanket Name Game is a simple name recognition/identification game. Go around the room and make introductions (share your name and other information such as your hobbies, major, etc. if desired. Separate into two groups and have two people hold a large, thick blanket separating the two groups so that neither group can see the other. When the blanket drops, the first person to correctly call out the name of the other group's designated person wins the round (which typically means the loser of the round must leave the game, though if you prefer to avoid 'elimination' then you don't have to do this). The group may strike different humorous poses to distract the attention of other group's person. As a variation, several people may be facing the other group with one person being chosen to call out the information of the other group's people.

Celebrity ID Game: The Celebrity ID Game is a good way to get a large group to mingle and break the ice by interacting with lots of people rapidly. To set up, the moderator prepares several labels with famous celebrity or well-known names (e.g. Tom Hanks, Mickey Mouse, Barry Bonds, etc.) The moderator sticks a label on each person's back. Then, the moderator announces it is time for the game to begin. At this point everybody mingles and introduces themselves to each other, and then each person asks yes or no questions to gain clues about the name. When a person correctly identifies the name, he or she removes the label and continues to mingle until a preset amount of time.

First Impressions Game: To set up First Impressions, pass out the large sheets of paper and writing utensils. Have each person write their name on the top of a sheet of paper. Tape each person's sheet to their back so that they can't see it. Instruct everyone to mingle with each other and to converse. Tell everyone to say hello and to introduce each other for a few moments. After a minute or so, ask each person to write an adjective (their "first impression" of the person they just spoke with) on each other's papers. Then have each person continue mingling with new people, repeating the process. After 10-20 minutes (depending on how large your group is and how long you want this activity to run), each person should have several adjectives and descriptive words listed on their backs. Go around the room and introduce each other, reading the words written on your neighbor's paper. This should be pretty humorous, and if people did this activity correctly, there should be lots of kind things said about each other. Important note: instruct everyone to write nice (or encouraging) words ONLY! Do not allow any mean, rude, or critical words to be written. For example, one can write words such as "beautiful smile," "great sense of humor," "smart and witty personality," "gifted listener," etc.

Giants, Wizards, & Elves: Teach everyone how to become three characters: the giant, the wizard, and the elf. Each character features hand motions and a noise.

- For the giant, each person stands on their tippy toes, lifts up their arms, and makes an angry growling noise: "Rooooar!"
- For the wizard, each person crouches a little bit, flutters their fingers as though they are casting a spell, and they make a magical noise: "Wooooo!"
- For the elf, each person gets down very low on their knees, cups their hands around their ears, and makes a high pitched elf noise: "Eeeeeee!"

Practice each motion together a few times. Divide everyone into two teams and have them separate into opposite sides of the room. The game involves several rounds. For each round, the following takes place:

1. Each team forms a huddle and decides to become a giant, wizard, or elf.
2. Both teams then line up and face each other, about 5 feet apart.
3. The facilitator says "3..2..1..Go!"
4. Each team acts out the giant, wizard, or elf (whatever they decided to become).
5. As soon as they act out their character, the winner tries to grab the loser and pulls as many people over to their side as they can. The loser tries to run away, back to their side, in order to be safe. The winner of each round is determined by the following. The giant defeats the elf because giants "squash" elves. Elves defeat wizards by outsmarting them, chewing at their legs. The wizard defeats the giant by "zapping" them with a magic spell. Identical characters are a draw (no one wins). This process keeps repeating for multiple rounds until one team is entirely consumed (or when time runs out.)

Human Sculptures Game: Competitive Version: The facilitator should announce a category (e.g. famous movies or famous songs — the more specific the better). All players are then divided into smaller groups and one team leader is given a pen and paper. Each group brainstorms an idea that goes along with the topic and each team leader must write

down the idea on a sheet of paper and turn it in to the leader, who checks that the idea is appropriate for use. Each group then creates a sculpture using their bodies. Every member of the group should comprise some part of the entire sculpture. After a predefined time limit (for example, five minutes), each team looks at each other's sculpture. Each team is allowed two guesses for what the other team has formed. Whatever group guesses the the other group's sculpture the closest is the winner.

Noncompetitive Version: The leader should announce that the group will now participate in a "human clay" activity. Players would be asked to provide their own interpretation or illustration of some category of events or other topics (prepared in advance by the leader). Some examples of categories that could be used:

- A topic related to specific subject matter learned in the classroom
- An important event or experience
- An important event in history
- An famous scene from a movie
- A line from a famous song

The leader should demonstrate first (to help put the players at ease, especially those who might be reluctant to act out). This noncompetitive version can be a good way to see how people illustrate content learned in class, or something personally meaningful to them. Have fun!

ID Guessing Game: Pass out an index card and a pen to each person who is playing. Then each person has to write two things they have done and one they haven't. The more unique and interesting the better, but the object is to make it hard for the others to guess that it is your card. Then the cards are collected and the group votes on who they think the card represents and which item they haven't done.

The Name Game: The Name Game (also known as the Adjective Game) starts with one person in the room picking a word that describes himself or herself as a person. The catch is, that the word must start with the first letter of their first name. For example, my students call me Miss Velasquez. I would say "Hello! My name is Vivacious Velasquez." The person after me must say my adjective and name before saying theirs. So they would go, "Hello, Vivacious Velasquez, my name is Silly Sam." Then the third person would go, "Hello, Vivacious Velasquez, and Silly Sam, my name is Easy-going Edwin." This continues on until all of the students have gone. Being last is hilarious in this game, because they must remember everyone's name AND adjective before stating theirs.

Never Have I Ever: Instruct everyone to sit in a circle. If you have an extremely large group, tell people to form smaller circles of about ten to fifteen people. To start each round, each player holds out all ten fingers and places them on the floor. Go around the circle and one at a time, each person announces something that they have never done, beginning the sentence with the phrase "Never have I ever..." For example, a person could say, "Never have I ever been to Europe." For each statement that is said, all the other players drop a finger if they have done that statement. So, if three other people have been to Europe before, those three people must put down a finger, leaving them with nine fingers. The goal is to stay in the game the longest (to be the last person with fingers remaining). To win, it's a good strategy to say statements that most people have done, but you haven't.

Shoe ID Game: Everybody takes off a shoe and throws them in a large pile on the floor. On the count of three, each person grabs a shoe from the pile, then find the person with the matching shoe in their other foot and find out their name and three things about them they didn't already know. Works best with larger groups. After everyone has found their person and asked them the questions, then go around the circle and have everyone introduce the person they talked to and tell the three things about them. This game is a good large group game, though it can be somewhat smelly.

Sorts and Mingle: The first part of the game is the "Sorts" game. You will throw out two contrasting choices and the group has to move either East or West of the room (e.g. "Do you prefer Target or Walmart?"). Then you throw out two more choices and have them move South and North. That way, they are all having to move somewhere and can't get "lost" in the crowd. Sorts that work well include: movie/book; salty/sweet; dress up/casual; inside/outside; be on the stage performing/in the audience watching, etc. The second part, the Mingle game, is also interesting and effective as an icebreaker; You throw out a general category and the group has to mingle around to find others that have the same answer and they clump up. After about thirty seconds to one minute, you then have each group call out their answer.

It's okay if someone doesn't have anyone else who has the same answer. Just try to avoid two groups with the same answer (means they didn't mingle very well!) Some examples of mingles: your favorite dessert; the type of toothpaste you use; if you could attend one huge event (e.g. the Superbowl, Oscars, World Series, Nascar Opening Day, etc.) what would you choose; your least favorite chore growing up as a kid; if you could be the very best at something, what would it be?

Telephone Charades: The Telephone Charades Game (also sometimes called "Charades Down the Line") is an icebreaker/stationary game that is a hilarious blend of the classic "telephone down the line" and "charades" game. This group game is fairly simple to play. Select five to six participants and ask them to leave the room. The audience chooses an action that is specific, silly, and obscure to act out (e.g. "a nerd's romantic first date", "washing an elephant", "going skydiving", etc.). Once the clue has been decided, bring in all the participants and instruct them to face the right side. The moderator reveals the clue to the first person, who taps the second person on the shoulder and acts out the topic using charades rules (no talking allowed, no noises). The second person then taps the third person and acts out his or her understanding of what was acted out. This continues until it reaches the last person in line, who must guess what the action is. This game is funny because the action mutates and changes based upon each person's interpretation of what is going on, often leading to confusion and silly motions.

Wink Murder: Sit the youth in a circle, facing each other. Choose one youth to be the 'detective'. Send this youth out of the room or get him to shut his eyes and look away. Ask the remaining youth to close their eyes and put their heads down. Pick a 'murderer' by tapping one of them on the shoulder. The role of the murderer is to outsmart the detective by killing off everyone without being discovered. To do so, he must make eye contact and wink at someone without the detective seeing him (note: no one knows who the murderer is besides the facilitator who chose him). After someone is winked at, he or she must wait five seconds, then loudly 'die' and lay back on the floor. The detective has three chances to guess who the murderer is. If he does not accurately identify the 'murderer' in three guesses before everyone dies, the murderer wins.

Squeeze Murder: Choose someone to be the 'detective'. Send this person away from the group. Ask everyone else to close their eyes and put their heads down. Select the 'murderer' by tapping someone on the shoulder. Tell the youth to begin walking around, shaking hands with everyone, and ask the 'detective' to come back into the room. The role of the 'murderer' is to outsmart the detective by killing off everyone without being discovered. To do so, she must squeeze the person's hand while shaking it. The person whose hand was squeezed must wait five seconds (while still walking around shaking hands), then loudly die and fall to the floor. The detective has three guesses. If he does not accurately identify the murderer in three guesses and before everyone dies, the murderer wins.

Balloon Master: Have everyone blow up a balloon and tie a string (about 2 feet long) to it. Now have everyone tie the other end of the string around their ankle. Players must run around and try to pop others' balloons by stepping on them. The last person with an unpoped balloon wins!

Clump: Have the participants walk around and mingle. Randomly call out a number. The participants must try and get into groups of that number. Any participants that do not end up in a group are out of the game.

String You Together: Arrange everyone in a circle, standing or sitting. Begin by stating your name and one unique fact about yourself (for example: "I have 7 siblings, I have a pet iguana, I can lick my elbow...", etc.). Hold onto your end and toss the ball of string to someone else in the circle. This person now must say her name and one unique fact about herself. Holding onto her place on the string, she then tosses the ball to someone else. Continue this until everyone is holding a piece of the string. Now work your way backwards, rolling the ball of string back up. You must, however, call out the person's name and remember their unique fact before you can toss it back to him or her!

Amoeba Tag: The game begins with one person being 'it'. When he tags someone, they must hold hands and work together to tag others. When four people are joined, they break off into two groups of two, both groups being it. The person who avoids becoming 'it' the longest wins.

Mine Field: Guides must lead a blindfolded individual through an obstacle course (mine field), using verbal cues only. Ask the participants to find a partner and decide who will be the guide (they can take turns). Tie a blindfold around the remaining individual and spin him around a couple times to disorient him. The guide must lead the blindfolded individual through the course without stepping on any mines (for example: “take three big steps forward. Take two little steps to the left,” etc.). The guide learns how to be responsible for team-mates while the blindfolded person learns to rely on team-mates.

Get A Clue: Stick a piece of paper naming an animal (or other category) on each participant’s forehead or back, in a way that allows everyone to see it but them. They are allowed to ask ten yes or no questions to anyone in the group they want, a maximum of two questions to the same person (for example: “does it live in the rainforest? Does it have a tail? Does it have 4 legs?”). After eight questions, they have the choice to guess their animal, but if they are wrong they lose. At the end of their ten questions, they can guess their animal. If they do not guess it correctly, they can ask two more questions, and guess one last time. If they are still incorrect, they lose. The object is to correctly identify your animal. Those that do can move onto a bonus round, where they only get five yes or no questions to identify a new animal.

All Aboard: Begin by getting everyone to stand on the tarp. Challenge them to turn the tarp over without anyone touching the ground in the process. Give the group a time limit of fifteen minutes to do so.

The Lava Pit: Make up a scenario that the participants are being chased and need to cross a field of hot lava in order to escape. Divide the participants into two even teams. Give each team the paper plates explaining that when they step on these plates they will not sink into the lava. The group must figure out how to get from one side of the lava pit to the other (Point A to Point B, marked on the floor with tape). Only one person can be on a plate at a time, and the plates may be picked up and moved. Key to the game is that only one person will need to work their way back across the field to help the rest across.

Name Game: Each group must create a team name and team slogan or cheer. Give each group ten minutes to do so. Tell the groups that at the end of the time, each group must present and explain their team name to everyone else, and demonstrate their team slogan or cheer. The group with the most creative team name and slogan/cheer wins.

Dizzy Lizzie: Have each group line up at the starting line. The first member from each group will run to the bat, put their forehead on one end and spin around the bat ten times, while keeping the other end of the bat on the ground. After spinning, they must run back and tag the next member of their team, who runs and does the same thing. The first team to have all of its members back across the starting line and sitting down wins.

Better Letter: Divide participants into teams. Hand each participant five pieces of paper (roughly three inches x five inches). Ask them to choose any five letters of the alphabet, and write down one letter on each piece of paper (remind them to not show these letters to the other members of their team. After everyone has done this, have each team put all their cards in a pile. Set a time limit (five – six minutes) and challenge the teams to use their cards to make as many words as possible, using each of their letter cards only once. Words must be three letters or more and short forms are not allowed. The team with the most words at the end of the time limit wins.

Reach Out and Touch Someone: Have group stand in a circle with their eyes close. Facilitator pulls 3-5 people into the circle and allows them to open their eyes. While the people standing around the circle keep their eyes closed, read a set of the statements listed below. As each statement is read, people in the circle should tap the shoulder of any members standing outside the circle that the statement applies to from their perspective. When set is complete, return participants in the circle to the circle, instructing them to close their eyes again. Pull 3-5 more people into the circle and repeat.

- You think this person is out going and friendly
- You would like to take this person out for coffee
- You would like to meet this person’s parents
- You are proud of this person’s accomplishments
- You would like to see this person run for a position on campus

- You think this person is interesting and would like to get to know them better
- You think this person has great potential
- You think this person has a great sense of style
- This person's smile brightens your day
- You would set this person up with your brother/sister
- This person has a hidden talent that you think they should share
- This person makes you laugh
- You have learned something from this person
- This person makes your day by being around them
- You think this person best fits the category of a student leader
- You think this person is shy on the outside but has a lot to offer from the inside
- Represents this school in a proud way
- You think this person has good ideas and should share them
- You would go on a blind date that this person set up for you
- You would share your winnings of the lottery with this person
- You think this person will excel and be a success in this chosen career
- If this person was out of town, you would really miss them
- You would like to travel with this person
- You would like your future partner or spouse to have similar qualities as this person
- You are glad this person is a fellow leader and a part of your life

Step Forward/Step Backward: Have group create a single-file line down the middle of the room. Read statements (see examples below), instructing members to take a step forward or back. Participants will be scattered around the room by the end of the exercise.

- If you are from [STATE], take 1 step forward.
- If you have a job, take 1 step forward.
- If you are a Cardinals fan, take 1 step forward.
- If you are a Cubs fan, take 2 steps backward.
- If you know what you want your major to be, take 1 step forward.
- If you have a boyfriend or girlfriend, take 1 step forward.
- If you play a sport, take 1 step forward.
- If you were on the debate team at your high school, take 1 step forward.
- If you voted in the last election, take 3 steps forward.
- If you could have voted but didn't, take 1 step backward.
- If you know you live on campus, take 1 step forward.
- If you know you are a commuter, take 1 step forward.
- If you are not from Missouri, take 1 step forward.

What you see is not necessarily what you get: Participants get a bag with an item in it. Secretly they look at the item and then take about 15 minutes to take attributes of that item and fashion them into a presidential platform. Sample items include: stress ball, pen, slinky, watch, football helmet. For example, for the slinky: the candidate is flexible, durable, can move forward, etc. All the participants vote based on the delivered platform. THEN the items are revealed to the larger group.

ICEBREAKER QUESTIONS:

- If you won a certificate for a free tattoo, would you use it and if so, what would you get where?
- What's your favorite part of vacation: the anticipation, the trip itself or the memories?
- Who would play you in a movie?
- What's your best friend's best quality?
- What is your wildest career fantasy?
- What are three things you loved about this year?
- What was your favorite present ever?
- Who is the most famous person you have ever met?
- What has been a memorable "other duty as assigned"?
- Which would you choose: more time or more money?
- What is your best "quirky talent" (eg: I am a great packer)
- What is something you're glad you did, but would never do again?
- When you went to college, what did you think you'd be doing today?
- Name something you can't live without
- What's one thing you wish you were really good at
- What's the last thing you did that was "new for you"
- Fill in the blank: I was there _____ (at Woodstock, when the Cardinals won the World Series, at groundbreaking for X)
- My favorite time of year is...
- My favorite childhood toy was...
- If I were a car, the car that best describes my personality is... The first time I kissed someone I...
- You have won \$5,000,000 but have only an hour to spend it, what would you buy... If I were a breakfast cereal my name would be...
- A person whom I would like to visit is...
- If I could be anywhere else in the world right now it would be... The dessert I like best is...
- My favorite animal for a pet would be...
- A person who has had a great influence on my life is... Why?... If I weren't in college right now I would be...
- One thing I am looking forward to in the future is... The best book I have ever read is...
- The worst problem facing our nation today is...
- When I think of my best friend from childhood, this is what I remember most... My favorite meal...
- When I can find some time alone, I like to...
- A characteristic that I find attractive in other people is... My favorite movie of all time is...
- Three things I think I am really good at are...
- If I could smash and break on thing, it would be... One thing the world needs more of is...
- One thing I would like to change about myself is...
- A problem that I am dealing with right now is... The most important person in my life is...

IMPROV GAMES:

Space Leap: It starts off with one person in the middle, and they create a little scene for themselves. Then somebody leaps into the scene and starts a completely different scene. Then a third person comes in and does the same, as does the fourth person afterwards. The scene had to find away to kick out the fourth person and then the scene has to change back to the scene that third person created. And then the same occurs, until all three of the members are kicked out and remains the first member doing the scene they started off with.

Sports Broadcaster: You take two things, an object and a sport, like toothbrush and basketball. The sport now created is toothbrush basketball. There will be the offensive team and the defensive team. There will be a broadcaster for both. So the teammates have to play and act it out silently while the broadcasters interpret the game.

Paper Bag Skits: First split your group into teams consisting of three to six members. Give each team a paper bag filled with assorted objects. These can be almost anything, i.e. a wooden spoon, a screw, a bar of soap, a computer disk, etc... The object of the game is to present a skit using all of the props provided. The props may be used as they would be in normal life, or they may be imaginatively employed. Give each group a topic to base their skit on. When all the skits have been planned and rehearsed they are performed for the amusement of all.

Shoulda Said: There is a circle of people with two or three people in the middle. They are acting out a scene that the other members have chosen for them. And then at any point in their scene, the other members that are watching may call out "shoulda said" and the actor that it was called on has to say either the opposite of what he/she meant, or what they were really thinking. For example, I say "I love that dress you're wearing!" and somebody calls shoulda said on me, I could say "that dress would look much better on my pet rat". And of course the other actors in the scene will have not heard your extra comment. This is a really fun game!

Icebreaker Facilitation Tips

Here are some specific tips to think about when presenting:

- Keep rules and verbal instructions to a minimum to avoid boredom and confusion, most people learn best by watching and then doing.
- If possible, avoid being a spectator or sideliner; get involved and play as many games as you're comfortable with.
- Don't worry about sticking to the rules. Change them and bend them as you go.
- Look for signs of "enough" and then introduce a new game before interest begins to wane.
- If possible, keep players in the game, avoiding or altering rules that permanently eliminate people.
- Start an activity or session that brings the whole group together.
- Alternate between active and quiet activities.
- If people are tired or just waking up start with quiet activities. If players are young or have been sitting, start with active games.
- If there are teams needed, avoid a situation where people are picked, use creative ways of forming teams.
- If your groups are co-ed then shoot for a 50/50 split.
- Have enough activities in hand to last the entire session.
- Have equipment on site before beginning to avoid participants' boredom.
- Encourage players to make creative alterations within the activities or try homemade versions.
- Get some feedback during the session as well as at the end (likes, dislikes and suggestions).
- Ask questions that will foster internalization of their experiences (What did you learn about yourself? What will you remember? Etc.)
- Emphasize competition against self or a team record, when competition seems natural. Avoid winners and losers; someone will feel bad.
- Discourage negative criticism and encourage acceptance of people's differences.
- End with a quiet activity that allows everyone to regroup in a fun way and try to leave the group laughing.
- Emphasize challenge over competition. Try to de-emphasize the importance of outcomes. Temper the spirit of competition with the spirit of cooperation.
- Send a clear message that you want everyone to play and that you want them to feel good about playing. If you express a caring attitude then you establish trust as a basis of play.
- When playing active games reiterate the principal of caring restraint, we'll use only the force necessary to match that of our opponents.
- A game can be an end in itself. It doesn't always have to have a deeper lesson or reason for happening. Enjoy!
- Consider experimenting with these activities on your staff. Consider the benefits that they, as your students, may derive from participating.
- Fantasy is the essence of play. When we decide to be a great warrior or a train we're taking a quantum leap out of the real world. Create a space where people can let them go, be free and where they can act without consequence or: connection to the real world. Fantasy makes a game come alive.
- Use rituals to help them to be drawn into the play world, look for opportunities to incorporate songs, chants, noise and body movements (e.g., ending the game, raising hand for group to be silent).

RESOURCES

Books in the Center for Student Engagement (CSE):

- "The Big Book of Icebreakers"
- "Staff Development: Fun and Games"
- "Indoor/Outdoor Team Building Games for Trainers"

Suggested Websites:

- <http://www.wilderdom.com/games/>
 - Also has links to many other options
- <http://www.group-games.com/>