

Icebreaker ideas

Name juggling

In advance: Prepare by gathering a variety of objects in a bag. Items should be soft without sharp edges, for example, different sizes of foam balls, soft flying disks, stuffed animals.

To play: Have the group members get in a circle facing each other. Pull out an item from the bag and call out a person's name who is across from you. Tell the person that you are going to toss the object to them. Once they catch it, tell them to call out a person's name who is across from them and toss the object, just like you did. The third person is to call out and toss to another person. These actions are repeated until all people are included. No one is to go twice, except when the last person is called, he is to say your name and toss to you, the first person. Try this again and once the group understands the concept, add another object in the tossing process. Then another and another and another. Everyone will have to pay close attention!

Animal nicknames

Have group sit in a circle. Have everyone think of an animal that starts with the first letter of their first name, for example, Raccoon Rena. Have the person on your left start the process by saying the animal and their first name. The second person says the first person's animal and name and then says their information. The third person says the first and second person's information and so on. If you have a large group, it can be tough for people at the end of the circle to remember all of the names as well as making it difficult to come up with animals for very popular letters. Variation: Use an action, verb, hobby or vegetable instead of an animal, for example: Ravishing or Rockin' or Rock climbing or Radish Rena.

Introduction game

This is a more mild-mannered version of Animal nicknames. First person says, "Hello, everybody, my name is Ted." The second person says, "Hello, Ted. My name is Fred." The third person says, Hello, Ted and Fred. My name is Ned." And so on.

I, me, my

Give out 10 beans (candies, peanuts, etc.) to each person and have the group converse and mingle. If anybody says the words "I," "Me" or "My," they must give up a bean to the person to whom they're talking. Whoever is able to get others to open up about themselves and has the most beans in five minutes is the winner!



Stringing people along

In advance: Get fifteen 3" x 5" cards per person. Cut them in half and hole-punch a corner of each card. String them onto an 18 inch piece of yarn and tie the ends of the yarn together to make a necklace.

To play: Give a necklace and a pencil to all of the participants. Everyone should introduce themselves to each other, but instead of giving yarn to each other, everyone needs to sign one side of a card. They can also write down a piece of advice, their personal motto or a joke, if there is room.

The colors game

This is just like the above game except that it is only with colored candies (like M&Ms or Skittles). Have everyone take three different colored candies. After the whole group has them, explain that they need to say their name and the following things based on the color of the candy that they selected.

M&Ms color code

Dark Brown: favorite TV show

Light Brown: favorite movie of the past year

Yellow: favorite sport

Red: reason they joined this club

Blue: favorite service project

Green: favorite fast food restaurant

Two truths and a lie

Have everyone grab one partner and talk about themselves in turn. The couples should be away from each other so they can't hear anyone but their partner. Tell them: "Find out as much interesting and unique information about your partner as you can and share facts about yourself. Come up with a lie about a pretend accomplishment and then get back together in the group." Each person introduces his or her partner and talks a bit about them, stating three interesting facts. The group then has to guess which one is the lie. This exercise can break down stereotypes. For example, you may find out that a seemingly shy person loves to dance and an outspoken, tough guy has a teddy bear collection.

Spinning a yarn

Gather group in a circle. Holding a ball of yarn, the leader shares interesting information about herself. When finished, she holds the end of the yarn and throws the yarn across the circle to any person who, in turn, shares a fact about himself, holds onto the strand of yarn, and throws the ball to another person. This process is repeated until every person has shared something about himself and the yarn has formed a web inside the circle. During this activity, the leader is responsible for sharing, listening and keeping the web secure. Through total cooperation, the web must then be untangled and the ball rewound.

The interview

Break the group into two person teams (have them pick a partner that they know the least). Have them interview each other for a specific amount of time (You can also prepare questions ahead of time or provide general guidelines for the interview). They need to learn about what each other likes about school, family life, hobbies, favorite sport, etc. After the interviews, reassemble the group and have each team introduce their team member to the group.

Telephone

Ask club members to form a line. Whisper a phrase into the first person's ear. This person then whispers into the next person's ear and so on until the message reaches the end of the line. Ask the person at the end of the line to repeat the message.

Chances are that the message will be very garbled and not at all close to the original message. This activity helps club members realize the importance of receiving a message firsthand and the need to verify second hand information. Critical details can get lost along the way.

Bet you didn't know!

This game will help club members learn about one another. Distribute small pieces of paper. Ask each club member to write three fun things about themselves that no one else would know. Here are examples of things club members might write down: I play guitar. I like to sew. My favorite cartoon character is Scooby Doo.

Everyone folds their piece of paper and places it in a basket. The advisor collects all the paper and shuffles them so they are out of order. The advisor then asks someone to pick a sheet of paper and read what is written. The rest of the club members must then guess who wrote the information.

The triangle exercise

Divide club members into groups of three. Give each group a piece of paper and each person in the group a pencil.

Instruct the students to draw triangles. The catch is that each person in the group must draw one line of the triangle, and they must take turns drawing these lines. Allow the groups of three to begin by drawing triangles within a 60-second time period. Begin timing the groups and let them draw. After 60 seconds, find out how many triangles each group drew.

Instruct club members that this time they should draw as many triangles as possible within the 60 seconds using the same method, but they have 60 seconds to first discuss how they will draw their triangles. Allow the groups 60 seconds of discussion time. Then begin the second exercise. At the end of the exercise, ask each group to share their drawing process and how many triangles they have drawn.

Name tags

After participants have filled out their name tags, direct them to introduce themselves to someone in the group whom they do not know. Tell them to exchange information about themselves for two minutes.

When time is called, ask participants to exchange name tags with their partners they then go on to meet another participant and discuss only the person whose name tag they are wearing.

Again, when time is called, the participants switch name tags and find others to talk to, talking only about the person whose name tag they are wearing, as before.

Continue this for several rounds, depending upon the time available. At the conclusion, ask participants to retrieve their own name tag.

Hum-dinger

Decide how many groups of participants you want to use, then select that many common, popular songs. Prepare strips of paper with the title of a song for each participant. If five is a good size for each group, for example, make 10 strips that say "Three Blind Mice," and 10 that say "Jingle Bells," "Home on the Range," "Happy Birthday," and so forth.

Tell them, "There is a great deal of talent and skill in this room. We are here to explore some of this talent. Each of you will be given a piece of paper on which is written the title of a common song. Please look at the title, but don't share it with anyone else. When I say go, please wander around the room humming your tune until you find all of the other members of your group with the same song."

When the small groups have been formed, they can take turns singing their song for the whole club.