



ICE BREAKERS & Team Building Activities

“Who am I?”

Equipment/Supplies Needed: post-it notes and pencils

Gather enough post-it notes to have one for each student. On each note, write the name of a famous person. It can be an athlete, a government leader, a cartoon character, a movie star, etc. You can even do themes and have all the names be of the same kind...like Olympic athletes. Then attach a post-it note to each student's back without letting him/her know the name you have given them. Now the fun begins. The goal is to talk to other members of the group in order to discover their identity. They can only talk with one person at a time, and can only ask Yes and No questions. If they ask a question about whom they are and the answer is yes, they may ask that person another question. If the answer is no, they must find someone else to ask. The first person to discover who they are is the winner! Give the rest of the group time to complete their quest! Funky twist—give them the names of other pod members and see how well they know each other!

“Honey If You Love Me”

Equipment/Supplies Needed: None

The group sits in a circle. One person will be in the middle. The person in the middle selects a person in the circle to approach and say "Honey, if you love me please smile". The chosen person in the circle must reply without smiling or laughing, "Honey, I love you but I just can't smile." If the chosen person smiles, they are the new person in the middle. If the person doesn't smile, then the person in the middle must ask another person the same question. The rest of the group can judge what's a smile and what's not. The person in the middle can ask the question to the same person up to 3 times in a row. This ice breaker is sure to stir up some fun!

“A Note of Affirmation”

Equipment/Supplies: Large index cards (one per person)

Explain that this exercise is an opportunity to share your appreciation and respect for each other. Give each person a large index card (it is important for all adults to participate). Instruct each person puts their name on the top of a card. Circulate the cards through the group. Instruct the group to write an affirmation (something they admire or appreciate about each person) on all the Pod members' cards. Each card will have an affirmation from all members. Suggest that the president or facilitator read all of the cards aloud. At the end of the activity, everyone should retrieve their own card.

“If You”

Equipment/Supplies: None

This game is a great way to get to know each other in a hurry! Have your group sit in a circle of chairs. The leader reads a series of questions. For each question, if your answer is 'yes' then you move one seat to the left. The object is to move all the way around the circle. The first person to reach his/her original seat wins the game! If more than one person needs the same chair, sit on each other's lap, or share the chair! Don't have room for a circle of chairs? Have the group stand in a circle and have each person take his/her shoes off, then move to the next pair of shoes instead of the next chair!

We've even put the questions together for you! Feel free to use these or your own!

(Questions are on the next page)

"If You Questions"

Move one seat to the left if:

- If you drove to school today.
- If you have brown eyes.
- If you had breakfast this morning.
- If you have ever traveled outside of the U.S.
- If you have a dog.
- If you are an only child.
- If you're wearing a watch.
- If you passed the fourth grade.
- If you have ever sent a text message.
- If you sing in the shower.
- If you can roller skate.
- If you have a job.
- If you are currently reading a good book.
- If you had/have a test today.
- If you use more than 10 squares of toilet paper at each sitting.
- If you prefer chocolate milk to white milk.
- If you know all of the words to the National Anthem.
- If you have at least one dollar in your pocket.
- If you can sing your school song.
- If you've ever played Mario Brothers.
- If you've been to a State Fair.
- If you were not born in the United States.
- If you've ever planted a tree.
- If you took a bath or shower today.
- If you have socks on.
- If you like yogurt.
- If you volunteer some where.
- If you have seen the movie Shrek more than three times.
- If you still watch cartoons.
- If you can touch your tongue to your nose.
- If you can make fart noises in your arm pit.

“Bumpity Bump Bump”

Equipment/Supplies: None

Form a large circle with one person in the middle (the leader). The leader will point to a person in the circle and say “right, bumpity bump bump”, or “left, bumpity bump bump.” The person in the circle that was pointed at will need to say the person to their left or right prior to the leader finishing “bumpity bump bump.” If the person in the circle recites the person’s name in time, the leader points to another person. If the person didn’t recite the name in time, they must take the leader position and the old leader takes a spot in the circle.

“Common Ground”

Equipment/Supplies: None

Divide the group into small teams of 3 or 4. Give each group a piece of paper and a marker. Give them three minutes to make a list of all the things they have in common. The group with the longest list, wins! (explain that “givens” like naming body parts, like we all have hands and eyes, or we live in the United States does not count!) Have each group share their list. To add a twist, have them make a second list of things they don’t have in common to celebrate the unique qualities that each person brings to the table.

“Where were you?”

Equipment/Supplies: None

Have each member make a list of the things they were doing yesterday at certain times throughout the day (you can pick any times that you want to.) For example, you might choose, 6:00 am, 11:45 am, 4:45 pm, 9:15 pm, and 12:00 am. Then divide them into groups of 3 or 4. Call out a time and have everyone in the group share what they were doing at that time. Do this for two or three times. Then tell them to “change time zones!” They should then form new groups, and share their times again with new friends. Repeat once more.

“Bag of Vision”

Equipment/Supplies: Prepare a bag with small household items inside. The items can be anything you wish, the stranger the better.

Break your group into teams of three or four. Then have one person from each team pull one item out of the bag. Their first task will be to, as a team, make up a story about where the item originated from, and how it got to your house. Give them a minute or two to prepare their story then share with the group. Next, each group must come up with a creative use for the item. The use should solve a problem, or benefit the community in some way. The more creative...the better!

“Add it Up”

Equipment/Supplies: Add it up sheet

Divide into groups of 4-6 people. Distribute an “Add it Up” sheet to each group. Ask the group to ask each member to answer the questions. Add the totals of each person’s answers for a total for each question. Add all of the questions together for a grand total. Ask each group to share their totals for each question and grand total. Congratulate the team with the highest number.

(Add It Up questions are on the next page)

Add it Up Questions:

How many siblings do you have? _____

How many pets do you have? _____

How many pairs of shoes do you own? _____

On average, how many cans/bottles of pop do you drink in a day? _____

How many times have you traveled out of your state? _____

What has been your favorite grade in school (so far)? _____

On average, how many hours do you spend practicing for music or a sport per week? _____

How many first cousins do you have? _____

How many times have you eaten fast food in the past two weeks? _____

On average, how many hours do you spend on a computer each day? _____

Group Grand Total: _____

“Chain of Command”

Equipment/Supplies: Quarter and tennis ball.

Divide into two equal groups. Have the groups sit in rows facing the opposing team. Each team joins hands. At one end of the teams there is a Guide who will flip the coin. At the other end of the teams is another Guide and the ball. On your signal, each team closes their eyes, except for the person on the coin end. They will need to watch the coin tossing. The guide begins to flip the coin. At the sign of “heads,” the first person on each team will squeeze the hand of the person beside them. The squeeze should then pass right on down the line until the last person receives the squeeze. The person on the end must then grab the ball before the person on the end of the other team does.

It is a race to send the message down the line, and get the last person to grab the ball before the other team. Whichever team gets the ball rotates, so that the person who grabbed the ball becomes the leader to watch the coin toss and start the signal. The first team to rotate all the way through (the first person to watch the coin toss makes it back to his original seat) wins!

Oh yeah...and no talking! If you don't have time to play a full rotation, just keep score for each team, and the first team to 5 wins!

“Favorites”

Equipment/Supplies: 3-4 varieties of small candy bars (one for each member)

Part I: Tape a candy bar under each chair (put different varieties side by side). If you don't have chairs in the room, you can hand the candy bars out as the students arrive (direct them not to eat them). If the students are seated, ask them to look under their chairs and grab the candy bar (direct them not to eat them). Give the instruction to get into groups according to the variety of candy bar (example: Kit Kat group, Snickers group, Milky Way group). They can eat the candy bars once they are in the group.

Part II: Each group needs to select a moderator and recorder. The moderator will ask the group the questions below (each member of the group should answer all the questions). The recorder will write down the answers to the questions. When all the groups have finished. Each group will read their groups responses to the questions. For example, our groups' favorite pets are: dogs, cats, horses, etc.

“Our Favorites”:

Our favorite junk food:

Our favorite hobbies:

Our favorite kinds of pop:

Our favorite music groups or artists:

Our favorite seasons and why:

Our favorite school subjects:

Our favorite cars:

Our favorite types of pets:

Our favorite cereal:

Our favorite movies:

“Fashion Show”

Equipment/Supplies: Several rolls of toilet paper

Mix the group up and divide into teams of four people. Each team will pick a model and the other three team members will be designers. Each group is given two rolls of toilet paper. The goal is for each group to dress their model in the most creative “toilet paper outfit”. Give the group 5 minutes to complete the activity. Have the models parade around the room for the fashion show at the end of the activity. This activity helps foster teamwork and is guaranteed to spark laughter. Have the teams sit together for the meeting as a strategy to mix up the seating arrangement.

“Animal Names”

Equipment/Supplies: None

Instruct the group to sit in a circle. Have everyone choose an animal that starts with the first letter of their first name. The first person will state their name and animal name, for example Kari-- Kola Bear. The next person will repeat the names and animal names of all the people that have gone prior to him/her and then announce their name and animal name. The last person in the circle will have to say everyone's name and animal name. This can be tough, so encourage the group to help the last person. This game is fun and is quick way for learning new member's names.

“Group Juggling with a Twist”

Equipment/Supplies: 6-8 tennis balls, stuffed animal, and a glass (use plastic) of water.

Instruct the group to stand in a circle. Give the group one tennis ball and instruct them to remember who threw them the ball and who they threw the ball to. Everyone should have the ball one time (only one time). Allow the group to complete the pattern a couple times. Then, introduce additional balls (slowly). If the group is having difficulty, call a time out and instruct them to strategize how they can improve their success in keeping all the balls in motion.

After time out, start with one ball and steadily introduce additional balls.

Introduce a stuffed animal by giving it to the last person in the pattern and instructing the group to pass the stuffed animal in reverse (passing it to the person that throws them the ball).

Introduce a cup half full of water to the first person in the pattern and instruct them to pass the cup of water to the person next to them (around the entire circle) without spilling and while keeping all of the balls/stuffed animal in motion. Stand next to the last person in the rotation and begin taking the items out of the rotation.

“Community Christmas Wish List”

Equipment/Supplies: None

The Holidays are a time to celebrate all that we love in life, and all that we're thankful for. Take some time as a group to brainstorm a holiday wish list for your community. What would a perfect community look like? What would we need to get there? Have the adults chime in about the needs they know exist in the community. Once you have the Community's Christmas List compiled, brainstorm some ideas for proactive service project that your group might want to help with.

“Who made the move”

Equipment/Supplies: None

Instruct the group to sit in a circle. Ask for one volunteer to step out of the room. The group selects a leader of the group. The leader is responsible for starting motions and the entire group will follow. The leader starts the motions once the person outside the room returns. (For example, the leader will start patting their head and the others will follow, then the leader switches to tapping the floor, etc.). The person who stepped outside is challenged to guess who the leader is. Once the leader is identified, the leader steps outside of the room and a new leader is selected. The game can continue until everyone has had a chance to be the leader.

Processing Questions:

- What made the activity enjoyable?
- What did it feel like to be the leader?
- Describe what it was like to be the person who had to guess the leader?
- How does this activity relate to our Pod?
- What can our Pod do to insure that everyone is included in the group?
- What made this activity challenging?

“Know Your Neighbor”

Equipment/Supplies: Index cards and writing utensil

Give each member a piece of paper, an index card, and something to write with. Have them put their name at the top of the index card, and then write a fact that the group may not know about them. Tell them not to share their fact with anyone else. Collect all of the cards. Have them number their paper for the number of members in the group. Read each fact aloud to the group, and have them write down which member they think it applies to. They can only use everyone's name one time. After each card has been read, go through them again, and say who's fact it is. The person with the most number of points wins.

“Community Circle”

Equipment/Supplies: None

Ask the group to form a large circle. Instruct the group to hold hands.

Go around the circle and have each person be an “in” or an “out”, alternating every other person. An “in” will be sandwiched between two “outs” (and vice versa). Tell the group that at the count of three...they must lean (shift all their weight) to whatever their title is “in” or “out.”

Remind them to keep their feet stationary and always continue to hold hands to support one another.

At the count of three, have them reverse positions (“in” lean out and “out” lean in).

Instruct the group, to find a rhythm to continual switch “in” and “out” without throwing anyone off balance. The goal is for the group to simultaneously have all members leaning “in” and “out” while the group is solid/balanced allowing for the movement.

Processing Questions:

What was it like to shift in and out?

What concerns did you have as you were leaning (either direction)?

What role did individuals play and what was our role as a group?

What would have happened if one person broke the circle (stopped holding hands) during the activity?

What role do individuals and organizations play in addressing needs in a community?

As a Pod, how can we connect with organizations to meet needs in our community.

“Hear, See and Do Philanthropy”

Equipment/Supplies: None

Divide the Pod into teams of three. One person in each group will “Hear”, one will “See”, and one will “Do” philanthropy. You will need five different objects (pencil, candy bar, ball, balloon, etc.) and one blindfold per group. Blindfold the “Do” member of each team and scatter the five objects of each team around the room. Have the “See” and “Hear” teammates face each other with the blindfolded “Do” behind “Hear.” The object is for each team to work together to retrieve all five objects. “See” uses hand signs and gestures to cue “Hear” to give “Do” verbal directions to each object. “See” cannot speak, and “Hear” may not turn around to face “Do.”

The first group to retrieve all five objects wins!

Processing Questions:

- 1.What was it like to play the role you had in this activity?
- 2.What made this activity difficult?
- 3.What strategies helped your group?
- 4.What other strategies may have helped your group?
- 5.What did you see (those of you that could see) other groups doing that was working?
- 6.How did each person in the group contribute to the overall success of the group?
- 7.How does this activity relate to your Pod’s success?
- 8.What can our Pod do to enhance teamwork?

“Call Out a Name”

Equipment/Supplies: Each group will need a piece of paper and pen. Divide the group into groups of three or four. Choose one of the groups to call out a person’s name (any name) that has three to six letters with no repeat letters. Each team must write the name on a piece of paper and list as many animals as possible that start with each letter. Teams score 1 point for each acceptable answer and 2 points for each answer that other teams did not think of. Choose other categories to replace “animals” for subsequent rounds. For example, flowers, types of foods, cities, tv shows, and brands of clothes. Have a group select a different person’s name for each round.

EXAMPLE for animals:

Name: Thomas

T=Turtle

H=Horse

O=Owl

M=Monkey

A=Aardvark

S=Snake

“Shoe Mania”

Equipment/Supplies: None

Everyone will need to take off their shoes and place them in one large pile in the center of the room. Shuffle the shoes in the pile. Divide the Pod into two equal groups. Line the groups up on opposite sides of the pile of shoes. Explain that the objective of the activity is to see which team can rotate all of their members through to put their own shoes back on first. Only one person from each team can go to the pile to find and put on their shoes at a time. The team member can't return to his/her team until their shoes are completely on. For example, they can't run back to their team with their shoes half on or untied. If they attempt to return to their team without their shoes on properly...everyone in the group that has their shoes back on must take them off again and start over.

“Sack Lunch Lottery”

Equipment/Supplies: Everyone will need to bring a sack lunch

Assuming that your meeting will include the lunch hour, have each member bring a sack lunch from home to the meeting...it should include a drink if you don't provide drinks at your meetings. Prepare slips of paper, numbered for as many as there are in your group, and place them in a hat. Have each member put his/her lunch on the table and draw a number. The person with number 1 gets to choose a lunch from the table of lunches, then number 2 and so forth. This is a pretty fun experience, and you never know what you might get! Of course, not everyone has to participate if they would rather keep their own lunch. It's also fun to go around and share what you are having for lunch after all of the lunches have been distributed. Remember to ask if anyone in the group has food allergies prior to using this activity

“M&M Activity”

Equipment/Supplies: 1-2 Large Bags of M&M’s

Instruct everyone to take as many M&M’s as they would like, and not to eat them yet. After everyone has M&M’s, share that each M&M color has a subject (see below). Ask each person to share a response for each of their M&M’s using the assigned color subjects. For example, a person would share a friend’s names from each “red” M&M they have.

Brown: Family

Red: Friends

Yellow: Pets

Orange: Hobbies

Blue: Foods

Green: Songs

“Hear Philanthropy, See Philanthropy, Do Philanthropy”

Equipment/Supplies: Blindfolds & 5 random objects for each group of three (example: pencil, folder, candy bar, ball, balloon, etc.)

Divide the group into teams of three. One person will “Hear”, one will “See”, and one will “do” philanthropy. Blindfold the “Do” member of each team and scatter the five objects of each team around the room. Instruct the “See” and “Hear” teammates to face each other with the blindfolded “Do” behind “Hear.” The object is for each team to work together to retrieve all five objects. “See” uses hand signs and gestures to cue “Hear” to give “Do” verbal directions to each object. “See” cannot speak, and “Hear” may not turn around to face “Do.” The first group to retrieve all five objects wins! Discuss how each person plays a vital role for the success of the group, and emphasize that no one person could have done it alone.

“Non-Profit Name Game”

Equipment/Supplies: Post-It Notes

Get to know nonprofits in your community with this fun and easy game. Put a post-it-note on the back of each Pod member that has the name of a local nonprofit on it. Don't let them see what you have assigned to them. When everyone has a post-it on, they must figure out which organization they are by asking yes/no questions of other members. If another member answers “yes” to their question, they may ask another. If the answer is “no” they must find another member to ask. The person who figures out who they are first wins! When everyone is finished, have each member share which organization they were. Talk about those organizations and how their missions might align with your Pod's work.

“Zip, Zap, Zop”

Equipment/Supplies: None

This is a fun, quick, and easy activity to play. Instruct everyone to stand in a large circle. One person will start the activity off by pointing at someone and saying “Zip.” That person (just pointed to) will point at someone else and say “Zap.” That person points to someone else and says “Zop.” That person points at another person and says “Zip.” This continues by using the words “Zip, Zap, Zop” in order. If someone hesitates or says the wrong word (such as Zip when it should have been Zap) is out. The game continues until it is down to two people remaining. The last two people will have a stand-off. They will stand back-to-back and take 4 steps forward. Someone who is “out” will give the demand to turn-around and will give a topic (such as food, movie, song, etc.) and the first person to say something from that category wins.

Have fun 😊

“Who are you”

Equipment/Supplies: None

This is a quick activity to play to get to know each other better. Instruct everyone to find a partner. Once everyone is in pairs, explain that one person in the pair will be the interviewer and the other will be the interviewee. The interviewer will ask the person, “who are they.” The interviewee will respond to the question. The same question, “who are they” will be asked and responded to until time is up. The facilitator will stop the conversation at 3 minutes and ask the pair to switch roles and repeat the same instructions. After 3 minutes, the facilitator will instruct everyone to find a new partner. Continue the activity until everyone has had 2-3 different partners.

Processing Questions:

- *What was the activity like for you?
- *What did you learn about yourself?
- *What did you learn about others?
- *How can we grow as a group by knowing each other better?