

Small Group Icebreakers

Icebreakers encourage people to get to know each other. It is important that icebreakers be non-threatening. What is non-threatening to some group members could terrify others. For example, the question, "Who would you like to go on vacation with for one week and why?" would be threatening to many groups. However, the question, "If you could go on vacation anywhere, where would you go?" is not as threatening.

Here are some suggested icebreakers. The first few are easiest and most helpful for a beginning group. Many of the later ideas are useful for building relationships in groups that have been together for awhile.

1. Best/Worst

Have each person share their best and worst moments from the previous week. Try to steer the group away from school items, if it is a student group. This icebreaker is an easy one to use at first and gives you good feedback concerning their life at the moment. Some veteran groups do this several times a year... the answers become more honest as you go.

2. Most Unique

Go around the room and have each person share something that makes them different from anyone in the group, like, "I've never left the state I was born in" or "I am one of 10 kids."

3. Two Truths and a Lie

Have each person make three statements about themselves: two true statements and one lie. For example, "I've never broken a bone. I have 5 sisters. I was born in Yugoslavia." The group tries to guess which statement is the lie.

4. Personal Scavenger Hunt

Take 5 minutes and find the following items in your wallet or purse: Something that . . .

- You've had a long time.
- You're proud of.
- Reveals a lot about you.
- Reminds you of a fun time.
- Concerns or worries you.

Have each person share the first item. Go around again on the second item, and again until you have gone through each one. Don't feel like you have to use the whole list because it will take too long.

5. Chart Your Life

Thinking back as far as you can, draw a line graph to represent your life. Consider the high points, the low points, moments of inspiration, moments of despair, leveling off times, and where you are now. The line will probably be a mixture of straight, slanted, jagged and curved lines. After you've drawn it, share what it means to you with the group.

6. Get To Know You Questions

- What do you do for fun?
- What would be your ideal vacation?
- What is the most memorable activity you did with your family as a child?
- What quality do you appreciate most in a friend?
- What is one characteristic you received from your parents that you want to keep, and one you wish you could change?
- What is a good thing happening in your life right now?
- What makes it good?
- If you knew you couldn't fail and money was no object, what would you like to do in the next 5 years?
- What would you like said at your funeral?
- When, if ever, did God become more than a word to you, and how did it happen?

7. Did You Know?

This is great for a group that doesn't know each other well. Find interesting facts about individual group members before the group meets. Try to discover information that sets each person apart from the others, such as "I have a tugboat named after me" or, "I once wrecked the same quarter panel of my car four times" or, "I have a twin."

Then make a sheet with one fact from each person and a blank beside this fact. Give everyone in the group a sheet and 5-7 minutes to find who goes in each blank. When they find the right person they must also learn one other fact about that person. At the end, introduce everyone in the group in the order on the list.

8. M&M's Game

Pass a bag of M&M's around and tell everyone to take a few. Then, before they eat them ask them to share something for every M&M. For example, something about their family for every red one, something about their plans for the future for every green one, etc.

9. Most Deprived

Buy a large bag of M&M's and give each person the same amount (try 10 M&M's). Start by stating something you've never done that you think everyone else has done (thus the name "Most Deprived"). For example, you might say, "I've never had a birthday party," or some other true statement about yourself that you think everyone else has surely done. Then, everyone who has had a birthday party pays you an M&M. You pay everyone who has not had a party. Keep playing until everyone has a turn or until someone runs out of M&M's. Obviously the idea is to come up with the most M&M's and be most deprived (this activity takes longer).

10. You Write the Question

Give each person a 3x5 card. You pick the topic and let them write the questions. For example, you choose "friendship" as a topic, and they each write out a question for anyone in the group to answer about friendship. For example, "What do you value most in a friend?" or, "Who was your best friend growing up and why?" Then pile all the cards face down in the middle of the group and let people draw. Topic ideas: jobs, life goals, funny stories, hobbies, family, fears, dating issues, significant relationships, relationship with God, etc.

11. My Life in Pictures

Bring a newspaper or magazine. have each person tear out a picture, article or anything they think tells something about themselves. If there's enough time they can make a collage that tells more about themselves.

12. House on Fire

Ask, "Your house is on fire, and everyone is safe. You have 30 seconds to run through the house and collect three or four articles you want to save. What would you grab? Why?" After everyone has done this, the group can discuss what they learned about the things they value.

13. Make Believe

If you could go anywhere in the world now, where would you go and why? If you could talk to anyone in the world, who would it be? Why? If you could talk to any person who has died, who would you talk to and why? If you could wish one thing to come true about your upcoming summer, what would it be?

14. Deserted Island

Ask, "You've been exiled to a deserted island for a year. You are told you may take three things you want, apart from the essentials. What would you take and why?"

15. Heroes

Ask each member to name three people, past or present, they admire. Why? Or, ask them if they could interview anyone in history, who would that be and why? What one or two questions would you want to ask?

16. How-pow-wow-chow

How was your week? Pow- Something that was hard this week? Wow- Something that was really cool this week? Chow- Some really good food you had this week?

17. Never have I ever.

(Pass out 10 M&M's, or delicious candies, to all) One person says something they have never done and anyone who has done it must eat one M&M for every event that someone else shares as their "Never have I ever."

18. Do you really know me?

Everyone needs a pen and paper. Have everyone sit in a circle and place a bowl in the center. To start, everyone writes down one thing that they think no one knows about them and then places it in the bowl. After everyone has put one in the bowl, one person at a time, pull someone else's paper. Go around the circle and one at a time the person reads the paper out loud and tries to guess who the paper belongs to. Take between 1-3 tries to get it correct, depending on the size of the group. The first person to guess 3 correct first wins.

19.