**Why icebreakers?**

Icebreakers can play an important role in helping participants integrate andconnect with one another in a group environment. Icebreakers can also enhanceyour teaching by helping to stimulate cooperation and participation. They canprovide positive momentum for workshops and discussions if things are getting “bogged down”.

Icebreakers:

 Help to create a safe environment.

Help a group get to know one another and feel comfortable together.

Help a group to focus on a particular topic.

Encourage cooperation and listening to others.

Can assist in changing things up.

Create a good atmosphere for learning and participation.

**Criteria for a Good Icebreaker**

They are not shorter than 5 minutes and not longer than 20 minutes.

They give participants a chance to actively perform a task, solve a problem, answer a question or discuss an issue.

They are creative and not repetitious.

**Icebreakers and you**

*A 10 SECOND CHECK LIST!*

Be enthusiastic, whatever happens, be enthusiastic.

Choose volunteers carefully and don't cause embarrassment.

If something is not working move on to the next activity.

Choose icebreakers appropriate for your group.

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**Getting to Know You**

**Two Truths and a Lie**

Ask everyone to write on a note card THREE things about themselves which maynot be known to the others in the group. Two are true and one is not. Taking turnshave the participants read out the three ‘facts’ about themselves and the rest of the group voteswhich are true and false. There are always surprises. This simple activity is alwaysfun, and helps the group and leaders get to know more about each other.

**Interview**

Divide people into pairs. Ask them to take three minutes to interview eachother. Each interviewer has to find 3 interesting facts about their partner. Bringeveryone back to together and ask everyone to present the 3 facts about theirpartner to the rest of the group. Watch the time on this one, keep it moving along.

**My name is?**

Go around the group and ask each person to state his/her name and attach anadjective that not only describes a dominant characteristic, but also starts with thesame letter of his name e.g. generous Grahame, dynamic Dave. Write them downand refer to them by this for the rest of the workshop.

**The question web**

You need to have a spool of string or yarn for this game. Ask the participants tostand in a circle. Hold on to the end of the string and throw the ball/spool to one ofthe people to catch. They then choose a question from 1-20 to answer. A listof 20 sample questions is given below. Adapt for your group.

Holding the string they then throw it to another member of the group. Eventuallythis creates a web as well as learning some interesting things about each other! Atthe end of the game you could comment that we all played a part in creating thisunique web and if one person was gone it would look different.

In the same way it's important that we all take part to make the group what it is,unique and special.

1. If you had a time machine that would work only once, what point in thefuture or in history would you visit?

2. If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?

3. If your house was burning down, what three objects would you try and save?

4. If you could talk to any one person now living, who would it be and why?

5. If you HAD to give up one of your senses (hearing, seeing, feeling, smelling,tasting) which would it be and why?

6. If you were an animal, what would you be and why?

7. Do you have a pet? If not, what sort of pet would you like?

8. Name a gift you will never forget?

9. Name one thing you really like about yourself.

10. What's your favorite thing to do in the summer?

11. Who is your favorite cartoon character, and why?

12. Does your name have a special meaning and or were you named aftersomeone special?

13. What is the hardest thing you have ever done?

14. If you are at a friend's or relative's house for dinner and you find a deadinsect in your salad, what would you do?

15. What was the best thing that happened to you this past week?

16. If you had this week over again what would you do differently?

17. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think about God?

18. What's the weirdest thing you've ever eaten?

19. If you could ask Christ to change one problem in the world today, what wouldyou like him to change?

20. What book, movie or video have you seen/read recently you wouldrecommend and why?

**Desert Island**

Announce, 'You've been exiled to a deserted island for a year. In addition to theessentials, you may take one piece of music, one book andone luxury item you can carry with you i.e. not a boat to leave the island! Whatwould you take and why?'

Allow a few minutes for the participants to draw up their list of three items, beforesharing their choices with the rest of the group. As with most icebreakers andrelationship building activities, it's good for the group leaders to join in too!

**If**

Ask the group to sit in a circle. Write 20 'IF' questions on cards and place them(question down) in the middle of the circle. The first person takes a card, reads it outand gives their answer, comment or explanation. The card is returned to the bottomof the pile before the next person takes their card.This is a simple icebreaker to get people talking and listening to others in thegroup. Keep it moving and don't play for too long. Write your own additional 'IF'questions to add to the list.

1. If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?

2. If I gave you $10,000, what would you spend it on?

3. If you could watch your favorite movie now, what would it be?

4. If you could talk to anyone in the world, who would it be?

5. If you could wish one thing to come true this year, what would it be?

6. If you could live in any period of history, when would it be?

7. If you could change anything about yourself, what would you change?

8. If you could be someone else, who would you be?

9. If you could have any question answered, what would it be?

10. If you could watch your favorite TV show now, what would it be?

11. If you could have any kind of pet, what would you have?

12. If you could do your dream job, what would it be?

13. If you had to be allergic to something, what would it be?

14. If you sat down next to the president on a bus, what would you talk about?

15. If money and time was no object, what would you be doing right now?

16. If you had one day to live over again, what day would you pick?

17. If you could eat your favorite food now, what would it be?

18. If you could learn any skill, what would it be?

19. If you were sent to live on a space station for three months and only allowedto bring three personal items with you, what would they be?

20. If you could buy a car right now, what would you buy?

**Name that person**

Divide into two teams. Give each person a blank piece of card. Ask them to write fivelittle known facts about themselves on their card.

For example, I have a pet dog, I was born in Michigan, my favorite food isspinach, my mother’s name is/was Doris and my favorite color is vermillion.Collect the cards into two team piles. Draw one card from the opposing team pile.Each team tries to name the person in as few clues as possible. Five points if they getit on the first clue, then 4, 3, 2, 1, 0. The team with the most points wins. (Note: ifyou select the most obscure facts first, it will increase the level of competition andgeneral head scratching!)7

**Would you rather..?**

Questions may range from silly trivia to more serious content. On the way you mightfind out some interesting things about your participants! Place a line of tape down the center of the room. Ask the group to straddle the tape.When asked 'Would you rather?’ they have to step to the left or right as indicatedby the leader. Don't forget to encourage your adult helpers to join in too! I'veincluded 20 starter questions, just add your own and let the fun begin.

Would you rather..?

Visit the doctor or the dentist?

Eat broccoli or carrots?

Watch TV or listen to music?

Have a beach vacation or a mountain vacation?

Be an apple or a banana?

Be invisible or be able to read minds?

Be the most well-liked or the smartest person you know?

Make headlines for saving somebody's life or winning a Nobel Prize?

Be without any media access (TV, phone, internet) or be without indoor plumbing?

Always be cold or always be hot?

Not hear or not see?

Eliminate hunger and disease or be able to bring lasting world peace?

Be stranded on a deserted island alone or with someone you don't like?

See the future or change the past?

Be three inches taller or three inches shorter?

Wrestle a lion or fight a shark?

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**People Bingo**

This is great for groups that don’t know each other. Make a 5 by 4 grid on a piece of card and duplicate foreveryone in your group. Supply pens or pencils. Each box contains one of thestatements below. Encourage the group to mix, talk to everyone to try and completetheir card. If one of the items listed on the bingo card relates to the person they aretalking with, have them sign their name in that box.End the activity after 10 minutes and review some of the interesting facts the grouphas discovered about each other. You can add your own statements appropriate foryour group.9

Has brown eyes

Has made the longest journey

Has run a marathon race

Plays Tennis

Is wearing blue

Speaks a foreign language

Loves to go fishing

Plays a musical instrument

Has 2 or more pets

Has been to the most foreign countries

Hates broccoli

Has 2 or more siblings

Name begins with an 'S'

Loves Chinese food

Loves to ski

Is a vegetarian

Loves soccer

Likes to get up early

Someone who’s favorite TV show is CSI

Someone over 6feet tall

**GROUP BUILDERS**

**Around the world**

The leader begins by saying the name of any country, city, river, ocean or mountainthat can be found in an atlas. The person next to him/her must then say anothername that begins with the last letter of the word just given. Each person has adefinite time limit (e.g. three seconds) and no names can be repeated. For example -

First person: London, Second Person: Niagara Falls, Third Person: Switzerland

**Supermarket**

The first player says: "I went to the supermarket to buy an Apple (or any other objectyou can buy in a supermarket that begins with an A). The next player repeats thesentence, including the "A" word and adds a "B" word.Each successive player recites the sentence with all the alphabet items, adding oneof his own. For example; 'I went to the supermarket and bought an Apple, Banana,CD, dog food, envelopes, frozen fish'. It's not too hard to reach the end of thealphabet, usually with a little help! Watch out for ‘Q’ and ‘X’.

**Tall stories**

The leader starts a story with a sentence that ends in SUDDENLY. The next personthen has to add to the story with his own sentence that ends in SUDDENLY. Continuethe story until everyone has contributed. The story becomes crazier as each person adds their sentence. Tape it and play it back. For example; 'Yesterday I wentto the zoo and was passing the elephant enclosure when SUDDENLY.....'

**Word link**

This is a word association game. Ask the group to sit in a circle. The first person startswith any word they wish i.e. red. The next person repeats the first word and addsanother word which links to the first i.e. tomato. The next person repeats theprevious word and add another word link i.e. soup, and so on. To keep this moving,only allow five seconds for each word link.12

**Line up**

Ask the group to line up. Works best with 8-10 in a line. If you’ve got a bigger

group, split them up and challenge each line to complete the task first. Ask the group

to form a new line in order of….

Height, from smallest to tallest.

Birthdays, from January through to December.

Shoe size, from smallest to largest.

Alphabetical first names (A-Z).

Alphabetical mothers first names.

Alphabetical grandmother's first names!

Anything else you think up.

**Energizers**

**Who am I?**

Prepare a self-adhesive label or post-it note for each person in your group.

Write on it the name of a well-known or famous person. This can be an historical character or current sportsman, musician, TV personality, celebrity etc. Have a good mix of men and women. Keeping the names hidden, stick the post-it notes on the foreheads of everyone in the group. They must then ask questions of the others to find out their identity. Each person takes a turn to ask questions and figure out who they are. For example, Am I alive? Am I female? Am I in a band? Only yes or no questions can be asked. If the answer is no, their turn is over. If the answer is yes, they can ask another question and keep going until they get a no, or guess who they are. Keep playing until everyone has guessed, or if time is short, stop after the first few correct

answers.18

**Movie star scramble**

Divide the group into pairs, each with a paper and pen. Ask them to visit the cards you have previously prepared and placed around the room. Their goal is to unscramble the names of 20 famous movies stars i.e. SHRIN FOR ROAD (work it out yourself!) Points are awarded for each correct answer. Alternatively there is ANIMAL SCRAMBLE, TV SCRAMBLE and so on.

**Twenty questions**

20 questions is an old party game which encourages deductive reasoning and creativity. One player is selected to think of an item. The rest of the group tries to guess the item by asking a question which can only be answered with a simple "Yes" or "No." Truthful answers only please, as anything else will ruin the game.

**Are You Alert?**

This is a fun and quick activity to stress the importance of being alert and observant. Before the workshop, prepare a tray or table of twenty unrelated items and cover with a cloth. Tell the participants that they will have one minute to look at the objects on the tray or table. Then they will be asked to write down as many things as they can remember. Uncover the table or tray and give the group one minute to look at the objects then cover it again. Give the group one minute to write down as many objects as they can remember. Ask for volunteers to read their lists.

**New and Good**

Ask participants to share something “new and good” that happened to them within the past week. This is a quick and energizing icebreaker which can help the facilitator stress the positive aspects of new experiences.