

Ice Breakers and Team Activities

ICEBREAKERS

Autobiography Poem: The first day of school, tell students that their first assignment will be to write a poem. You will usually hear moans and groans at this point, especially if you teach a subject like Math. Tell students that this will be the easiest poem they have ever written because it will be about themselves. The first line is their first name, the second line is three words that describe themselves, the third line is three things they like, the fourth line is three things they do not like, the fifth line is three movies they have seen (could do books they have read, but movies usually get a better response), the sixth line is three fears they have, the seventh line is three things they like about school, the eighth line is two goals they have, the ninth line is a place they would like to visit, and the tenth line is their last name. You could adjust any of these lines to suit your classes. Then collect the poems and read them aloud. Have the students guess which poem goes with which person. As you read the poems, omit the first and last lines. You can give bonus points to the one who gets the most correct.

Snowball Fight: Give everyone a white sheet of paper. Along with their name, ask them to write one thing they are excited about, one thing they are nervous about, and one thing they would like to learn. (They can draw a picture if they aren't able to write yet.) Then have them wad it up and have a snowball fight with the other students. Next, everyone should pick up a snowball and read the information. Finally, everyone should work together to find who it belongs to. This is great for getting to know each other and seeing what their fears and expectations really are. At the end of the year, it's usually what they remember most.

Teacher True/False Quiz: About a week after school starts, pass out a true/false quiz about yourself. Create approximately 10 statements which deal with things you'd like the students to know about you, and some random true facts that they always think are false. Once the students have silently taken the quiz, go through the statements together. Ask them to raise their hand if they think a statement is true, then, if they think it is false. This part will help you see what impressions they have about you. Finally, tell them the correct answer. They love it! Their homework assignment that night is to write a true/false quiz about themselves, which you can then take. They can then grade how well you did on their quiz. You will learn quite a bit about them by taking their quiz.

Name That Food: Icebreakers for high school students need to stir some fun in the room. Gather all the students and make them sit in a circle. Every person sitting in the circle has to introduce themselves and then name the food they like, which has to start with the first letter of their name. For example 'My name is Mandy. I like M & M'. The next person has to remember what the previous person said, recite the whole thing and then introduce himself/herself. It's hilarious fun when the game reaches the last person.

Line-up: Divide the group into two. Each team will compete against each other to see who can get the challenge done faster. Challenges could be line up according to birthdays, alphabetically by first

name or last name, age, etc. Do the challenges again at the next meeting. Or, try the same challenges without talking.

Self-disclosure Introductions: Ask each team member to state his/her name and attach an adjective that not only describes a dominant characteristic but also starts with the person's first name. Examples: Serious Susie, Nice Natalie, and Loving Lauren.

TEAM ACTIVITIES

All Aboard: You need an item that is foldable and preferably not too slippery, like a large tarp or rug. It should be large enough so that the entire class can easily stand on it with both feet. Start the game by spreading the tarp (rug) out and explain that when "All Aboard" is called, everyone is to get both feet onto the "platform." Then call "Off Platform." Everyone should step off the tarp. Now fold the tarp to decrease its size. Announce "All Aboard" again. Repeat this cycle until all of the students can't fit onto the tarp. Along the way, the students should begin to cooperate and strategize about how to fit more people into a smaller space.

Human Knot: Each person grabs hands with two different people across a circle. Then the group works to untangle itself. The only rule is that everyone must NOT let go of the hands of the two people they are connected to.

Keep the Ball Up: Using a beach ball, have the students start hitting it around and trying to keep it off the ground. Then challenge them to keep it in the air for 20 hits, or 30 hits, etc. Encourage them to develop some strategy to try to keep the ball up for as many hits as possible.

I'll Be Your Guide: This activity teaches students to communicate well with one another by both giving good verbal directions and listening well to directions. An obstacle course needs to be set up. Students need to be in partners in which one student is blindfolded, while the other is the guide. The guide must verbally give directions for the blindfolded partner to get to the opposite side of the obstacle course. This is a lot harder than you might think! Just for fun, have the students lead you through the obstacle course blindfolded.

Compliments Game: This is a great activity to do with children after they have had a few weeks to get to know each other. Each student will have a piece of paper that they will write their name on. Put the papers on the desks. The students then will rotate seats until they have the chance to visit every other student's desk and paper. While they are at each desk, they are to write a compliment to that person. They are not to write anything mean. Share lots of examples with students because they are typically not familiar with giving compliments to one another and may have some difficulty coming up with unique compliments. Often you hear, "You're a great friend," or "You're nice." Teach the students how to elaborate on these concepts. This is a keepsake for children that they will treasure, the kind compliments from their classmates. The teacher can participate too. It feels great!

Sculpting: Divide the students into two groups. Give each group different supplies such as newspaper, scissors, construction paper, glitter, straws, tape, string, etc. and tell them to create a

sculpture that represents their school's spirit. Have each group explain the significance. If the school's spirit is low, use this opportunity to discuss how they can improve their school's spirit in a way that unites the sculptures.

Ball of String: While standing in a circle; pass a ball of string from one member to another. The rules are only the person with the string can talk. After everyone has had their turn to speak and share their feelings, there will be a web of string. This web illustrates the interconnected nature of group process. Everything they do and say affects the team. Now toss a balloon in the middle and have them try to keep it. They are not allowed to touch it. This symbolizes "teamwork".

Order Out Of Chaos: Each person is assigned a number. (1,2,3 etc.) The group is then blindfolded and instructed to get themselves in numerical order, without speaking. Scoring is by subtracting the number of seconds used from 120. Time allowed: 2 minutes maximum.