

Covenant Community Services

Icebreakers and Teambuilding Games

Why use Icebreakers?

- Icebreakers help help people to get to know one another
- Icebreakers help create a positive atmosphere
- Icebreakers help help people to relax
- Icebreakers help break down social and physical barriers
- Icebreakers help energize, motivate and stimulate creativity
- Icebreakers help people to think outside the box and get outside of their box!

General ideas:

- Always use icebreakers to set up or frame the day – match each ice breaker with a purpose from the training agenda.
- Find fun ways to pair people and create teams. You can use each icebreaker to pair and create larger teams for teambuilding.
- Always have teams name themselves. This is a great creative mechanism and fun way to get people engaged. Once they have named themselves have them come up with a sound and a sign. Every time you mention their team name the team responds with their name, call and sign. Tons of fun!

Each Icebreaker below follows a template for ease of use. The first item is the title, second is purpose, third are the tools you will need, fourth is the instructions for the icebreaker, and fifth is the approximate time needed for each activity.

Introduction Bingo

Purpose: Getting to Know each other

Tools: Bingo card and prizes

Time: 5 to 10 minutes

Instructions: Prepare a bingo card with various things people have done (parachuting, river rafting, speaking a foreign language, visiting a prison, having surgery, having grandchildren, sledding, playing bocce ball, etc). This is an 8/12 x 11 paper with the a Name:_____ spot and the items in boxes. To complete the card, each player walks around the room and asks people questions, “Have you ever parachuted?” If yes, the person signs the card (a person can only sign one square. We have used up to 25 squares with easy stuff. Use smaller amount of people the more difficult your questions should be. Once the card is completed the player announces Bingo! Award up to three places.

Cattle Call

Purpose: Listening and Fun

Tools: Large open area (we use a gym), blindfolds (we use dark sheets torn in strips –“reuse them annually)

Instructions: Pair people up. Use a pairing game in the beginning of training to facilitate this process. Once paired, each person needs to pick an animal and their corresponding sound. For example, a dog and “Woof, Woof”. When each pair has picked their animal and sound, split the group across the large open area. Have them face each other. Now, everyone puts on their blindfold. Once the blindfold is on, mix people up as safely as possible. Once thoroughly mixed (in their lines – perpendicular to each other and approximately 25-35 yards apart), provide these instructions: On my call, each partner is to locate their

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partner by listening for their sound and moving towards each other. Once you have found your partner shout “glory” and we will spot your team.

Common Denominators

Purpose: Getting to know one another

Tools: People and space to interview each other

Instructions: Split the team into pairs. Each pair will have 30 seconds to find 5 things they have in common. At the end of the 30 seconds, put two pairs together and give the foursome a minute to find something all 4 have in common. Finally, each group can present the list of things they have in common. (You can use this activity to form larger groups for other games.) For example, if you have 50 people and need 10 people teams for a game later in the day – develop the game so 10 people have things in common or find a way to mesh groups, one that has 4 in common with one that has six in common, and then make it a large team. Always have team’s name themselves and have a sound – this is really fun.

The Human Knot

Purpose: Helps people get to know each other, practice of safe touch, breaks down social and physical barriers.

Tools: People and Space

Instructions: Break the team into groups of 6-10 (10 is ideal). Instruct the group to form a circle – shoulder to shoulder. Once in the circle, instruct the group to place a hand in to the middle of the circle. Now, each person is to grasp the hand of someone in the circle. To emphasize name learning and fun, have each person introduce themselves to the person they are holding hands with. Instruct the team not to let go of the other person hand. Now, kick it up a notch. Have the team put their other hand into the circle and grasp the hand of another person. Go through introductions again. Remind them not to let go of each others hand. Each hand must be connected to a different person. This process will create a human knot. The goal is to now form a circle without letting go of anyone’s hand by untying the human knot.

Games

Have the team line up in a particular order. For instance, tell them to line-up by birthdates. You can make this more difficult by not allowing them to talk during this activity. This brings out leadership and communication skills. This game needs a good debriefing with open-ended questions.