

Inspirations
Ice Breakers
and Team
Building
Activities



Inspirations, Icebreakers, and Team Building Activities

Presenter Notes and Introduction

There are many ways to keep meetings and events interesting and fresh. The first is to plan ahead and prepare an agenda or program itinerary. Keep to a schedule and stay on target with the planned time schedule.

Inspirations

Beginning a meeting with an inspiration or inspirational moment tends to set a nice tone for a successful meeting. The leader of the meeting can deliver the inspiration or this task can be delegated to another officer or member. The following pages contain Inspirations collected over the years and can be used by anyone for your events and meetings. You can also say the Pledge of Allegiance (being sure that a flag is present), or take motivational quotes from any reliable source. Prayers, if used at all, should be totally non-denominational.

You could begin or end your meeting with an Ice Breaker. You do not have to have an Inspiration or an Ice Breaker but it helps to set the mood or tone. If most of the attendees know each other a short Inspiration can begin your meeting and get you off to a good start. If you have some new folks it might be fun to do an Ice Breaker so people can get to know each other. If you want to both, then do one at the beginning and one at the end.

Icebreakers: An Introduction

An ice breaker can be used to create a friendly atmosphere among the participants. It is effective both with groups in which participants do not know one another well, and those with participants who have worked together as a team. One suggested activity that uses group involvement is to have small groups think about an answer to a question such as, "What are the qualities of an effective leader?"

Ice Breakers can be excellent options to:

- Help people feel more comfortable with themselves and others
- Help people feel more "at home" in a group
- Help to break up the "cliques" by forming random groupings
- Help individuals meet others in a non-threatening and fun way
- Enable groups to function more efficiently

Ice Breakers are Introductory activities that:

- Are designed to begin interaction
- Help create an atmosphere that reduces inhibitions
- Allow participants small amounts of disclosure opportunities
- Foster creative thinking

Characteristics of Ice Breakers:

- Usually take less than 30 minutes each
- Are simple, light, and fun to implement
- Very energizing
- Tension reducers
- Non-threatening

On the following pages you will find a sampling of Inspirations, Ice Breakers and Team Building Activities. Please feel free to use them as they are presented, modify them to fit your group or event, or take the idea and write your own.

Good luck as you move forward to make your meetings and events better.

INSPIRATIONS

Hugs - Making a Difference

There's something in a simple hug that always warms the heart; it welcomes us back home and makes it easier to part. A hug's a way to share the joy and sad times we go through, or just a way for friends to say they like you 'cause you're you. Hugs are meant for anyone for whom we really care, from your grandma to your neighbor or a cuddly teddy bear. A hug is an amazing thing it's just the perfect way to show the love we're feeling but can't find the words to say. It's funny how a little hug makes everyone feel good; in every place and language, it's always understood. And hugs don't need equipment, special batteries or parts just open up your arms and open up your hearts.

by Jill Wolf, from a book called Priorities – Making a Difference in the Life of a Child published by Successories

Whose Child Is This? *Author Unknown*

"Whose child is this?" I asked one day seeing a little one out at play

"Mine", said the parent with a tender smile,
"Mine to keep a little while

To bathe his hands and comb his hair, to tell him what he is to wear

To prepare him that he may always be good and each day do the things he should"

"Whose child is this?" I asked again, as the door opened and someone came in

"Mine", said the teacher with the same tender smile, "Mine, to keep just for a little while

To teach him how to be gentle and kind, to train and direct his dear little mind

To help him live by every rule, and get the best he can from school"

"Whose child is this?" I ask once more, just as the little one entered the door

"Ours" said the parent and the teacher as they smile, and each took the hand of the little child,
"Ours to love and train together, ours this blessed task forever."

A Tribute to Volunteers

Valuable is the work you do,

Outstanding in how you always come through.

Loyal, sincere and full of good cheer,

Untiring in your efforts throughout the year.

Notable are the contributions you make,

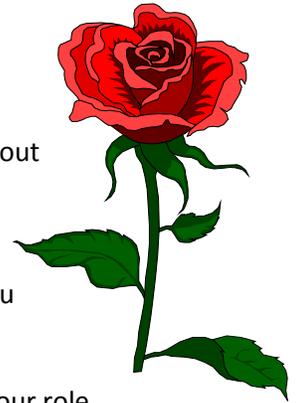
Trustworthy in every project you take.

Eager to reach your every goal,

Effective in the way you fulfill your role.

Ready with a smile like a shining star,

Special and wonderful; that is what you are!



Promise Yourself

Promise yourself to be so strong that nothing can disturb your peace of mind.

To talk health, happiness, and prosperity to every person you meet.

To make all your friends feel that there is something in them.

To look at the sunny side of everything and make your optimism come true.

To think only of the best, to work only for the best and expect only the best.

To be enthusiastic about the success of others as you are about your own.

To forget the mistakes of the past and press on to greater achievements of the future.

To wear a cheerful countenance at all times and give every living creature you meet a smile.

To give so much time to the improvement of yourself that you have not time to criticize others.

To be too large for worry, too noble for anger, too strong for fear and too happy to permit the presence of trouble.

Attitude *Charles Swindoll*

The longer I live,
the more I realize the impact of attitude on life.
Attitude, to me,
is more important than facts.
It is more important
than the past, than education, than money,
than circumstances, than failures, than
successes,
than what other people think or say or do.
It is more important than appearance,
giftedness or skills.
It will make or break a company...a church...a
home.
The remarkable thing is
We have a choice every day regarding the
attitude
we will embrace for that day.
We cannot change our past...we cannot change
the fact
that people will act in a certain way.
We cannot change the inevitable.
The only thing we can do is play on the one
string we have,
And that is our attitude...
I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to
me
And 90% how I react to it.
And so it is with you...
We are in charge of our attitudes.

Carrot, Egg, Coffee Bean

A young woman went to her mother and told her about her life and how things were so hard for her. She did not know how she was going to make it and wanted to give up. She was tired of fighting and struggling. It seemed as one problem was solved, a new one arose. Her mother took her to the kitchen. She filled three pots with water and placed the flame on high. Soon the three pots came to a boil. In the first, she placed carrots, in the second she placed eggs and in the last, ground coffee beans. She let them sit and boil without saying a word. The daughter impatiently wondered what she was trying to do. She had problems, and her mother was making this strange concoction.

In about twenty minutes the mother turned off the burners. She fished the carrots out and placed them in a bowl. She pulled the eggs out and placed them in a bowl. Then she ladled the coffee out and placed the liquid in a bowl. Turning to her daughter, she asked, "Tell me what you see?" "Carrots, eggs, and coffee," the daughter replied. She brought her closer and asked her to feel the carrots. The daughter did and noted that they were soft. She then asked her to take an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hard-boiled egg. Finally, she asked her to sip the coffee. The daughter smiled, as she tasted its rich aroma. The daughter then asked, "What's the point, mother?" Her mother explained that each of these objects had faced the same adversity - boiling water - but each reacted differently. The carrot went in strong, hard and unrelenting. However, after being subjected to the boiling water, it softened and became weak. The egg had been fragile. Its thin outer shell had protected its liquid interior. But, after sitting through the boiling water, its inside became hardened. The coffee beans were unique, however. After they were in the boiling water, they had changed the water, making it richer and stronger.

"Which are you?" she asked her daughter. "When adversity knocks on your door, how do you respond? Are you a carrot, an egg, or a coffee bean?" Think of this: Which am I? Am I the carrot that seems strong, but with pain and adversity, do I wilt and become soft and lose my strength? Am I the egg that starts with a malleable heart, but changes with the heat? Did I have a fluid spirit, but after a death, a breakup, a financial hardship or some other trial, have I become hardened and stiff? Does my shell look the same, but on the inside am I bitter and tough with a stiff spirit and a hardened heart?

Or am I like the coffee bean? The bean actually changes the hot water, the very circumstance that brings the pain. When the water gets hot, it releases the fragrance and flavor. If you are like the bean, when things are at their worst, you get better and change the situation around you. When the hours are the darkest and trials are their greatest, do you elevate to another level? So, how are you?

ARE YOU A CARROT, AN EGG, OR A COFFEE BEAN?

Two Choices

What would you do? You make the choice! Don't look for a punch line; there isn't one! My question to all of you is: Would you have made the same choice? At a fundraising dinner for a school that serves learning disabled children, the father of one of the students delivered a speech that would never be forgotten by all who attended. After extolling the school and its dedicated staff, he offered a question: "When not interfered with by outside influences, everything nature does is done with perfection. Yet my son, Shay, cannot learn things as other children do. He cannot understand things as other children do. Where is the natural order of things in my son?"

The audience was stilled by the query. The father continued. "I believe, that when a child like Shay, physically and mentally handicapped comes into the world, an opportunity to realize true human nature presents itself, and it comes, in the way other people treat that child." Then he told the following story: Shay and his father had walked past a park where some boys Shay knew were playing baseball. Shay asked, "Do you think they'll let me play?" Shay's father knew that most of the boys would not want someone like Shay on their team, but the father also understood that if his son were allowed to play, it would give him a much-needed sense of belonging and some confidence to be accepted by others in spite of his handicaps. Shay's father approached one of the boys on the field and asked if Shay could play, not expecting much. The boy looked around for guidance and said, "We're losing by six runs and the game is in the eighth inning. I guess he can be on our team and we'll try to put him in to bat in the ninth inning."

Shay struggled over to the team's bench put on a team shirt with a broad smile and his Father had a small tear in his eye and warmth in his heart. The boys saw the father's joy at his son being accepted. In the bottom of the eighth inning, Shay's team scored a few runs but was still behind by three. In the top of the ninth inning, Shay put on a glove and played in the right field. Even though no hits came his way, he was obviously ecstatic just to be in the game and on the field, grinning from ear to ear as his father waved to him from the stands. In the



bottom of the ninth inning, Shay's team scored again. Now, with two outs and the bases loaded, the potential winning run was on base and Shay was scheduled to be next at bat. At this juncture, do they let Shay bat and give away their chance to win the game? Surprisingly, Shay was given the bat. Everyone knew that a hit was all but impossible 'cause Shay didn't even know how to hold the bat properly, much less connect

with the ball. However, as Shay stepped up to the plate, the pitcher, recognizing the other team putting winning aside for this moment in Shay's life, moved in a few steps to lob the ball in softly so Shay could at least be able to make contact. The first pitch came and Shay swung clumsily and missed. The pitcher again took a few steps forward to toss the ball softly towards Shay. As the pitch came in, Shay swung at the ball and hit a slow ground ball right back to the pitcher.

The game would now be over, but the pitcher picked up the soft grounder and could have easily thrown the ball to the first baseman. Shay would have been out and that would have been the end of the game. Instead, the pitcher threw the ball right over the head of the first baseman, out of reach of all team mates. Everyone from the stands and both teams started yelling, "Shay, run to first! Run to first!" Never in his life had Shay ever ran that far but made it to first base. He scampered down the baseline, wide-eyed and startled.

Everyone yelled, "Run to second, run to second!" Catching his breath, Shay awkwardly ran towards second, gleaming and struggling to make it to second base. By the time Shay rounded towards second base, the right fielder had the ball, the smallest guy on their team, who had a chance to be the hero for his team for the first time. He could have thrown the ball to the second-baseman for the tag, but he understood the pitcher's intentions and he too intentionally threw the ball high and far over the third-baseman's head. Shay ran toward third base deliriously as the runners ahead of him circled the bases toward home.

All were screaming, "Shay, Shay, Shay, all the Way Shay."

Shay reached third base, the opposing shortstop ran to help him and turned him in the direction of third base, and shouted, "Run to third! Shay, run to third" As Shay rounded third, the boys from both teams and those watching were on their feet were screaming, "Shay, run home! Shay ran to home, stepped on the plate, and was cheered as the hero who hit the "grand slam" and won the game for his team. That day, said the father softly with tears now rolling down his face, the boys from both teams helped bring a piece of true love and humanity into this world.

Shay didn't make it to another summer and died that winter, having never forgotten being the hero and making his Father so happy and coming home and seeing his Mother tearfully embrace her little hero of the day! We all can make a difference. We all have thousands of opportunities every single day to help realize the "natural order of things." So many seemingly trivial interactions between two people present us with a choice: Do we pass along a little spark of love and humanity or do we pass up that opportunity to brighten the day of those with us the least able, and leave the world a little bit colder in the process?

A wise man once said every society is judged by how it treats it's least fortunate amongst them.

Unity Poem *Author Unknown*

I dreamed I stood in a studio
 And Watched two sculptors there,
 The clay they used was a young child's mind
 And they fashioned it with care.
 One was a teacher, the tools he used
 Were books and art and music;
 One was a parent with a guiding hand,
 And a gentle loving heart.
 Day after day the teacher toiled,
 With touch that was deft and sure,
 While the parent labored by his side

And polished and smoothed it o'er.
 And when at last their task was done
 They were proud of what they had wrought,
 For the things they had helped mold into the child
 Could neither be sold or bought.
 And each agreed he would have failed,
 If he had worked alone.
 For behind the parent stood the school,
 And behind the teacher, the home.

The PTA Garden

Adapted for PTA from the "Garden Life"

It's spring

New ground has been plowed

And it's time to plant

The _____ PTA Garden

First, Plant five rows of P's,

Presence

Promptness

Preparation

Perseverance

Politeness

Next, plant three rows of squash

Squash indifference

Squash criticism

Squash gossip

Then, plant five rows of lettuce,

Let us be faithful to duty

Let us be unselfish and loyal

Let us obey the rules and regulations

Let us be true to our obligations

Let us respect one another

No garden is complete without turnips,

Turn up for meetings

Turn up for a smile

Turn up with the determination to make

Everything we do count for

Something

Good and worthwhile for the

Children of _____.



ICEBREAKERS

A Penny for Your Memories Icebreaker

Please reach into your pocket (or the basket being passed around) and select a penny. Look at the year and tell us something about you and PTA during that year.

(Supplies needed:

A Basket with assorted pennies. Make sure that you have pennies from the 60's, 70's, 80's; or tell everyone to add ten, twenty or thirty years to the penny they choose.)



Try to Meet Someone New!

Find someone born the same month as you or someone you didn't know very well before today. What one thing do you have in common with each other? We will all find new things about each other when we report out.

Name Tag

This one could be used as an initial get-acquainted exercise. As each participant enters the meeting room, check off his/her name on the roster, but present a different person's name tag. Explain that they should seek one another out, and also introduce themselves to other participants as well. If the group is relatively small (up to 30-35 participants), have the paired individuals interview each other so they can introduce their counterparts to the rest of the group.

Supplies needed: name tags

Approximate Time Required: 15-20 minutes

Siblings

This is good for an initial get-acquainted ice breaker. Before the session begins, ask the group to

divide themselves in the four corners of the room with these subsets:

1. If they were the oldest in the family,
2. If they were the youngest in the family,
3. If they were any place in the middle,
4. If they were an only child.

As the participants seek out their respective groups, ask them to recall what they liked or disliked about their respective places in their growing up days. For example, the oldest may have had to care for their younger brother(s) or sister(s) or the youngest may have had all the "hand-me-down" clothes. In retrospect, would they have preferred a different place?

After each group has ten-fifteen minutes to discuss these and other questions, ask for one person to respond for each group. (Groups should be limited to eight-ten people.)

Supplies needed: none

Approximate Time Required: 20 minutes

People Bingo

This ice breaker will assist participants in getting acquainted with other attendees. This is best used in groups of twenty-five or more.

As each person enters the room, they are given a 3" x 5" card with a number that coincides with bingo cards (e.g., B-12, G-51, O-72, etc.). They are also given regular bingo cards on which they are asked to seek out others who then sign their name under their respective letter heading (e.g. B-7, Jerry Smith).

When twenty-four names are filled in the proper boxes, the individual signs his/her card and brings it to the registration table. Prizes could be awarded to the first person completing the task.

Supplies needed: 3" x 5" cards, bingo cards, prizes (optional)

Approximate Time Required: 15 minutes



Scavenger Hunt Ice Breaker

This one would serve as an initial get-acquainted exercise for a group that is attending a two-three day program.

Prepare a form similar to the one below. Change the items to tailor it to your organization. After the opening welcome, hand out the forms and ask each person to walk around, introduce himself or herself and determine what item might fit. Each person can sign on only one line, thereby encouraging more involvement and movement. Announce that the first completed form turned in will get a prize(optional).

Supplies needed: Form as shown; an inexpensive prize

Approximate Time Required: 10-15 minutes

SAMPLE SCAVENGER HUNT

Find a person who answers the question. Have the person sign his or her name. One person can sign only once—so you have to find ten people. The first six people to complete the form win a prize.

1. Find a person who has the same ZODIAC SIGN as yours: _____
2. Find a person born WEST OF THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER: _____
3. Find a person who has lived in NEW YORK MORE THAN 10 YEARS: _____
4. Find a person who is a SCHOOL SECRETARY: _____
5. Find a person who has BEEN A PTA MEMBER MORE THAN 10 YEARS: _____
6. Find a person who SERVED AS A UNIT TREASURER: _____
7. Find someone who BELONGS TO MORE THAN ONE PTA : _____
8. Find a person ON THE STATE PTA BOARD OF MANAGERS: _____
9. Find a person who has RECEIVED HONORARY LIFE AWARD: _____
10. WHAT'S ON THE BACK OF OUR MEMBERSHIP CARD: _____



The Balloon Personality Test!

Balloons – pass one out to each person. The instruction sheets reads: “Inflate Your Balloon.” Wait a couple of minutes and just observe.....

Now....

How many people did not inflate the balloon?
(raise hands)

- this is the more reluctant person
- needs more prompting and encouragement
- does not like to draw attention to themselves
- OR feels that the directions were insufficient or stupid

How many people tied the balloon?

- this person has initiative
- they anticipated what they thought the next direction would be
- wants to hurry up and complete the task
- wants to be sure the balloon retains its size
- does not want to lose out
- be cautioned though that you may be the type to jump the gun

How many people let their balloon go flying?

- these are “here today, gone tomorrow” types
- get them quick or their interest is gone
- they got bored with the exercise already
- these are fun loving people!
- be cautioned that they may not be the best person to rely on

How many have let their air go out quietly & set the balloon back down?

- these people lack patience, they gave up already
- they can be pessimistic and defeatist
- they felt the exercise was not going anywhere
- they felt the “reward” would not be worth their effort

How many are left, still holding their untied, inflated balloon?

- these followed the directions literally
- they are patient and steadfast
- they are determined and trustworthy
- be cautioned that they are perhaps not the most aggressive or creative

Personality Traits Exhibited By Jelly Beans

With a large selection of each color of jelly beans:

- Ask each person to take one, considering the color of the jelly bean.
- Tell the group to hold the jelly bean, do not eat it.
- The Jelly bean color you have chosen tells something about you as a personality.

White/Black:

This individual is highly structured and organized

Surroundings are neat.

If given an assignment, wants to know how many pages, and exact requirements.

Always wants to know the rules.

Memorizes things well.

Can't stand sloppy, unorganized people.

Deliberates before making decisions.

Yellow:

Not usually outspoken.

Always in a state of transition, whether they are 8 or 80.

Usually smart and innovative, often artistic.

Sometimes confused in making decisions, not sure where they are supposed to be.

Hard workers.

Exciting to be with – will try anything as long as it's safe.

Spiritual aspects usually important to them.

Orange:

Cheerful and good-natured.

Have the ability to get along well with almost anyone.

They are friendly and have a ready smile.

Usually have a quick wit.



Fluent, often eloquent and profound in speech.

Do not like to be left alone.

Enjoy life and inspire others to reach highest potential.

Red/Pink:

Are courageous and their energy seems boundless.

Smile much of the time.

If they see someone not smiling, will ask what the problem is.

Genuinely care about other people and become involved in other's problems.

Highly influenced by others, share their sadness or grief.

Make their decisions with feelings, act on impulses of the heart.

Spend a great deal of time on the phone, usually listening to others.

Sensitive, enthusiastic friends and lovers.

Violet:

Flirty and passionate.

Highly creative and highly excitable

Have new ideas and are visionaries.

Short attention span – can't stay put for a long time.

Disorganized, often choosing to close doors rather than deal with organization.

Procrastinators who thrive in chaos, enjoy the challenges of different problems.

Have a problem dealing with highly structured time.

Questioning – when given an assignment, asks why it must be done a certain way, wants to do it differently.

Set high standards for themselves and those who work for them.

Green: (Need To Stand And Remain Standing While Traits Are Read)

We always ask green to stand because they love recognition.

These people are often seen as leaders, usually in highly visible positions

They respect authority and tradition.

They are decisive, directed, and focused.

They love black and white jelly bean people to organize their projects for them.

Ask for a show of hands of those who think the color description of the jelly bean they chose is valid for them as they perceive themselves.

This exercise is 80% statistically valid. (About ¾ of the participants should raise their hands.)

Emphasize the following:

No one is just “one color”; but one color is usually dominant. All of us have traits associated with other colors. This is important in dealing with others. We should be able to empathize with those who see things differently and deal with problems differently than we do.

Note: you can substitute gum drops but the colors black and pink will have to be eliminated in your description.

More Icebreaker Ideas

(taken from the Games Trainers Play series, John W. Newstrom and Edward E. Scannell, McGraw-Hill.)

1. Get small amount of personal information from each board member (hobbies, major accomplishments, etc) prepare brief synopsis of each with blank so each person fills in the names they believe match the descriptions.
2. Each person gets blank name tag on which to list five words that tell about themselves. Start mixing around until all have had a few moments to chat,
3. Scavenger Hunt 2 – working in groups of 4 to 6, give specific time period to locate items on a list. Include items that are feasible to obtain but which require

- ingenuity or collaborative effort within the group.
4. Listening: read a story from a newspaper 2 - 3 paragraphs. Then ask a few questions based on the story. Why didn't we all listen? (disinterest, no objective, no advance warning) – relates especially to paying attention to reports at board meetings – my comment)
5. How observant are we? Take someone's watch and ask them to describe its face.
6. Let me introduce you – Each person writes about themselves on a 3 x 5 card which a partner reads. Then another person reads the card prepared by the first reader, etc.
7. Who am I checklist of answers to ten questions about ourselves, completed before arrival at Orientation, copied and distributed at event. Provides topics of conversation during rest of weekend.
8. How good is 99.9%? Poll about what quality level is acceptable. Read a list that begins:
If 99.9% is good enough, then –
 - 12 newborns will be given to the wrong parents daily
 - 114,500 mismatched pairs of shoes will be shipped each year.
 - 2,000,000 documents will be lost by the IRS this year
 - etc.We can't give 100%, but we can try. And sometimes can then understand why some things go slightly awry.

TEAM BUILDING ACTIVITIES

Pipe Cleaners

This activity allows participants to be creative. At the beginning of the session (or during a break) place three pipe cleaners at each person's place. Don't tell what they are for unless asked. When you are ready tell the group they are to create a pipe cleaner sculpture. In other words, they can do anything they want with them.

At the end of the morning (or day), ask each group of five people to select a winner. Then have everyone select an overall winner.

If your culture encourages people to work in teams make sure to give special recognition to any group that combines their pipe cleaners and uses all of them together to make something "better."



Blind Numerical Order (20 minutes)

Illustrates: Communication and listening.

- a) There is no talking
- b) You must keep your blindfolds on at all times
- c) Each of you will have a number whispered

into your ear

d) The goal is for the group to arrange itself in numerical order without speaking and without the use of sight.

Blindfold all the participants. Whisper a number to each of them (do not allow other participants to hear). The number should be RANDOM (not just 1-12, etc). After whispering the number, move the participant to a random location. Once every participant has a number, they should begin. Make sure all participants are safe throughout the exercise.

Processing Questions:

What was the most difficult aspect of this exercise?

Did you have a sense of working together?

Why/why not?

How frustrating was it when you could not talk?

What was necessary in order for you to be successful?

Did you assume that the assigned numbers would be in order (like 1-12)?

How important is good communication in groups?

How does this activity relate to our group?

All Tied Up

Material Needed: Bandanas or cloth strips, other items as needed
Time Required: 15-30 minutes, depending on the goal and number of group members
Group Size: 2-15

1. Purpose: Work as team to complete a common goal



2. Arrange participants into a circle, facing each other. Ask them to hold out their arms.
3. Tie the group together so that each person is tied to both neighbor's wrists.
4. Now that the group is "all tied up", give them a task to do together.

Some ideas are:

- Make root beer floats for everyone
- Wrap packages with gift wrap, bows, and a card
- Eat lunch
- Make a snack
- Create an art project
- Pour a cup of water for each person in the group
- Anything else that is fun and crazy

Note: To make the task more difficult give the group a time limit. **Debrief Questions or Topics:**

1. Why were you successful (or unsuccessful) at completing the task?
2. How did the time restrictions aid or hinder your group from completing the task?
3. Did everyone in the group help to get the task done?
4. What happened when someone didn't help?
5. Do you ever feel like you are "tied up" with someone else when you are working with them and trying to get a job done? If so, why, and how do you deal with this feeling?

Source: Jones, A. (1999). *Team -Building Activities for Every Group*. Richland, WA: Rec Room Publishing. P. 56-57.

Build a Car

Material Needed: flip chart paper
Time Required: 25 minutes
Group Size: 5-30

Using flip chart paper, draw the outline of a car. Instruct the group to add components to the car and explain what it stands for and how they can relate that to the team. Give one example and then let them go.

Break team into groups of four or five. Allow 20 minutes for the team to draw the car and 5 minutes for each team to present their vehicle. The total time depends on the number of groups you have.

Some examples: Draw the antennae to make sure we have good communication or the wheels keep us in motion. Others include a rear view mirror to keep an eye on where we have been, head lights

to help us find our way, a trunk to store all our knowledge and tools, the gas tank to provide fuel when we need it, etc.

Human Machines

Have groups of 6 to 8 people each create a machine out of humans by imitating the appearance and action of the machine. Examples include becoming a blender, toaster, lawn mower, copy machine, lamp, or washing machine.

Rain

Everyone sits in a circle, shoulder to shoulder. No talking is allowed. The leader starts the exercise and each person joins in when they hear the sound the person to their left is making. The leader starts the exercise by rubbing their palms together. This continues in the circle until it comes back to the leader who then changes the sound (snap fingers, clap hands, slap thighs, stomp feet, and then in reverse order). The sensations created are akin to the sounds of a rainstorm.



Consensus

Material Needed: None Time Required: 10-15 minutes Group Size: 10-12 Purpose: Team building, discussing consensus & teamwork, compromise

1. Divide the participants up into 3-4 groups depending on the number of people.
2. Ask each group to huddle together and create a noise and action to perform for other groups.
3. After each has demonstrated noise and action twice for other groups, the facilitator

gives 10 seconds time for each group to huddle.

4. The goal is for all of the groups to be doing the same noise and action together, without consulting one another.
5. After the huddle, the facilitator counts to three and all of the groups at the same time must perform one of the action/noise combinations. (It doesn't have to be their original one).
6. Keep re-huddling until all groups are doing the same noise/action.

Variations: If for some reason the groups are successful on the first or second try, break participants up into smaller groups and have them repeat the activity.

Debrief/ Discussion Questions:

1. How did it feel to be successful (unsuccessful) with this activity?
2. What made it so hard to reach consensus?
3. What was most frustrating about this activity?
4. How did it feel to have your noise/ action not be chosen by the group?
5. Did any of you make any compromises during this activity, how did that feel?
6. How did it feel to not be able to communicate with the other groups?

Phrase Ball

Material Needed: A Nerf or other soft ball Time Required: 15-20 minutes Group Size: 5-40 Purpose: Public speaking, adjusting to change, problem solving

1. Arrange participants into a circle, and tell them they will now discover how talented they are at speaking extemporaneously.
2. The members of the circle will toss the ball to one another, at the same time speaking a simple, descriptive phrase; ("the placid lake, the little girl, the beautiful city skyline, the terrifying grizzly, the soft Nerf(tm) ball, etc.) Tell them that since there are no rules, there are also no wrong phrases! Have the group take turns tossing and speaking until everyone has gotten confident with their ability to come with a phrase (this usually takes less than 5 minutes). When you feel this has happened, wait for the next time the ball is thrown to you and hold onto it.

3. Congratulate them all on their verbal virtuosity, and tell them they have moved ahead to the advanced level with astonishing speed. Tell them they will now play the game again, this time with only one rule: Their phrases must relate to the phrase that came before. That is, one person will say a phrase and toss the ball, and the person catching it will add onto that phrase.



4. Try a couple of passes. Toss the ball and say: "the new member..." The person catching must now say something like, "organizing the carnival." (Applaud him to encourage the rest.) This person will then throw the ball to someone else, saying perhaps, "wants to sell popcorn,..." And whoever catches it might say, "and cotton candy". That person turns and tosses it to someone else, saying, "the little girl..." That person catches it and says, "who needs glasses". And so on.
5. Do this until, once again, everyone seems comfortable with the ability to speak extemporaneously, at least most of the time. Express your admiration and ask your learners to sit down.

Debrief/ Discussion Questions:

- What were your thoughts or feelings when the ball got tossed to you? Did these change as the game progressed?
- How comfortable were you in coming up with something to say in the moment? Did you censor or evaluate your contributions?
- What round was easier for you, round one or two? As a speaker, how could your presentations improve if you focused on responding to your groups instead of impressing them?

- How does all this apply to making your presentations? Does being spontaneous mean you shouldn't carefully prepare yourself? [Answer: No!]

KEY POINT: Once you've prepared- written, rewritten, and rehearsed your presentation- what do you have to do next? [Answer: Get ready for the unexpected...because it will happen].

Note: If your learners consistently have trouble with this game, it is because they are pressuring themselves to be clever- to come up with poetic, funny or unusual phrases. Keep reminding them that the point is to be spontaneous and impromptu. Tell them they don't have to worry about their originality. It will show up by itself; in fact they can't repress it. For the moment, their challenge is to just go with the first idea that occurs to them. Then swallow your pride and model this for them every time the ball comes your way!

Team Building Exercises for 5-10 People

Flip It Over (Estimated Length: 5 Minutes)

Ingredients

- ✓ A large tablecloth (that allows 5-10 people to stand on 75% of the space)

Objectives

- Foster creativity
- Improve communication
- Demonstrate the importance of collaboration and teamwork

Directions

- Participants stand on tablecloth, leaving a quarter of the portion empty
- The group must flip over the tablecloth so that everyone is standing on the other side of the cloth without stepping off or touching the ground outside the cloth
- SOLUTION: the group must huddle together and fold a non-occupied piece of cloth back. As the cloth is folded back, more people can step on the other side of the cloth.

Photo Finish (Estimated Length: 10 Minutes)

Ingredients

- ✓ Use duct tape to make 5 "finish lines" in room
- ✓ Timer
- ✓ 2-3 random objects



Objectives

- Improve critical thinking skills
- Learn to evaluate and adjust approaches to achieve desired goals

Directions

- The group has 15 minutes to cross 5 checkpoints (as indicated by the duct tape, in 5 different locations)
- All the members of the group must all cross the checkpoint at the exact same time without speaking
- The group must cross the finish line in 5 different ways relying on non-verbal cues only
- SOLUTIONS COULD BE: Hold onto a single item (i.e., marker) and move it over the checkpoint; tap an object on the ground to signal when to cross; count down using one person’s hand to count down when to cross; and grab hands and hold them over the checkpoint.

Game of Possibilities (Estimated Length: 15 Minutes)

Ingredients

- ✓ Index cards
- ✓ Markers

Objectives

- Inspire creativity and individual innovation
- Improve non-verbal communication skills

Directions

©NYS PTA®
Summer Leadership Conference 2018

- Each participant receives an index card with the name of an object written on it
- Each player takes a turn going in front of the group to demonstrate a use for that object without speaking
- The rest of the team must guess what the player is demonstrating

Conducted Story (Estimated Length: 20 Minutes)

Ingredients

- ✓ Timer

Objectives

- Encourage members to adapt to change
- Improve communication skills

Directions

- One player is “storyteller” while others are “word suppliers”
- Word suppliers provide the topic the storyteller talks about
- As the storyteller speaks, the word suppliers call out words unrelated to the topic
- Storyteller must cohesively incorporate these words
- After 2-4 minutes (depending on the group size), one of the word suppliers becomes the new storyteller
- Continue until everyone has been storyteller

Team Building Exercises for 10-20 People

Winner/Loser (Estimated Length: 10 Minutes)

Ingredients

- ✓ None

Objectives

- Learn how to reframe negative situations into positive learning experiences

Directions

- Groups break off into pairs
- One person in each pair describes a negative experience to a partner (can be personal or work-related)
- With Partner B's help, Partner A describes the situation again focusing only on the positive aspects
- Pairs switch roles

Shepherd and Sheep (Estimated Length: 10 Minutes)

Ingredients

- ✓ Small cones

Objectives

- Build trust
- Strengthen leadership and problem-solving skills

Directions

- In teams of 5-10 people, team leaders (shepherds) use verbal commands to guide teammates (sheep) into a pen marked off by the small cones
- The sheep's eyes must remain closed
- The team that pens all their sheep the fastest wins the challenge
- Time-permitting, this may have multiple rounds

Human Knot (Estimated Length: 15 Minutes)



Ingredients

- ✓ None

Objectives

- Foster communication
- Build teamwork

Directions

- Everyone stands in a circle facing each other
- Participants use each hand to grab another person's hand in the circle, creating a human knot of arms
- Within 15 minutes, the group must untangle the knot of arms without letting go
- SOLUTION: To untangle the knot of arms without letting go, participants will need to go under other participants arms or step through arms.

Picture This (Estimated Length: 20 Minutes)

Ingredients

- ✓ Paper
- ✓ Markers

Objectives

- Fine-tune communication skills
- Build teamwork

Directions

- Team members create a single-file line
- The first person creates a drawing and shows it to the next person in line
- The second person describes the picture to the person behind them, who then describes it to the person behind them, and so on...
- The last person in line must draw the original picture using the description they heard from the person in front of them

Team Building Exercises for 20+ People

Birthday Line-Up (Estimated Length: 5 Minutes)

Ingredients

- ✓ None

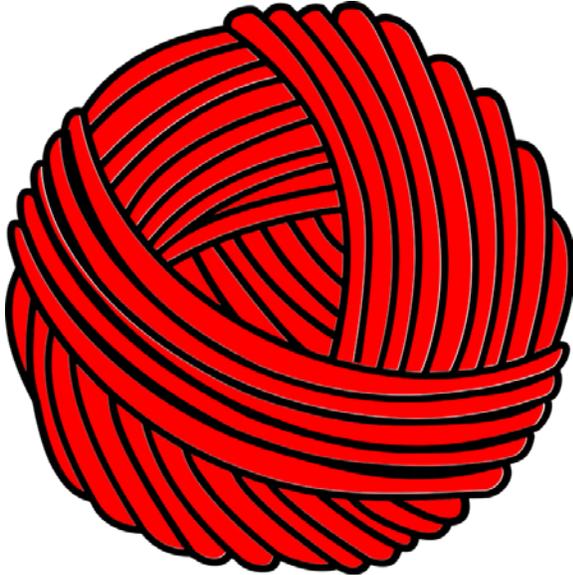
Objectives

- Learn and utilize non-verbal communication skills

Directions

- Participants must line up single file in order of birth month and day (ignore birth year) without talking or writing

- Participants must remain silent and may not



write to communicate with one another

Spider Web (Estimated Length: 10 Minutes)

Ingredients

- ✓ A large ball of yarn

Objectives

- Demonstrate connection between individuals and experiences through shared common ground
- Build rapport between team members

Directions

- The group forms a large circle, facing inward (sit or stand)
- One person holds a large ball of yarn and tells the group an embarrassing moment or interesting fact about themselves
- While holding on to one end of the yarn, the person throws the ball to someone in the circle, extending yarn to next person
- That person tells an embarrassing story or interesting fact, holds a piece of the yarn, then throws the yarn to another person, and so on until all have shared
- The end result produces a “spider web” out of the yarn, connecting individuals together as a community

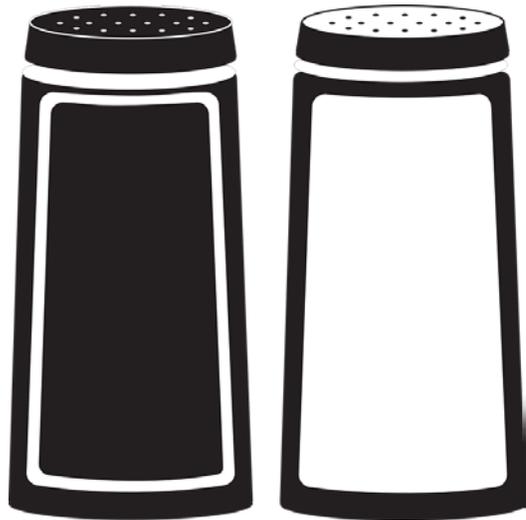
Salt and Pepper (Estimated Length: 15 Minutes)

Ingredients

- ✓ Index card with a word that corresponds to an opposite word written on another index (Salt/Pepper; Happy/Sad)
- ✓ Tape
- ✓ Markers
- ✓ An even number of participants

Objectives

- Improve collaboration skills
- Learn how to ask the right questions



Directions

- All participants have an index card with a word written on it taped to their backs
- The players must ask other participants yes or no questions to determine what the word on their back is
- Once the person determines what word it is, they must find the person with the opposite word on their back

More Team-Building Tools

- **13 Top Team-Building Activities** - vorkspace.com/blog/index.php/13-top-team-building-activities/
- **17 Fun Get to Know You Games** - funattic.com/get-to-know-you-games/
- **Fun Attic** - funattic.com/indoor-team-building-games/
- **Team-Building Games** - toggl.com/team-building-games/
- **TOOBEEZ Team Building** - www.toobeez.com/teambuilding-book/16-Photo-Finish-Activity.html
- **Venture Team Building** - ventureteambuilding.co.uk/team-building-activities/#quick
- **Wrike's 12 AwesomeTeam-Builders** - wrike.com/blog/team-building-games