

Icebreakers/ Team Building Games

- **THE NAME GAME-** Some sort of name game works best with smaller groups of students. If possible, sit in a circle. Each student must come up with an adjective starting with the same letter as his or her first name, i.e. "Super Suzanne." The trick with this game, though, is that a student must first say all of the names that came before him or her. So the second person would say, "She is Super Suzanne, and I am..." and so on. Alternatively, you could have each student choose an animal beginning with the same letter as his or her first name (e.g., "Suzanne the Salamander"), or any other category you find appropriate.

- **STRINGING CONVERSATION TOGETHER-** Cut string or yarn into pieces of different lengths. Each piece should have a matching piece of the same length. There should be enough pieces so that each student will have one. Then give each student one piece of string, and challenge each student to find the other student who has a string of the same length. After students find their matches, they can take turns introducing themselves to one another. You can provide a list of questions to help students "break the ice," or students can come up with their own. You might extend the activity by having each student introduce his or her partner to the class. (next—**THE PARTNER INTERVIEW**)

- **THE PARTNER INTERVIEW -** Come up with a set of fun questions (and encourage students to think of their own!) that students must ask each other. Then each of your students must present his or her partner to the rest of the group.

- **20 QUESTIONS:** Divide the class into two teams, choose a category, and have each team pick something that fits that category. Teams ask each other yes-or-no questions; whichever team figures out the opponents' word or name in fewer questions wins.

- **WHO AM I? :** This game never fails to amuse. Have some Post-It notes handy, and have each pupil write down the name of a well-known person. Each student sticks the Post-It on a fellow student's forehead, and a guessing game follows. Then each person asks the group yes-or-no questions about the name on his or her forehead. A "yes" answer means the student is allowed to ask another question. A "no" answer means that the next person asks a question.

- **THE QUESTION GAME-** Everyone loves to talk about themselves and your students are no exceptions. Hand out a list of questions or fill in the blank statements for every student. Then read their responses and have students guess which student gave the responses. But don't pry into the depths of their circumstances which may offend and embarrass; instead chose question that lend themselves to creative responses.
Some sample questions:

If I were an animal I would be a (n) _____. If I were a flavor of ice cream I would be _____. When I grow up I want to be _____ because I would love waking up in the morning and

knowing I would be _____ everyday. If you could live anywhere in the world where would you chose to live? Why? If you could have person dead or alive over for dinner who would you chose? Why? What is you birth order? Oldest, middle, or youngest? What color describes your personality? Why?If I could sum my personality up in one word I would chose _____.

- **STUDENT FEUD (CONTENT REVIEW)**
 - Teacher assigns each student to a group of five. After the students are placed in their groups, give them a few minutes to think of a name for their team. After all teams are named, place them in a hat and randomly choose the first two teams to compete against each other. The other students will be the audience for the game and the teacher is the host. After the game is played a few times, she may choose a student to be the host.
 - To begin the game, one student from each team will come to the front of the classroom. Each student will have a bell or buzzer in front of him. Students will place their hands behind their back and after the question is read, the first one to sound the bell answers first. They have 3 seconds to answer the question, otherwise the opponent answers.
 - Student who answers first and gets it correct has the option of having his team play or pass it to the other team. If they choose to play, they must get all answers correct to win the points. The playing team is able to get three incorrect answers before the other team has the chance of stealing the points. The stealing team must get one of the hidden answers correct to steal the points.
 - First team to acquire 200 points win the round and goes to speed round. Each question is worth a specific amount of points, that is predetermined by the teacher. The more difficult questions are worth more points. It is best to play the game by starting with the easier questions.
 - Speed Round requires two members of the winning team to answer 5 questions in 20 seconds. Each of the questions are different and jointly they must answer 7 correct to win the prize for their team. All prizes can be redeemed at a later date in the school year.
 - After the game is complete, take a break or have the two remaining teams play the game to win a prize

- **POPCORN-** Everyone mills around in the playing area, you could be moving to music, or whatever, so long as people are mixing around. The leader then calls out a number and an object. Participants quickly form groups of that number, then use their bodies to make the object. For example, "2, rocking chair!" and you'll suddenly see pairs forming themselves into rocking chairs. Once everyone's made their object and have been suitably congratulated, then it's time for more mingling and the next object!

Some guaranteed hits: washing machine , hot air popcorn popper , toaster , car , piano , waterfall , old oak tree , eagle , elephant You can always end with "Everyone, roller coaster!"

- **CHANGING THE LEADER-** The leader can change the activity any time he or she wants. Everyone in the group has to watch the leader to see what to do next. For younger kids, this might be as much as you want to try.

Here's where it gets interesting. Without saying anything, the leader lets someone else in the circle know that that person is now the leader. It could be a wink, slight nod, or even just a smile with direct eye contact. Then the new leader can change the action any time until passing the leader role to a new person. The kids have to be paying attention to figure out who is the new leader and what action they should be doing now.

The kids have fun with the game. More importantly, they are learning to pay attention to each other and non-verbal communication skills.

- **CHAIN GANG**

Begin by asking students "Who can do something really well?" After a brief discussion about some of the students' talents, pass out paper and ask students to write down five things they do well. Then provide each student with five different-colored paper strips. Have each student write a different talent on separate paper strips, then create a mini paper chain with the strips by linking the five talents together. As students complete their mini chains, use extra strips of paper to link the mini chains together to create one long class chain. Have students stand and hold the growing chain as you link the pieces together. Once the entire chain is constructed and linked, lead a discussion about what the chain demonstrates -- for example, all the students have talents; all the students have things they do well; together, the students have many talents; if they work together, classmates can accomplish anything; the class is stronger when students work together than when individual students work on their own. Hang the chain in the room as a constant reminder to students of the talents they possess and the benefits of teamwork.

- **SILHOUETTE COLLAGE**

Stock up on old magazines. Your school librarian might have a discard pile you can draw from. Invite students to search through the magazines for pictures, words, or anything else that might be used to describe them. Then use an overhead projector or another source of bright light to create a silhouette of each student's profile; have each student sit in front of the light source as you or another student traces the outline of the silhouette on a sheet of 11- by 17-inch paper taped to the wall. Have students cut out their silhouettes, then fill them with a collage of pictures and words that express their identity. Then give each student an opportunity to share his or her silhouette with the group and talk about why he or she chose some of the elements in the collage. Post the silhouettes to create a sense of "our homeroom."

- **HUMAN WEB-** For this game you separate into two groups (hopefully, they will end up being somewhat equal). Have each group hold hands, forming a circle, and then have them all walk forward until they are close together and the circle is small and tight. Drop hands. Now each kid should grab any two different hands except for those of his immediate neighbor. This will form a colossal mess! Next comes the fun part! This kids need to untangle themselves without letting go of any hands. They will have to step over arms, duck under, and work at it; but it is fun and challenging!

- **GETTING TO KNOW YOU—MULTIPLE CHOICE STYLE-** This icebreaker helps students to understand that they are not as different as they may think. This is an active learning activity in which the moderator/teacher/leader reads a series of questions and participants respond by selecting a multiple choice answer. Each corner of the room should be a designated letter. Example statements:

- If I had to see a movie, I would rather see: (A) Dumb and Dumber (B) Acaconda (C) Star Wars (D) The Little Mermaid.
 - If I could go out to eat, I would eat at: (A) Red Lobster (B) Olive Garden/Pasta House (C) McDonalds (D) Applebees.
 - My favorite thing about myself is: (A) My personality (B) My looks (C) My car (D) My brain.
 - If I had to give up one thing at home, it would be: (A) Air conditioning (B) Television (C) Microwave (D) Computer.
 - If I could hold one of the four jobs listed, I would be: (A) Pilot (B) Webmaster (C) Teacher (D) Doctor.
- **HUMAN KNOT-** For this team builder, participants get in groups of five, and connect hands so that they form a tangled knot. Then, each team must try to get out of the knot without letting go of each other's hand.
*This activity can be adapted by having participants use string to knot up rather than their hands.
 - **BLIND MAP WALK-** Giving and receiving directions over the phone is much more difficult than giving them in person. When you are talking on the phone, you need clear communication skills for both parties to understand each other. In this game success depends on clear verbal skills and excellent listening skills. This teambuilder is designed to help participants to learn the importance of giving clear directions and to learn what is required of them when using good listening skills. To build trust among group members. You will need blindfolds and a sketch of the surrounding area with a course drawn on it.
 - Divide the group into pairs and blindfold one member of each pair. Give the partner, without the blindfold, a copy of the map. The partner without the blindfold must guide the blindfolded partner through the course with only verbal directions. The partners may walk together but they may not touch each other.
 - Once the course has been completed, switch the blindfold to the other partner and give the pair a new map to follow.
 - HINT: This works best when you use an area that is unfamiliar to the group so they do not already know what obstacles they may encounter.

Discussion Prompts:

1. Did you like giving or receiving directions the best? Why?
 2. What did you do to make sure the directions were clearly understood?
 3. What did you do to make sure you were following the directions?
 4. Why are good communication skills important?
 5. How was trust a factor in this activity?
- **HUMAN SCAVENGER HUNT-** Break the large group into smaller groups of about six to twelve people each. Have each group stand or sit together in a place that is separate from the other groups but of equal distance from you - the leader who stands in the middle of the room. Read one item from the list at a time. The team who sends up a person or group of people to you first that fits the description you have just given earns a point. For example, you

might say "two people who have the same middle name" and within each group the members must talk, find out if any two have the same middle name, and then quickly send those people up to you. The first group of people with the same middle name to reach you earns a point for their team. You may give a bonus point for different items if it applies - for instance, if a group has three people with the same middle name they may earn a point for this round even if they were not the first group to get to you. The group with the most points at the end of the game wins.

Human Scavenger Hunt List

1. Two people who have the same first and last initial
2. The person in your group who was born the farthest away from here
3. Two people with the same middle name
4. A group of people whose ages add up to 100
5. Two people with the same birthday (or birthday month)
6. A group of people whose shoe sizes add up to 40
7. The person in your group who lives the closest to here
8. A group of people who have attended school for a total of 38 years
9. A group of people who can spell a word by putting together the first letters of their first names
10. A group of three people who all have different colored eyes

SHOWER CURTAIN--The game I know starts out with everyone (or two groups) standing around a shower curtain. Everyone must be able to stand with two feet on the curtain and hold the position for 5 seconds. Once the five seconds are up, everyone steps off of the curtain and the instructor folds it in half. Again, everyone must be able to step on with two feet. It gets tricky towards the end because they really have to communicate and problem solve about how to get everyone on the shower curtain. So that could be fun as well.