



ICEBREAKERS & TEAMBUILDERS

At the start of the year, use icebreakers to help members get to know each other. Use teambuilders throughout the year to build connection. Along the way, help everyone have fun and feel like a team! A few notes to remember:

- *Adjust the instructions if you have a large club (over 15 members) or a small club (fewer than 10 members). For instance, if the activity asks for members to sit in one circle, members of a larger club can create two circles that are a manageable size for you to monitor.*
- *Members will share information about themselves, so keep an eye out for anyone who may be uncomfortable with sharing. Offer them a different role.*
- *If the club wants to display what members created, make it optional — so members who don't want to post their work do not feel obligated.*

ICEBREAKERS

GRAB AND GO

Purpose: For members to get to know one another.

Time: 25-30 minutes

Supplies: Chairs. A timer, stopwatch, or cell phone. Pre-written questions.

Preparation: Create a list of 8-10 questions (that can be answered in 30 seconds or so) to help members get to know one another. Pick topics interesting to students. such as “What’s the last show you binged?” or “What’s your favorite thing to do?”

Instructions: Split members into two groups. Have members sit on the floor (or in chairs) in two long lines, spaced apart, facing each other. Explain that you will read a question and members sitting across from one another will have 60 seconds — 30 seconds each — to share their answers. When the time is up, everyone on one side will scoot down a seat, and the last person in the line (who now doesn't have a partner) will move to the end of their line. Now, GO!

I AM

Purpose: For members to learn each other's names and get to know one another.

Time: 25-30 minutes

Supplies: Paper, pencils and/or pens.

Instructions: Give each member a piece of paper and a pen. Ask them to write their name down the left side of the page, with room to write next to each letter. Tell them their name will be an acronym, and they will have 10 minutes to choose words for each letter that tells something about them. After 10 minutes, ask for volunteers to share their acronyms. Do members notice similarities? Any surprising differences?

NAME GAME

Purpose: For members to get to know one another.

Time: 25-30 minutes

Supplies: Poster boards and markers

Instructions: Divide members into groups of four or five. Place a poster board and markers in the middle of each group's table. Ask members to find an object in the room that begins with the first letter of their last name. After the group finds their items, share the following instructions: Each group must write and perform a short song, rap, rhyme, poem or story that includes the names of all the people in their group and all items collected by the members. Save enough time for each group to share/perform for everyone.

STORY BUILDING

Purpose: To build members' listening skills, creativity and teamwork.

Time: 20-25 minutes.

Supplies: 2-3 shopping bags containing 10-12 random items, such as a notebook, paint brush, phone, sippy cup, record album, wig, whistle, candle, chalk, map, ball cap, tea bag, funnel, frisbee and dog toy.

Instructions: Pass out a bag and tell the members that they will create and tell stories using props in the bag. Remind them that good stories have beginnings, middles and ends that wrap up the story. Ask them to sit in a large circle. Now give the bag to a member in the circle. Tell them the first member will draw an item from the bag and then start a story — with a 20-second beginning that features the item. A second member will do the same, adding to the previous member's story. Members will continue passing the bag and speaking until the story reaches a natural ending or the member with the last item gives the story a good ending. If all members have not had a turn, start a new story by giving them another shopping bag. Reflect by asking members what they found most challenging and what they learned from the activity.

TEAMBUILDERS

ALL TIED UP

Purpose: For members to learn teamwork.

Time: 25-30 minutes

Supplies: 20-inch x 1-inch cloth strips (same amount as number of members) and other supplies for the group's task.

Preparation: Decide on a task that groups will complete. Before the meeting, gather supplies. Task ideas include wrapping a package with gift wrap, creating a poster or eating a snack.

Instructions: Separate members into groups of 4 or 5. Ask them to stand in a circle facing each other. Tell them that they will have a task to complete in their group but cannot untie themselves to do it. Ask members to hold their arms out to their sides and tie them together with cloth strips, wrist-to-wrist. Give the groups the task to complete. GO!

Close the activity with reflection questions:

- What were challenges to completing or trying to complete the task?
- What made your group successful if you completed the task?
- Did all the members take part? If not, how did that make you feel?
- Does working on a team ever feel restrictive when trying to complete a task? If so, why? How do you deal with this?

BLINDFOLD BUILD

Purpose: To build members listening and communication skills and trust among teammates.

Time: 25-30 minutes

Supplies: Timer. Bandanas. Building blocks (for half of the members to have 20-30 blocks).

Instructions: Explain that members will work in teams of two. One member will be blindfolded and will build a specific structure with the building blocks, relying only on their teammate's spoken instructions. The member who isn't blindfolded cannot touch the blocks or their teammate when giving instructions.

Have members sit in pairs on the floor or at tables around the room, facing each other. Give a bandana to one member of each team and ask them to put it on snugly. Place a pile of blocks in front of the other member. Tell them they have three minutes to build a small structure. Then give them two minutes to study the structure and memorize it. Have the non-blindfolded members pull apart their structure and put the blocks in front of their teammate. Give blindfolded people about 10 minutes to build the same structure — with only verbal instructions from their teammates. At 10 minutes, ask them to remove the blindfolds and look at the structure. Have the sighted group share how close the structure looks to the original.

Close the activity with reflection questions:

- What were the biggest challenges to completing the activity?
- What tips would you give others to help them be successful with a “blindfold build”?
- How is this game like life?

BRIDGE

Purpose: For members to recognize their strengths and the strengths of others.

Time: 30 minutes.

Supplies: Thick dark markers. Paper plates (at least five times the number of members).

Instructions: Place plates and markers near members. Ask members to think about their strengths and talents and to write them on the plates. One strength per plate.

After completing the task, tell them to work together to make a bridge across the room using only the “strength plates.” Choose 2-3 members to build the bridge while others stay seated. The bridge builders cannot touch the floor unless they step on strength plates. If more plates are needed to build the bridge, people must write down other strengths on more plates and pass them to the builders to add to the bridge.

Close the activity with reflection questions:

- Could one person build a bridge by themselves? Why or why not?
- What strengths do more members have? What strengths are less common?
- How is a club enhanced by having members with different strengths and talents?

LINE UP

Purpose: To show members that everyone can lead — and that who leads is based on the task.

Time: 25-30 minutes

Preparation: Decide on a list of things that will apply to all members but won’t be the same for all of them. Examples include birthday months, beginning with the current month; number of people in their immediate families; and alphabetical order by first name.

Instructions: Gather members and share the first thing on the list. Ask them to form a line based on how it applies to them. Give members a time limit. Do rounds, sharing the next statement on the list.

Close the activity with reflection questions:

- Did one person or multiple people lead each round, or did leaders change each round?
- Is it sometimes important to have a leader?
- What happens when everybody — or nobody — tries to lead?

Adapted from: Jones, Alanna (1999). Team-Building Activities for Every Group. Richmond, WA: Rec Room Company.