

Youth Icebreakers

Icebreakers can play an important role in helping young people integrate and connect with one another in a group environment. Icebreakers can also enhance your teaching by helping to stimulate cooperation and participation. They can provide positive momentum for small group study and discussion by:

- *Helping a new group get to know one another.*
- *Helping new members to integrate into a group.*
- *Helping young people feel comfortable together.*
- *Encouraging cooperation.*
- *Encouraging listening to others.*
- *Encouraging working together.*
- *Encouraging young people to break out of their cliques.*
- *Developing social skills.*
- *Building a rapport with leaders.*
- *Creating a good atmosphere for learning and participation.*

YOUR CHECKLIST:

- *Be enthusiastic, whatever happens, be enthusiastic!*
- *Choose volunteers carefully and don't cause embarrassment.*
- *If something is not working move quickly on to the next activity.*
- *Timing is important. Don't flog them to death. Use only 2 or 3 icebreakers as a 20-30 minutes introduction to your program. Finish each icebreaker while young people are still enjoying it.*
- *Choose icebreakers appropriate for your age group. No group is the same and your understanding of what will and will not work with your group is a core youth work skill.*

This will encourage sharing, openness, listening, cooperation and discussion, providing a useful 'getting to know you' or 'group building' introduction for a small group study or teaching time.

FACT OR FICTION

Ask everyone to write on a piece of paper THREE things about themselves which may not be known to the others in the group. Two are true and one is not. Taking turns they read out the three 'facts' about themselves and the rest of the group votes which are true and false. There are always surprises. This simple activity is always fun, and helps the group and leaders get to know more about each other.

CONVERSATIONS

Each person is given a sheet of paper with a series of instructions to follow. This is a good mixing game and conversation starter as each person must speak to everyone else.

For example:

- Count the number of brown eyed boys in the room.
- Find out who has made the longest journey.
- Who has the most unusual hobby?
- Who has had the most embarrassing experience?
- etc.

THE QUESTION WEB

You need to have a spool of string or wool for this game. Ask the young people to stand in a circle. Hold on to the end of the string and throw the ball/spool to one of the young people to catch. They then choose a question from 1-18 to answer. A list of sample questions is given below. Adapt for your group. Holding the string they then throw it to another member of the group. Eventually this creates a web as well as learning some interesting things about each other! At the end of the game you could comment that we all played a part in creating this unique web and if one person was gone it would look different. In the same way it's important that we all take part to make the group what it is, unique and special.

- 1) If you had a time machine that would work only once, what point in the future or in history would you visit?
- 2) If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?
- 3) If your home was burning down, what three objects would you try and save?
- 4) If you could talk to any one person now living, who would it be and why?

- 5) If you HAD to give up one of your senses (hearing, seeing, feeling, smelling, tasting) which would it be and why?
- 6) If you were an animal, what would you be and why?
- 7) Do you have a pet? If not, what sort of pet would you like?
- 8) Name a gift you will never forget?
- 9) Name one thing you really like about yourself.
- 10) What's your favorite thing to do in the summer?
- 11) Who's your favorite cartoon character, and why?
- 12) Does your name have a special meaning and or were you named after someone special?
- 13) What is the hardest thing you have ever done?
- 14) What book, movie or video have you seen/read recently you would recommend? Why?
- 15) What was the best thing that happened to you this past week?
- 16) If you had this week over again what would you do differently?
- 17) What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think about God?
- 18) If you could ask Christ to change one problem in the world today, what would you like him to change?

IF

Ask the group to sit in a circle. Write 20 'IF' questions on cards and place them (question down) in the middle of the circle. The first person takes a card, reads it out and gives their answer, comment or explanation. The card is returned to the bottom of the pile before the next person takes their card. This is a simple icebreaker to get young people talking and listening to others in the group. Keep it moving and don't play for too long. Write your own additional 'IF' questions to add to the list.

1. If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?
2. If I gave you \$____, what would you spend it on?
3. If you could watch your favorite movie now, what would it be?
4. If you could talk to anyone in the world, who would it be?
5. If you could wish one thing to come true this year, what would it be?
6. If you could live in any period of history, when would it be?
7. If you could change anything about yourself, what would you change?
8. If you could be someone else, who would you be?

9. If you could have any question answered, what would it be?
10. If you could watch your favorite TV show now, what would it be?
11. If you could have any kind of pet, what would you have?
12. If you could do your dream job 10 years from now, what would it be?
13. If you had to be allergic to something, what would it be?
14. If you sat down next to Jesus on a bus, what would you talk about?
15. If money and time was no object, what would you be doing right now?
16. If you had one day to live over again, what day would you pick?
17. If you could eat your favorite food now, what would it be?
18. If you could learn any skill, what would it be?
19. If you were sent to live on a space station for three months and only allowed to bring three personal items with you, what would they be?
20. If you could buy a car right now, what would you buy?

NAME THAT PERSON

Divide into two teams. Give each person a blank piece of card. Ask them to write five little known facts about themselves on their card. Include all leaders in this game too. For example, I have a pet iguana, my grandmother is called ___, my favorite color is blue, etc. Collect the cards into two team piles. Draw one card from the opposing team pile. Each team tries to name the person in as few clues as possible. Five points if they get it on the first clue, then 4, 3, 2, 1, 0. The team with the most points wins.