

Quick “Get to Know You” Activities

- **Active Names**

Participants should stand in a circle. Ask each person to think of a verb and action which starts with the same letter as their first name. Ideally the action will be something the participant enjoys (e.g., "Dancing Dana".) Each participant will step into the circle a bit, perform their action and yell their active name. Everyone in the group then copies the movement and repeats the active name.

- **Can You Find Me?**

Give each participant an index card and have them write 3-5 statements about themselves (e.g. favorites, hobbies, vacations taken or dreamed of, biographical information, etc.) Ensure participants do not include their names however. Once everyone is finished, the facilitator should collect all of the cards, shuffle them, and randomly pass them out. Have participants then find the person with their card and introduce themselves.

- **Four Corners**

This activity is a kinesthetic way for participants to learn more about one another’s characteristics or opinions.

- Option 1: Label the four corners of the room with large numbers, 1-4. Tell participants to listen to the characteristics you describe, and to go to the number that best describes them. For example, questions might include:
 - Do you have siblings? If you have 1 sibling, go to Corner 1; 2 siblings, go to corner 2; 3 or more siblings, go to corner 3; no siblings, go to corner 4. Once participants have moved to their corner, if your group is not incredibly large you can have them circle up and share on that topic. For example, in participants could be instructed to share a time their sibling got on their nerves, and participants in the “no siblings” corner could share whether they like being an only child.
 - Which pet do you prefer? Dogs-go to corner 1; Cats-go to corner 2; Some other type of animal-go to corner 3; Don’t like animals at all-go to corner 4. (Optional: Once in their corners, participants in corner 1 and 2 could be instructed to share why they prefer this animal, and to tell about their own pet; corner 3 could be instructed to share which pet it is they prefer and why; and corner 4 can discuss why they don’t like animals.
- Option 2: Label the four corners of the room with Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree. Tell participants you will read a statement, and they are to go to the corner of the room that represents their opinion on that issue. For example:
 - Chocolate cake is the best dessert on the planet.
 - School uniforms cut down on teasing, violence, and class disruptions.
 - The death penalty is an appropriate way to punish severe criminals.
 - American troops should be withdrawn from Iraq.

When a group is first getting to know one another, facilitators should use less controversial questions. However, once group cohesiveness is established, this activity can be used as a kinesthetic way to discuss deeper topic.

- **Group-Grouping**

This game is a kinesthetic way to allow participants to learn more about one another. The facilitator should prepare questions in advance which require participants to arrange themselves in relation to other people according to various individual and social characteristics. Questions can be simple, surface level questions to begin with, but can also be changed to deeper, value based questions once a foundation of trust has been built within the group. Examples include:

- Find someone who:
 - had the same breakfast as you
 - has the same favorite type of music
 - has the same shoe size
 - has a different religious belief
 - you haven't met yet, but would really like to
- Lineup according to:
 - number of siblings
 - how outgoing you consider yourself to be (introversion / extraversion)
 - how tired you feel this morning
 - number of states other than this one you have visited
- Group yourselves according to:
 - the place where you were born
 - the place where you live
 - a place you would like to visit
 - your favorite place to hang out

- **“M & M” Game**

Pass around a bag of M&Ms (or other multicolored candy, such as Skittles), tell participants to take 5 pieces, and tell them not to eat the candy yet! After everyone has 5 pieces of candy, write the colors on the board with a different question beside each. For example:

- Yellow-What is your favorite food?
- Green-Who is someone you admire?
- Red-What makes you happy?
- Brown-What do you enjoy doing in your free time?
- Orange-What are your goals for the next 10 years?

Questions can vary; for example, they may be general “get to know you” questions or can be based on a particular theme you want participants to focus on.

- **Meet My Friend...**

Place all participants in pairs and instruct pairs to tell one another all about themselves. Facilitators can assign particular questions that participants should answer in their pairs, or simply allow them to share whatever information they choose. Each participant will then introduce their partner to the group by saying “Meet my friend...”, filling in their partners name and summarizing what they learned about him/her.

- **Pair and Share**

Prior to participants arriving, the facilitator should create cards that contain an open-ended question. Place students into pairs (or small groups) and have each pair/group draw one question card. Participants should be given a designated amount of time to discuss. Pairs/groups that finish first may be allowed to return their card and draw another. Questions can be simple for groups that are just getting to know one another and more complex or theme based for groups that are more familiar with one another. Examples of questions include:

- What is your best attribute? What do you most need to improve?
- What is the biggest change that needs to take place in your community to make it a better place?
- Who is someone in your life that you greatly admire and why?
- What is your biggest fear?
- Where do you see yourself in 15 years? What will you be doing?
- Share one of your most embarrassing moments.
- If you were given a million dollars what would you do with it?

- **Peek-A-Who**

Divide participants into two equal teams. Using a large piece of cloth or a blanket, the facilitator and a volunteer should separate the two groups by holding the blanket up between them (group members should squeeze in together so that neither team can see any member on the other side of the cloth). The facilitator should select one participant from either team to move up closer to either side of the blanket, so that they are face to face with the blanket between them. On the count of three, the facilitator and volunteer drop the blanket so that the two participants are facing one another. The first participant to call the name of the other participant wins and the other participant must now switch to the winning participants team. (It is important facilitators explain that the remainder of the group behind the playing participants must remain silent.) Repeat the process by again raising the cloth, selecting two more participants to move up to either side of the blanket, and again dropping the cloth on the count of three. The team that has the most participants on their side at the end of the game wins. As participants get better at the game, the facilitator can select two participants from each side to sit on either side of the blanket, so that four participants are playing at one time rather than two.

Note: Groups who do not have a basic familiarity of one another's names will need time at the beginning to go around the room and introduce themselves.

- **Rotating Circles**

Prepare a list of questions that you want the group to share with one another. Have the group form two circles, one inside the other, both containing the same number of participants. The participants in the inner circle should face a participant in the outer circle, so that everyone is paired up. Read a question and have the first pair answer it about themselves. Then, have the circles rotate in opposite directions so that they move one person over. Ask another question for the new partnership to answer. Questions can be general, or can be focused on a particular theme.

- **Sock it To Your Name!**

This is a fun way for participants to learn one another's names. Participants should stand in a circle. Instruct everyone to introduce themselves one by one. Then, using a pair of rolled up socks (a ball, soft toy, or anything else that can be safely thrown will work also) the facilitator should say his/her name, followed by the name of someone across the circle, then throw that participant the rolled socks. This participant then repeats the process, saying his/ her name, calling someone's name across the circle, and throwing that participant the socks. As participants get more familiar with one another's names, encourage them to go faster. Eventually, the facilitator can introduce another pair of socks into the game, so that more than one participant is calling someone's name and throwing socks. This heightens excitement but also requires the group to focus more.

- **The Big Wind Blows...**

Have participants arrange their chairs into a circle and have a seat. The facilitator should stand in the middle and fill in the following statement with something that is true of him/her: "The big wind blows for everyone who..." For example, "The big wind blows for everyone whose favorite subject is Language Arts." All participants who the statement is true of must get up and find another empty seat. One person will be left standing in the middle, who then completes the statement for something that is true of them. Again, everyone seated who the statement is true of must scramble to find a new seat. The game can continue in this way for as long as the facilitator chooses.

- Note: Facilitators should set some ground rules when explaining how to play, reminding participants that though the game gets exciting, they should move safely within the circle. Facilitators may also want to make moving to the chair directly beside you illegal. If participants are using a room with no circles, use masking tape to mark the floor with X's where everyone is standing.

- **Two Truths and a Lie**

Instruct participants to think of two truths from their own life, as well as a lie. Participants will take turn sharing these three statements, and the rest of the group must guess which statement is untrue of the three. This activity can be done in small groups or with the entire class, and serves as a fun way to learn more about one another.

- **Web We Weave**

Instruct all participants to stand in a circle. Holding on to the end of a ball of yarn, the facilitator should say his or name and share something about himself/herself. (The facilitator should predetermine what information he/she wants participants to share, such as what they are looking forward to, a time they were proud of themselves, something positive about themselves, etc.) The facilitator then throws the ball of yarn to someone across the circle, who repeats the process of saying his/her name and something about himself/herself. He/she then holds on to a piece of the yarn and throws the rest of the ball of yarn to someone across the circle. Once all students have shared and held on to a piece of the yarn, a web will be formed. The facilitator should then lead a group discussing regarding how the web symbolizes the connections between everyone in the group, the importance of team work, etc.

- **Whatcha' Got In There?**

Instruct participants to choose an item from their book bag, purse, pocket, etc. that relates to who they are in some way. In small groups, participants will share these items and explain how it represents their personality, likes/dislikes, background, or another aspect of who they are.

- **Who Am I?**

Instruct participants to describe themselves in first person on a piece of paper, without stating their name or obviously giving away who they are. Each description should end with "Who am I?" Once finished, participants will give their descriptions to the facilitator and sit in a circle. The facilitator will read each paper out loud and the group must guess who it is. An example of a "Who Am I" is:

- "I am a person who was born in North Carolina, but lived in New York City for 5 years. I love spaghetti, reading, and going to the beach. My favorite books to read are the Harry Potter series. If you ever need help with your Math, I'm the person to come to, because I'm really good at it. Who am I?"

- **Wipe Out!**

Pass around a roll of toilet paper and tell participants to tear off as many squares of toilet paper as they think they may need for the day. Once everyone has taken the amount they want, explain that each participant must share one thing about themselves for each square they have. This game is a structured way for participants to share facts about themselves yet keep things fun and light (since everyone is holding toilet paper after all!)