

# Things We Have in Common

On the first day of class, ask students to form groups with approximately five members and generate a list of 25 things they have in common. Students will generally first identify extremely obvious characteristics (for example, “We are all human beings,” “We all have two eyes,” “We all go to this school.”) and then move to less obvious characteristics that require discussion, for example:

1. We are all taking more than six credits.
2. We all live on campus.
3. We all like \_\_\_\_\_ (a particular musical group or TV show).
4. We have all seen a movie within the last week.
5. We are all single.

Encourage students to be creative. You may make the exercise competitive, awarding a prize or recognition to the group that finishes first or simply stop the exercise after 15 minutes, for example, and see which group has the highest number of commonalities.

# First Impressions

**Purpose:** To help students get to know their classmates while learning something about first impressions and preconceptions.

**Estimated Time to Complete:** 10 minutes

**Materials and Preparation:** Create questions

## **Activity:**

1. Divide the groups into triads
2. Each person is given two identical forms, containing five blanks labeled with questions about personal tastes, such as favorite TV show, perfect vacation, favorite food.
3. Participants fill out one sheet for each of the other two members, guessing at what they think the other's tastes might be. Guessing is essential, so only 2-3 minutes are allowed to fill in the blanks.
4. Once the blanks are filled in, participants give the sheets to the people to whom they refer.

## **Questions for Discussion:**

What were your guesses based on?

Were any correct?

Did two people guess the same thing about one participant?

# **ICEBREAKERS**

## **Getting People Acquainted**

### **A. Reception Line**

- Divide everyone into 2 groups; have them stand facing each other.
- Each talks to the person across from them until signaled (flash lights)
- At signal, person at end of one line moves to other end. Consequently, everyone has a new person to talk to.

### **B. Pictures From Magazines**

- Supply several old magazines and have people cut out a picture which either represents them or helps people remember their name.
- Share picture with group or wear at meeting as nametag.

### **C. Discussion Pairs**

- Provide pair with structured questions to discuss about themselves.
- Use the Book of Questions type questions or more fact-oriented.
- Pair can be asked to introduce each other to whole group at end.

### **D. Discussion Groups**

- Go around the circle and have everyone in group answer questions similar to those mentioned in Discussion Pairs (C).

### **E. Write Name on Board in Giant Letters**

- Use colored chalk or markers if available.
- Add doodles to help people remember the name and the person (i.e. draw polka dots in letters if have on polka dot shirt).

### **F. Passing Candy**

- Pass a bag of candy (like M&Ms) and have everyone take as many as they like. (Don't explain your purpose)
- Once everyone has some candy, have them share one piece of info about themselves for every piece of candy they took.

### **G. Piece of String**

- Pass around a ball of string. As people take a piece (any length they want) but don't tell them the purpose of the icebreaker.
- When everyone has string they have to wrap it around their finger and tell something about themselves every time they wrap it around.

### **H. Autograph Sheets**

- Prepare a sheet listing traits or facts about people with a line for them to sign their name next to the trait that applies to them. (i.e. someone who wears contacts, someone who has been to Europe, etc...)
- People mingle around the room with their sheets seeking to find people who are eligible to sign their sheets. A person can only sign once with any sheet.
- May also reverse the process and have people seek out the autograph of people which they think the category applies. (i.e. someone who looks like they enjoy the outdoors, someone who is from the east, etc...)

### **I. Signature Points**

- Prepare a signature sheets listing spaces for signatures of people in various occupations. (i.e. policeman, nun, coach, mayor, registrar, etc...)
- Assign points to each person, based upon the difficulty of obtaining that signature
- People have a set time limit to go around the campus/community to obtain the signatures. At the end, add up the points to determine the winner.
- Could be used to orient freshmen to campus offices and the community.

### **J. Autograph Bingo**

- Prepare a sheet with 9 or 12 squares, each containing a trait or characteristic which could apply to people in the group.
- After the sheet is handed out, people have a set time limit (5 minutes) to mingle and find people to sign in the box which lists a trait that applies to them.
- The one with the most signatures when time is called wins bingo.

**K. Words From Your Partner's Name**

- On a sheet of paper, the two partners write out their names and attempt to make other words using only the letters included in the names.
- After a set time limit, the one with the most new words wins.

**L. Something Unique**

- Everyone stands in a straight line, side to side.
- Someone says something they think is unique about themselves (i.e. I spent last summer in Africa)
- If others have done the same thing, they step forward too.
- Everyone steps back in place and the next person attempts to find something unique about them.

**M. Coat of Arms**

- On a sheet of ledger paper or newsprint, people draw a coat of arms and divide it into six spaces.
- The facilitator reads questions to the group and people put their answers in the designated space, either by using pictures or words to answer.
- The results may then be shared individually with the group or a piece of yarn may be attached to the sheet and people can wear them as giant name tags while they mingle and talk with others about their answers.

**N. Do-Si-Do Your Partner**

- People assemble in-group formations like square dancing and are given a question to discuss with their partner.
- The group then "do-si-do's" to switch partners, and are given a new question to discuss.
- The questions may be written out on quarter-page sheets and distributed to the group at the beginning so the pace of the icebreaker quickens.

**O. Action Names**

- Participants gather in a circle.
- One person begins by stating their name and doing an action.
- The next person repeats the name and action of the first person, then states his own name and does an action.
- This continues until the last person.

**P. Find Your Twin**

- Sample topics are typed on a sheet of paper, with two blank lines provided to the right of each topic.
- First individuals fill in their personal response to each of the topics. (i.e. list the state in which you were born)
- Then they find another person who listed the same response to one of the first questions and get their autograph on the corresponding line.

**Q. First Impressions**

- Break into groups of three people who don't know each other.
- Just from impressions, not talking, individuals guess answers to a list of questions about the other people. (i.e. hometown, rural or city person, major, beverage of choice, etc)
- People make a list of assumptions, then talk with each other to find out the real answers.
- Also provides insight to the power of non-verbal communication.

**R. Pick the Piece**

- In advance, cut paper into several shapes (i.e. circle, diamond/square, rectangle, half-circle, star, etc).
- Have participants pick out a piece and then share with the group why it represents them.

**S. Index Cards**

- Give people index cards, have them write answers on them to questions you ask (i.e. favorite type of food, why came to this school, best period of life, etc...)
- Hand in cards, shuffle, then leader reads of the answers while people try to guess who the person is.

**T. Three Things You Didn't Know**

- Ask group members to write down three things about themselves that other members do not know.
- Compile a trivia sheet and then have group members identify who each statement is about.

**U. Backpack**

- Have each person take from their backpack something that symbolizes them. Share the objects with the group, telling why they chose it.

- Variation: Put items in a pile and draw them out one at a time, guessing who's it is.
- Variation: Have each person take items from their wallet and either share with the group or break into small groups of 2-3 people.

**V. Humdingers**

- Prepare slips of paper with name of popular, easy to hum songs on them.
- Each song should be written on three or four slips of paper.
- As people enter the room, they are given these slips of paper.
- On the word 'go': people mill around the room humming the song, trying to find others humming the same song.
- Variation: Use animal sounds rather than songs.

**W. Middle Name**

- Each participant gives their middle name.
- They tell how or why that name was given.
- The leader should start the process.

**X. My Name Is...**

- Players sit in a circle.
- First person says, "My name is...and I like (food, pastime, animal, etc...) using a word that starts with the first letter of their name. Example: My name is Pat and I like pasta.
- The second person introduces the first person and their favorite, and then him/herself.
- This continues around the room until the last person has the task of introducing the entire group.
- If a person gets stuck, give them a little time to get through their memory block before you give them the answer.

**Y. Color, Car, Character**

- Each person writes their name on a piece of paper.
- Under their name, they write which color they feel fits their personality.
- Beneath the color, each writes the name of the car that fits their self image.
- Finally, under the name of the car, each participant is to write the name of a fictional character with whom they identify.
- One at a time, group members identify themselves by stating their names, colors, cars, and fictional characters. In the introduction, each participant is to provide a brief rationale for each of his/her three choices. It is not necessary to use color, car, character – other topics may be used.

**Z. Using Your Non-Verbals**

- Instruct the group to line up according to their birthdays...without communicating verbally.
- Once they've lined up to ask the group to say their birthdays out loud to determine if they've lined up properly. This activity can also be used to form groups as it mixes the group up arbitrarily.

**AA. Personal Bingo**

- Each person signs his/her name on a slip of paper which is put into the hat (these are later used when playing bingo – they are the substitute for the numbers B4, I21, etc)
- Everyone takes their bingo card (which is Xeroxed off with empty squares) and gets members to sign their bingo cards until all the blank squares are filled.
- Then play bingo.

**BB. Growing Paper Clips**

- Each participant is given one paper clip.
- The objective is to attain the most points by linking paper clips with others.
- The score of the player is equal to the number of linked papers clips in the group, except the person in the middle, they receive an extra point.
- Linked groups must have an odd number of participants, except in pairs.
- When a group links, everyone must introduce themselves, works best with large groups.

**CC. Alphabet Competition**

- Have participants (in groups of 4-5 people) write the alphabet down the left side of a page.
- Choose a sentence from a book.
- List the first 26 letters of the sentence down the page so each line has two letters.
- Write down the names of famous people whose initials match the two letters.
- Reward the group with the most names.

#### **DD. The Millionaire**

- Divide into groups (4-5 per group)
- Each person has been given \$1 million, after taxes. How would you use the money?
- Other questions: 2-week trip to anywhere in the world; leader of any country in the world, where and why; travel to any era in time, what would it be an why; if you could talk to any one person now living, who would it be?

#### **EE. What's Your Name**

- Divide into groups of 6 or 8 people
- Give each group a koosh ball or other soft ball
- Toss it around the group and the receiver calls his/her first name

## **ICEBREAKERS**

### **Energizers**

#### **A. Four Up**

- Everyone starts by sitting down.
- Anyone can stand up whenever he/she wants to, but you cannot remain standing over 5 seconds.
- As soon as you sit down you can stand up again.
- The group's goal: To have exactly four people standing at all times
- Time required: 1 minute, best group size is approximately 8.

#### **B. Human Knot**

- Divide into groups of 6-10 people. Each group forms a tight circle, standing and facing each other.
- Everyone extends their hands into the circle, by intermingling their arms, grasps hands with other members of the group.
- Instruct people to be sure that the two hand they are holding don't belong to the same person.
- The group's goal: to untie the knot which results. Members of the group physically climb over/under/through each other's arms to untie the knot of bodies.
- Note: It's rare but it is possible for a knot to be unsolvable or end in two separate circles.
- From New Games.

#### **C. Backrubs**

- People stand in a circle and put their hands on the back of the person in front of them.
- Everyone simultaneously gives the person in front of them a backrub.

#### **D. Quick Sentences**

- For each team the facilitator should put a piece of newsprint on the wall at eye level and give each member a marker.
- Split the group into equal teams (4-8). Teams stand in a single file line facing their sheet of newsprint.
- The team's goal is to write two complete sentences with each person contributing only one word. Teams may not talk during the energizer.
- The facilitator may start each team with the same work (i.e. the name of the group).
- Sentences may have as many words as necessary, but the team with the first two complete sentences wins, regardless of their length.
- From the Encyclopedia of Icebreakers.

#### **E. Whooping Crane**

- All stand and simultaneously say "A long, long time ago I met a whooping crane and he coughed and coughed until his head and tail shook so hard that they fell off."
- Each time you say "coughed and coughed" bend your elbows and move them back and forth in a chicken-type motion.
- Each time you say "head and tail shook", wiggle your head and whole body.
- Repeat the phrase, each time saying it faster.

#### **F. Grapefruit**

- All stand in a single line and pass a grapefruit between necks from the beginning to the end.

#### **G. Balloons on Strings**

- Everyone ties a balloon to a string and ties it to their ankle.
- Everyone tries to break each other's balloons by jumping on them.
- Object is to be the last one with a balloon remaining.

- H. Trust Roll**
- Group participants stand in a tight circle.
  - A volunteer is rolled around the outside of the circle. He/she may be thrown from side to side, therefore it is important that the person in the center keep their feet together, knees locked, and eyes closed.
- I. Lap sit**
- Form a tight circle, shoulder to shoulder.
  - Turn so everyone faces the back of the person ahead of them.
  - Take one step toward the center of the circle.
  - Simultaneously sit on the knees of the person behind you.
- J. Balloon Volleyball**
- Use two chairs and a piece of masking tape to create the net. A balloon serves as a volleyball.
  - Divide teams, each player sits on a chair in row formation.
  - Each side must have three hits.
  - No “air-butts” (players bottoms must remain on chair at all times)
  - The judge is always right and serves the balloon.

## **ICEBREAKERS**

### **People Who Are Acquainted**

- A. Worksheets**
- Approximately 5 “icebreaker” questions typed on a sheet in advance.
  - Hand to members of group to write out answers before sharing with the group.
  - May be collected if leader is interested in knowing the responses to a particular question (i.e. why have you joined this group?)
- B. “Stems”**
- Facilitator provides an open-ended sentence to start discussion (i.e. In a group I am...The thing I like best about myself is...The best measure of success is...It is fun to...As a child I...).
  - Can be used for discussion or in writing
  - Can be discussed in pairs, as a group, or used for self-assessment.
  - Stems may be prepared in a booklet, people stay with the same partner for all questions on one page then switch partners for the next page.
- C. Find Someone With ‘x’ and Talk about ‘y’**
- Gets people moving around as well as discussing when facilitator calls out “Find someone with ‘x’ and discuss ‘y’.”
  - Examples
 

|                      |                              |
|----------------------|------------------------------|
| Birthday season      | your summer vacation         |
| Eye color            | your favorite food           |
| Letters in you names | how you reduce stress        |
| Size of hometown     | fun things this group can do |
- D. Unique Things**
- In advance, each person in the group confidentially completes the sentence, “One thing that is really unique about me it...” or “One thing really unique that happened to me is...”
  - Responses are typed up with a line in front of each.
  - People mill around and find the persons that match each of the statements. Individuals respond only with a ‘yes’ or ‘no’.
- E. All Acquainted**
- Personality characteristics are written on individual cards (i.e. subtle, athletic, good writer, patient, etc...) There must be enough cards so that each participant has six.
  - After the cards have been given out, each person determines which cards apply to them and which don’t. Participants are then able to trade and bargain in order to get cards which apply.
  - One of the six cards is discarded.
  - After a specified time, the facilitator collects the cards and reads them to the group. The group tries to determine who the cards describe.

**F. Index Cards**

- Give people index cards, have them write answers on them to questions you ask (i.e. favorite type of food, why came to this school, best period of life, etc).
- Hand in cards, shuffle, then leader reads off the answers while people try to guess who the person is.

**G. Describing a Picture**

- Everyone leaves the room except for two people who look at a picture/poster for two minutes.
- Then bring in two more people; each of the original two describe to one person what they saw.
- Two more come in and the last people describe the scene to them. People continue to be called in by pairs.
- At the end, the last people describe the scene to the group, then show it.

**H. Trigger Pictures**

- Provide everyone with a stack of pictures and have them tell which one represents a significant event in their life (and why). Pictures may be from magazines or each person may receive a copy of the same generic drawing.

**I. Dictionary**

- A person looks up a word in the dictionary which they don't think anyone will know.
- Everyone writes down what they think the definition is and the person who looked up the word writes down the real definition.
- All the definitions are read and people vote for the one which they believe is the real one.

**J. Pairs Back to Back**

- People sit on the floor with their back to their partner.
- The facilitator then reads questions and each partner has to guess the answer for the other. Some questions have to do with what the other person is wearing, but other topics may be used.
- One point is awarded for each correct answer.

**K. Puzzle Pieces**

- Make a puzzle by writing a slogan or group logo on a sheet of card stock (index weight paper) and cut it up into puzzle pieces.
- Each member of the group gets an envelope of pieces when they arrive and try to assemble the puzzle as a group.

**L. Broken Cookies**

- Hand out a chocolate chip cookie to everyone and then have them try to take the chips out without ruining the cookie.
- Then have them put the cookie back together again.
- Give them another cookie to eat!

**M. Geography**

- The first participant names a place (city, country, body of water, etc)
- The next participant must then name a place that begins with the last letter of the first participant's location.
- If they can't, they're out and the third participant tries. Continues until there is only one person left.
- From Are We Almost There? Book of car games by Valerie Levy.

**N. Positive Bombardment**

- Use post-it notes or labels.
- Each participant writes a positive comment to at least three different people.
- They attach the post-it notes to those people.
- Discuss what it is like to receive praise.

**O. Board of Directors**

- Draw a table with chairs on a piece of paper.
- Participants put the names of people they would put on their board of directors at each chair.
- Participants share their list of mentors and why those people are important to them.

**P. The Person in the Shopping Bag**

- Each participant imagines they were given shopping bag. Tell them they must put five items inside (with a material value of \$30 or less) in the bag from which a complete stranger could get a good idea of who you are, what you are like, and so forth.
- All five items would have to fit in the shopping bag.

- Choose at least three items that any of us could buy in a store or make easily.
  - Explain why you chose these five particular items to summarize “who you are.”
- Q. One Minute Autobiography**
- Each person takes a few minutes to write down things they can tell about him/herself.
  - Break into small groups and each person takes one minute to tell the others about him/herself. You can use a timekeeper to prevent people from going over 1 minute.
  - Restrictions can be set as to what can or cannot be talked about (i.e. nothing about hobbies, job, family, home town, summer activities). A restriction could enable participants to discuss feelings, rather than common place items.
- R. Paired Introductions**
- Each person meets and gets to know one other person, and in turn, introduces his/her partner to the entire group.
- S. Life Map**
- Each person draws on paper a picture of his/her life. The map could include symbols, stick figures, arrows, etc. The map can reflect any portion of the artist's life. For example: the person can have a starting point of birth or maybe just reflect on the last year.
- T. The One & Only**
- Each person divides his/her paper into four parts. Part one should reflect things you hold dear (things that are important to you such as family, job, religion, pet, etc). Part two should be words that the participant feels describes him/her. Part three should reflect hobbies and interests. Part four should reflect goals or dreams the participant has. Stick figures, symbols, magazine pictures, etc, can be used to convey the artists self-image.
  - After allowing time for the individual to complete his/her paper, split into small groups. Each person shares his/her paper with the others in the group. The paper should reflect some things about the participants self-image.
- U. Name Circle**
- Participants sit in a large circle. You may wish to split groups so that you have no more than 10-15 per circle. The leader begins by stating his/her own name and something he/she likes.
  - The next person repeats the leader's name and favorite thing and then states his/her own name and a favorite thing. You go on around the circle, until everyone has shared their name and a favorite thing.
  - The objective has been met if everyone knows everyone else's name and something they like.
- V. Knotted String**
- The leader has a ball of string or yarn with knots tied every foot or so. Each person takes a turn with the ball and starts to unroll it. They must talk about themselves until they reach the next knot. You can use restrictions as in the one minute autobiography to encourage them to discuss more than their name and place of residence.
- W. Burned Match**
- This is the same as the knotted string exercise, except that each person talks about him/herself as long as it takes the match to burn. You would want to consider the safety of this activity with some groups.

### Sample Topics/Questions for Icebreakers

- Name, nickname
- Family
- Job
- School, education, major/minor, favorite class
- Travel, vacation
- Interests, sports, hobbies
- What they hope to get from taking part in this group
- Talents, how they can help the committee the most
- What they like most about committee, meeting, etc
- What they would change about committee, meetings, etc
- Favorite movie, book, section of newspaper, car, food, carnival ride, class, birthday present, animal, thing about hometown, etc

- Birthday/astrological sign
- What would you like to accomplish this year
- Tell us something not on your resume
- Where have you spent the happiest three days of your life and why?
- Where do you go when you want to be alone?
- Who in your life brings you the most joy?
- Who do you really respect? Who is your role model?
- Name X things you're really proud of, can do well, etc
- Personal and professional goals
- Wildest career fantasy
- Why you wanted to be involved, skills you hope to gain
- What animal represents you? What state represents you?
- Three words you'd most like to be remembered for
- The best period of your life
- Biggest pet peeve
- If you could be someone else for a day, who would you be?
- How do you work on a team?
- Type of leader you are/type you admire
- Strengths/weaknesses
- What I'd like to know about you is...
- If you won the lottery what would you do?
- Why did you come to this school?
- Something no one else knows about you
- I came here to learn about...
- For fun I like to...

## **ICEBREAKER RESOURCE LIST**

Sue Bianchi, Jan Butler, and David Richey. Warm-ups for Meeting Leaders. University Associates, 1990.

Sue Forbess-Greene. The Encyclopedia of Icebreakers. University Associates, 1983.

Ken Jones. Icebreakers: A Sourcebook of Games, Exercises, and Simulations. Pfeiffer and Company, 1991.

John Newstrom and Edward Scannell. Games Trainers Play. McGraw-Hill, 1980.

Edward Scannell and John Newstrom. More Games Trainers Play. McGraw-Hill, 1983.

Edward Scannell and John Newstrom. Still More Games Trainers Play. McGraw-Hill, 1991.

## **Icebreakers and Teambuilders**

The following pages provide a number of icebreakers and teambuilders. Consider your group and your purpose for the activity when choosing an icebreaker or teambuilder. Some are more appropriate for new groups, others for more established groups. Not all of these activities will appeal to everyone, but there are many for you to choose from to help get your group going!

### **INTRODUCTIONS**

Have people pair up. Give the pairs 5 minutes to each other and share vital information. Then have the people introduce their partners to the rest of the group.

Variation: "Silent Introductions" – same as above only the partners can't speak to each other. Partner receiving clues should write notes to self but should not give a response to the actor as to whether or not they understand the visual clues. Only those receiving clues can use pencil and paper.

### **DEAR DOLORES**

Have everyone sit in a circle. One person begins by giving their name, plus an adjective that begins with the first letter of their name. (e.g., Jolly Jim, Happy Holly). The next person repeats the person's name and adjective and then their own name the same way. Continue around the circle.

### **BALLOONS**

Prepare questions on small pieces of paper. Put one question inside a balloon and blow up the balloon. Have people pop the balloons to get the question and have everyone answer their questions to the group.

### **STRING NECKLACES**

Tie a string or yarn "necklace" around everyone's neck; the object of the game is to get as many strings as possible around your own neck by getting others to say "no" to questions you ask. When someone says "no" to you, she or he forfeits their necklace.

### **ANIMAL/BARNYARD SOUNDS**

Think of five or six different animals that make distinct animal sounds such as: cat, dog, snake, monkey, cow, pig, etc. Give each participant a piece of paper with one of the animal names and have them find each other by making that animal sound. For example, all the dogs would find each other by barking. You can use blindfolds to make it a little more interesting.

### **SENTENCE COMPLETION**

Have the group introduce themselves by completing a low risk sentence. Examples: favorite food, animal, cartoon strip, musical group, funniest story you have ever heard, best joke, hobbies or interests, funniest relative, what would you like to do if you had two extra hours today, what would you would do if you won the lottery, etc.

### **WALLET/PURSE INTRODUCTIONS**

Participants pull an object out of their wallet or purse, which represents them and explains why.

### **TOSS A NAME**

Standing in a circle, the person with the ball calls someone by name and tosses the ball to them. When the other person catches it, they say, "Thank you, \_\_\_\_\_" (the name of the person who threw it to him/her) and then calls upon another person to toss the ball to. After the balls have been tossed for a couple of minutes, start a second ball going at the same time, then a third, and finally a fourth.

### **HUMAN KNOT**

Participants should stand shoulder to shoulder in a circle. Each person should put his/her right hand into the middle of the circle and join hands with someone across the circle (and not directly to his/her right or left). Each person then places their left hand into the circle and joins hands with a different person, and not the person directly to their left or right.

When the participants have their hands tangled, inform them they need to be untangled without ever breaking grips within the group. Note that there are three possible solutions: a circle, two interlocking circles, or two circles with a knot in it. Participants should not make sudden or large movements since they're all connected.

Processing questions:

Was this challenging? Why? Or why not?

How did the group approach this task? What was done effectively? What could have been done more effectively?

What role did you personally take in this exercise?

For those who were facing out, and couldn't see what was happening, how did you feel?

How could each of you have increased participation in this activity?

How can you relate your freshman experience to this activity?

### **GOSSIP**

The group sits in a circle and Gossip begins with the facilitator sharing a secret with the person next in the circle. The secret is passed as each person shares it with the next person. In telling the secret, it may not be repeated twice to the same person (so the listener must get it all the first time.) When the secret is finally back to the facilitator, it is shared out loud. The facilitator then reads the original and a comparison is made.

### **IMPORTANT ITEM**

Have each person bring something to the meeting that means something special to him or her, and then take turns telling about it. Could have people try to guess who items belong to.

### **PAT ON THE BACK**

Have everyone draw an outline of their hand on a sheet of paper, then tape it to their back. Have group members mingle and write things on everyone's back that tells them something positive.

### **LIFELINES**

This exercise uses a huge sheet of paper with a long "lifeline" drawn across it. Each member marks dates on the line to represent the highs, lows, significant events, turning points, etc. of her/his life to date. (can also project the future). Each date should be labeled to help explain it. Members of the group each share their dates with other members. The group may ask questions about each other's lifelines.

### **BLIND POLYGON**

Ask the participants to form a circle and put on their blindfolds. Give them a rope. Ask each person to grab hold of the rope, and then, as a group, to form a perfect square. When they believe the task is accomplished, they are to stand in position and remove the blindfolds. Using the same procedure, ask them to form any geometric shape you think is possible with the group.

### **PERSONAL COAT OF ARMS**

Give each person a sheet of paper with a blank coat of arms on it. There are four quadrants on the "shield" and you ask participants to respond to specific questions/statements in each quadrant. For example, where your favorite place to escape is, favorite childhood memory, greatest fear, person who's most important to you, etc. Then ask each participant to draw a symbol or motto about his/her shield that represents him/her. Go around the group and have each participant share what they're willing of their shield with the group.

### **STAND-UPS**

Start off by breaking the participants into pairs. Have each participant sit back-to-back, link arms at the elbow, and stand up. Then have two pairs join together, introduce themselves, then sit down in a small circle and face outward so that all backs are in the center. Then arms at the elbow, stand up as a group. Then they grab another group so that there are 8 people, and do the same thing.

### **M&Ms**

Everyone loves M&Ms, so when the group is meeting for the first time, bring in a large bag of M&Ms to introduce the group to each other. Have the group sit in a circle. Pass the bag around and ask people to help themselves to the M&Ms, but not to eat them yet. When the bag has been around the full circle, each person must tell one thing about themselves for every M&M they took. A variation is to assign a number of things a person must tell about themselves to every color. Of course, don't tell people about this aspect of the game until they have already grabbed a handful.

### **PHOTO SCAVENGER**

Polaroid cameras will be needed for this exercise. Break the group in half, and give each group a list of places at which they need to get a group photo taken – and everyone needs to be in each photo! Meet at a designated time and place, and compare photos.

### **NAMETAG**

Paper, crayons or markers, and tape are needed for this activity. At the start of the meeting, have everyone make a nametag that includes a picture on it that says something about themselves (a caricature, cartoon, symbol, places, etc). Or ask people to put the answers to specific questions in the corners (i.e. – where you were born in the upper right, your favorite hobbies in the lower left, etc.). Go around the room and have each person explain their drawing. You can use note cards and felt pens or if you really want people to be creative, supply construction paper and scissors.

### **WHERE ARE YOU?**

Pick a year or a date before the meeting and give each person a chance to tell what they were doing on that date (summer '96, January '97, etc.).

### **SUPERLATIVES**

Participants are asked to study the composition of the group quietly to decide on a superlative adjective that describes themselves in reference to others (youngest, tallest, most uptight, etc.). They tell their adjectives, explain, and, if possible, test their accuracy.

### **HOMETOWN**

Post a large outline of the state or country on the wall or even tape it on the floor. Have participants put their hometowns and name on the map. Ask them to share about their hometown and how they decided to attend ISU.

### **DEMOGRAPHICS**

Brainstorm background data that participants would be interested in knowing about each other (age, education, birthplace, etc.). Have each participant tell who they are in reference to demographics.

### **PAPER PLATE DATES**

Give each participant a paper plate. Have them draw the face of a clock on their plate with a line next to each number. Then have the participants walk around and find a "date" for each hour, writing their date's name on a line. The catch is no one can make a "date" with more than one person per hour. After everyone has made their dates, speed up time to allow 1-3 minutes for each hour. The pairs will then get the chance to get to know each other.

### **BLANKET NAME GAME**

Have your group divide itself into two groups. Tell them to sit on the floor facing each other. Hold up a blanket between the groups so that each team cannot see the other. A member of each team is quietly selected to move up to the blanket. On the count of 3, drop the blanket so that each of the selected members is facing each other. Then race to see who can remember the others name first. Who ever loses goes to the other team.

### **CONTRASTING STATEMENT**

Think of several contrasting groups such as bread/butter, hammer/nail, etc. After saying each pair, have the group divide in two and join the group for which they best relate (to the word). Within the group, have them explain why they chose to say the hammer instead of the nail.

### **LOLLIPOP**

Pass out dum-dum lollipops to the group. For every letter that appears in the flavor, the participant has to say something about themselves to the group.

### **STRING GAME**

Participants select pre-cut lengths of string from the facilitator. Each member holds the string between his/her thumb and forefinger. For each "wrap" of the string around the finger, participants must share one thing about themselves.

### **SENTENCE STEMS**

Form dyads and triads and have participants complete the rest of the sentence. The leader can read the sentence to all of the participants or all participants can have sheets of paper with these listed and take their own time in covering them. Here are some examples:

Before I came to ISU, my main interests were . . .

The way I would describe my family is . . . .

The thing I remember most about high school is . . . .

My most unusual friend is. . .

The things I value most are . . . .

Where I hope to be 5 years from now . . . .

The thing I would most like to accomplish this year is . . . .

The thing that concerns me most about school is . . . .

For roommates:

The first day we met, the things I noticed about you were . . .

Since then, some things that surprised me about you were . . .

Something I like about you is. . .

It appears to me that an important difference between us is . . . .

I think we might have to compromise on . . . .

What I think I will get out of having a roommate is . . . .

I think the most important thing I have learned from this discussion is . . . .

### **HOG CALL**

Break the group into two pairs. Each pair must choose two things: a machine and an animal. They then have to decide who is which. The pairs then divide up on opposite sides of the room. Everyone must close their eyes, and by only making the noise of their character would make, they must find their partner. When they find their partner, they can open their eyes and wait until everyone is done. When conducting an activity with eyes closed, have the group raise their hands in front of their chests as bumper guards, and have at least one person (leader) acting as a spotter.

### **SOLEMN AND SILENT**

The facilitator explains that this exercise takes self-control. Members pair back to back. On the count of three, everyone must face their partner, look each other in the eye, and try to remain solemn and serious. No speaking! The first to smile or laugh must sit down. All who remain standing then take a new partner and the activity continues until only one person is left. If you get a pair at the end who are both keeping a straight face, the rest of the group can act as hecklers to disrupt them.

### **UNCLE FRED'S SUITCASE**

The group forms a circle. The first person states their name and the reason they picked this college. You continue going around the group, repeating the names of the persons preceding their name and why they chose to attend ISU. You can also substitute "Why you came here" with other things they like to do.

### **FAMOUS PAIRS**

In this exercise, group members will be asked to identify the names of famous pairs or persons. The leader tapes on the back of group members a nametag with the name of a famous pair or persons written on it (Fred and Wilma Flintstone, Hillary and Bill Clinton, peanut butter and jelly). The group member is not to see what is taped on his/her back. The leader then tells group members that their task is to find out

who they are. Members are to mill around the room and ask questions that can be answered with only “yes” or “no.” If the member receives a “yes” answer, he or she can continue to ask questions until a “no” reply is received. At that point, the member must move on to another participant. Questions may include, “Am I alive?,” “Am I a movie star?,” etc.

### **BIRTHDAY LINE**

Explain to the group that this is a nonverbal exercise. The group is to perform a single straight line according to birthdays. No lip reading or spelling in the dirt is allowed. When the line is completed, each person will shout out his or her birthday, beginning in January.

### **THE SHOE GAME**

Have the group stand in a large circle shoulder to shoulder. Next, have everyone remove their shoes and tie them together. At the leader’s command, everybody runs to the center of the circle, and throws their shoes in a pile, returning to the circle. Have one volunteer choose a pair of shoes other than his/her own and make one statement about the owner of the shoes (for example, “The owner of these shoes must be very thrifty and economical to wear shoes in this condition.”). The owner of the shoes then comes forward, introduces her/himself to the group, and picks out another pair of shoes to introduce. Repeat until everyone has been introduced through their shoes.

### **COUNT COUP OR ON-GOING TAG**

Count Coup is an ongoing tag that you can initiate at the first group meeting. You tell the group that one of them is “It” (pick someone right here). The object is not to be “It.” The “It” may tag another person in anyway they like, i.e. touch, telephone, sight, mail, note through a friend, etc. So long as the new “It” is aware that they are now “It.” The game can last for as long as you wish and makes for a lot of laughs and funny stories. The group need not know who “It” is so that the surprise factor is increased and ongoing. It may be distracting to start the game during the beginning of the meeting, so save it until the end. There are no rules and no limit to the number of times the “It” can change in any given time period. A fun variation to the game includes agreeing that the person who comes to the next meeting of the group as “It” brings refreshments.

### **KILLER**

Group sits in a circle, where one has been designated “It” (by draw of a designated card or a slip of paper marked “It” and the rest blank). The object is for the killer to wink at group members then they “die” or are out of the game. Encourage creativity in the death scenes. One can accuse if they suspect or catch the killer in action, but if they are wrong, they, too, are “dead.”

### **COUNT TO TEN**

Have the group come together into one group, side by side with each other. When everyone is together, tell them the game is to count to ten as a group. But the catch is that each person is only allowed to say one number. If two people speak at the same time you must start over. The same person cannot start the exercise twice in a row. To make it even more challenging, have the group members close their eyes.

### **BODY ENGLISH**

Split the group into two groups. Each group must plan and spell out the words by using their bodies (no hand signals or signs). The other group must figure out what they are spelling. Start with single words and move into phrases as the groups are better at spelling.

### **MRS. MUMBLES**

The goal of this game is to never show your teeth. Participants sit in a close circle. All participants must hide their teeth at all times. If, at any time, a participant shows his/her teeth, that person is out of the circle. The first person to start looks at his/her neighbor and asks: “Is Mrs. Mumbles home?” Then the neighbor responds: “I don’t know! Let me ask my neighbor.” He/she then asks the person seated next to him/her: “Is Mrs. Mumbles home?” and so on. If someone shows his/her teeth and thus leaves the circle, that person’s job is then to do all he/she can, except for touching people, to get others to show their teeth.

### **PEOPLE TO PEOPLE OR ANATOMY SHUFFLE**

The group is divided into two circles of equal size. One circle stands outside the other so that the members of the inner circle face out to the members of the outer circle, creating pairs. During the game, the circles walk in opposite directions until the leader yells out two body parts (for example, head to knee or foot to elbow) at which time the partners must find each other touch those parts. The last ones to touch are eliminated from the game and the others return to the circles. The game continues until one pair wins.

### **HUM THAT TUNE**

Each person in the group is given a small piece of paper with the name of a nursery rhyme or other song written on the paper. Example, "Row, row, row your boat," "Rock-a-Bye etc. All the people who are given the song must hum that tune and find everyone else in the group singing that same tune.

### **BALLOON ROMP**

People line up into groups of six facing a row of chairs about eighty feet away. One chair per group. The first person in each group runs to their chair, blows up a balloon and breaks it and then runs back to their line. After they return, the second person runs to the chair and repeats the same process. An alternative way to play is for partners to run down in pairs, place the balloon between them and "squeeze" until it pops and then run back.

### **CHALKBOARD SENTENCES**

This exercise asks the participants, working in teams to race against one another to formulate a sentence to which each team member has added a word. The facilitator begins by explaining that participants will be competing to see which team is the first to complete a group sentence. Next the members are asked to divide into two teams. If the group contains an uneven number, one participant may compete twice. The teams are then lined up ten feet from the board. After giving the first person in each team's line a piece of chalk, the leader explains the rules.

- 1) Each member is to add one word to his/her team's sentence.
- 2) The first person in each line is to come forward and write the first word of their team's sentence, passes on the chalk to the next team member, and returns to the end of the line.
- 3) No preplanning of sentences is allowed.
- 4) Each player may add only one word
- 5) The winner is the team that is the first to build a full sentence using words contributed by all of its group members.

### **SOUNDS IN THE NIGHT**

A beach ball or basketball is needed for this game. Everyone sits in a circle with their eyes closed. The room is darkened. Each player selects an animal sound to mimic as his or her own personal signal. If group members run out of animals from which to choose, divide players into separate groups. The first player has the ball and makes their animal sound and then the sound of the animal to whom they want to roll the ball. The animal that is "called" replies so that the first player knows where to direct the ball. The first player then rolls the ball to the animal. If the intended player receives the ball, they respond loudly. All the other animals rejoice in unison by making their sounds as well. However, if the intended player misses, the ball goes back to the first player who tries another animal.

### **BALLOONS OVER AND UNDER**

A single line is formed with one person behind another. Four or five balloons filled with water are placed in front of the first person. One by one, the first person takes each balloon and passes it over their head to the person behind them. They pass it under their legs to the next person, that person passes it over their head and so on. When the balloons get to the last person they run to the front of the line and pass it over their head. Adventurous groups can choose to toss the balloon over their head and hike it (toss it) between their legs.

### **CLAM FREE**

A Frisbee or ball type device is needed. We start by defining the boundaries of the playing field. One person volunteers to be the nuclear reactor and activates himself/herself with a Frisbee or nerf ball. The rest of the group members are clams and signify so by being as happy as possible. The object of the game is for the nuclear reactor to contaminate all the clams by tagging them with the Frisbee. Once contaminated, the clams become frozen in place. As the reactor chases and tags the clams, it would appear that doomsday is just around the corner, at least for the hapless clams who are getting zapped one after another. There is hope, however, a frozen clam can be defrosted if two mobile clams manage to link hands around him/her in a clamshell-like alliance and shout, "clam free!" Better yet, if seven clams can manage to link up in a circle and count to ten, then the nuclear reactor is shut down forever.

### **VALUES DISCUSSION**

Grab two other people who are wearing the same color as you. Sit down in a circle a little away from other groups. Instruct them they will be talking about some issues and you will give them new topics every few minutes.

- 1) Talk about the most important thing you did this year.
- 2) What are the easiest and hardest emotions for you to express and why?
- 3) What is something that few people know about you?
- 4) What do you value in a friend?
- 5) What do you want to be doing in five years?
- 6) What is one goal you have for next year?
- 7) What do you want to learn to do better?
- 8) What is a motto you try to live by?
- 9) What are five words a friend would use to describe you?
- 10) What is the greatest challenge you are facing?
- 11) What do you like most about yourself?
- 12) What do you value in a loving relationship?
- 13) What do you value most in life?

### **WEBS**

A ball of string or yarn is needed. The group is to sit in one large circle, preferably on the floor. The facilitator holds a large ball of string and tells the group that they are now going to discuss a particular topic such as why they chose to become a member of the learning community, their greatest personal experiences, etc. The first person to begin tosses the ball of twine to another member of the group seated across the circle. That person then shares his/her experience holds onto a piece of the string and tosses the string to another participant. This process continues until each member of the team has his/her time to share. By tossing the string around the group, participants weave a web, which connects all the members of the team in the same manner. The group facilitator then asks two or three members to "drop" their string. The web begins to sag and appears to be very weak and vulnerable. The facilitator can then discuss how important each participant is to the team and the effect that low levels of involvement and commitment has on the entire team. If time allows, the team can unravel the string and talk about another topic or issue while rewinding the twine. Group members can also cut a piece of the string from the web to keep as a reminder of the exercise and the thoughts the group shared.

### **POSITIVE BOMBARDMENT (OR FEEDBACK)**

One member is selected to be the recipient of positive feedback from the rest of the group. Once everyone has had a chance to give that member the gift of feedback, another person is chosen and the process is repeated. This can be done in writing with a positive comment to each member and putting them all in an envelope with the person's name on it. This can be adapted so that the member first gives some constructive criticism and then some positive feedback.

### **TINKER TOY COMPETITION**

The group leader brings a box of tinker toys and divides the pieces into two equal groups. The people in the group also divide into two equal groups. Each group of people is given the tinker toys and the following instructions:

- 1) You have 5 minutes to create the tallest structure you can with the pieces given to you.

2) You then have an additional five minutes to build the longest structure.

3) The winners get a prize.

A variation is to do this activity with balloons instead of tinker toys.

### **PROGRESSIVE STORY**

For this exercise, a group of people must know one another and feel comfortable discussing personal issues. Everyone must be able to hear the other members of the group, but people don't have to see one another. So, the group doesn't have to be sitting in a circle. A facilitator begins the story by setting the initial scene and mood.

i.e.: "on my way to class the other day . . . ."

"A good friend called last night and . . . ."

"I had them most amazing weekend! I . . . ."

In no special order, members of the group then take over the story. They add another element to the plot. The information that is added can be light-hearted, serious, true, fabricated, etc. The main point is to make sure everyone adds something. The progression of the story indicates where the group members are emotionally and is representative of what is high on their lists of priorities/concerns/thoughts.

i.e.: If everyone returns to work-related examples, then work may need some discussion and processing. Maybe there are issues that need extra attention. If the story is hilarious, we can assume the group is feeling confident and secure – or at the other extreme, they may be on the verge of insanity.

### **FORCED CHOICES**

Tell everyone that you will be naming two different things and they have to choose which one they prefer of the two. Have one group go to one side of the room and one to the other for each category. Make up contrary dichotomies that you want, but here are suggestions: bath/shower, ping pong/pool, coffee/tea, city/country, Leno/Letterman, veg out/work out, ocean/mountains, morning/night, math/literature, movie/concert, museum/sporting event, etc. Process by focusing on commonalities each person shares with each other or their staff members and encourage them to find ways to form positive working relationship with everyone.

### **LIGHTHOUSE-ROWBOAT**

Have one person volunteer to be the lighthouse. He/she should stand at one end of the room on a chair facing the group. Have another person volunteer to be the rowboat. He/she should stand at the opposite end of the room with their back facing the group. The rest of the group should then position themselves around the room standing, sitting, and or lying on the ground in between the lighthouse and rowboat. These are the "rocks." The rowboat cannot talk and must close his/her eyes. It is the lighthouse's responsibility to give the rowboat instructions on how and where to move so that the rowboat can make it safely to the lighthouse without tripping or falling. The lighthouse can give any kind of instructions they want, as long as they do not leave the lighthouse stand.

### **HOT AND COLD**

Two people are chosen to be "it" and are sent out of the room. The remaining people choose a task for them to do (stand on the table, do a somersault, etc.). When the chosen two return, it is the group's job to encourage them to perform the task. However, the only encouragement allowed is applause when they're "hot" and booing when they're "cold."

### **ELECTRIC FENCE**

Prior to beginning this exercise, the facilitator needs to tie a rope approximately 5-10 feet long between two poles or trees. The rope should be about shoulder height and should be tied very tightly. All members of the team should be standing on one side of the rope. The facilitator then tells the group that they are chased by a group of crazed maniac and their only means of escape is to climb over the electric fence. Each member of the team must climb the fence without touching the rope. If any member of the team does touch the rope during this exercise, the entire team must return to the starting point and begin the climb all over again.

### **FRUIT BASKET TURNOVER**

The group starts out sitting in a circle with one group member standing in the middle. Each person is given the name of one of three fruits. When the person in the middle calls out the name of a fruit, all those people must find another seat.

### **HEADLINERS**

Each member of the group is asked to reflect on his/her freshman experience. After pondering this issue for several minutes, the facilitator will distribute newsprint and markers to each team member and relay to them the following instructions: You have just joined a learning community, and recently received a copy of your hometown newspaper describing your first experience as a learning community member. Write the headline for this article. After all participants have completed this assignment, each team member displays his/her headline and describes it to the group. This exercise is a great way for team members to get to know each other better while reflecting on their learning community experience.

### **EMBARRASSING MOMENTS**

Divide the large group into smaller groups of 10-15 and arrange for each group to sit in a circle. Each participant is asked to take 3-5 minutes to think of an embarrassing moment that has occurred in his or her lifetime. After several minutes of contemplation, each participant shares his/her experiences with other members of the group.

### **FIND YOUR TWIN**

Write a list of traits on one side of the page, and then put two columns on the page beside these traits. The headings above one column should read "yours," and above the other, "autograph of twin." For example, some of the traits may be color of eyes, favorite movie, favorite city, favorite NFL team, school colors. Direct the participants to complete the "yours" column first, then to find their twin.

### **GET UP AND MOVE**

Make a circle large enough for everyone in the group, except for one person. The person standing says, "Get up and move if . . ." and fills in the blanks with a phrase of his/her choice. For example, "Get up and move if you watch Survivor religiously." After the person makes the statement, everyone it applies to gets up and changes chairs. The one remaining standing makes up a new phrase and the game continues.

### **FIRST IMPRESSIONS**

Have participants sit in a circle. All participants should be wearing nametags. Give each one a piece of paper, tell them to write their name on the top and number it according to how many people are in the group. Have each member of the group pass their papers to the left and quickly write their impression of the person next to them as a fruit, car or other object. For example, one person may remind you of an apple, another of a banana, or one of a Ferrari, and someone else a Volkswagen, etc. Keep passing the papers around the circle with each person writing the impression of the other person in the group, until the sheets get back to the original owner. The participants can then share what others wrote, and see if they are any similarities.

### **GETTING CREATIVE**

Start with a word, and throw it out to the group. Have the first person say the first thing that comes to his/her mind. Then have the next person say the first thing that comes to mind about the previous person's answer. Go all around the room.

### **INNOVATIVE IDEAS**

The facilitator should set up a collection of unrelated items (computer disk, calendar, picture, baseball. . . anything goes) on a table in the front of the room. Divide the large group into smaller groups of 3-4. Have a member of each group select 4-5 items from the table and bring them back to the group. Instruct each group to plan a program using all of the items they selected in some way. You can specify a type of program: social, educational, alcohol awareness, etc., or leave the floor open.

### **MOCK THUMPER**

Each participant of the group decides on a hand sign or motion. The participants of the group introduce themselves with their name and their sign. After the introductions, one person starts the game by saying their name and sign, then someone else's name and sign. Continue on until you have a good grasp of the group member's names.

### **NAME AEROBICS**

Have all participants stand in a circle. Have them think of the first letter of the name they would like to be called, and think of an adjective that begins with the same letter and describes them (e.g. Jolly John, Crazy Chris). Then have them think of how many beats or syllables are in the adjective and their name (e.g. Crazy Chris would be three beats: Cra-zy Chris). Ask each participant to take a moment and think of series of movements so that there is one distinct and repeatable movement for each beat in his/her adjective and name.

Have one person in the group start with his/her adjective and name, and the movements that go along. The entire group then repeats with the same movements. The second group member follows with his/her adjective name, and then the group repeats. Follow this pattern until everyone in the group has done theirs and the group has followed.

### **RECEPTION LINE**

Divide everyone into 2 groups; have them stand facing each other. Each person talks to the person across from him or her until signaled. At the signal, the person at the end of one line moves to other end, consequently, every one has a new person to talk to.

Possible conversation topics include:

- What is your favorite movie/TV show/ music group, and why?
- Who is your biggest role model and why?
- Why did you decide to enroll at Iowa State?
- If you could travel any where in the world, where would it be?
- What is a quote that you live your life by?
- What's your favorite hobby or pastime?

### **COLOR, CAR, CHARACTER**

Each person writes his or her name on a piece of paper. Under their name, they write which color they feel best fits their personality. Beneath the color, each writes the name of a car that fits their self-image. Finally, under the name of the car, each participant is to write the name of a fictional character with which they identify.

One at a time, group members identify themselves by stating their names, colors, cars, and fictional characters. In the introduction, each participant is to provide a brief rationale for each of his/her three choices. It is not necessary to always use color, car, character; similar topics may be used.

### **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Draw on a piece of paper a table with chairs. Participants write the names of the people who they would like to have as their board of directors.(e.g., family members, teachers, friends, coaches, etc.) Participants share their list of mentors and why those people are important to them.

### **SOMETHING UNIQUE**

Everyone stands in a straight line side-to-side. Someone says something they think is unique about them (e.g., I spent last summer in Africa). If others have done the same thing they step forward too. Everyone steps back into place and the next person shares something unique about him/herself.

### **TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE**

Have each participant write three unique statements about him/herself – two of which are true, and one, which is false.

Each participant reads his/her statements, and the other members try to guess which one is false.

### **PEOPLE PLATFORM (15 minutes)**

Illustrates: Teamwork and the importance of listening to everyone's contributions.

Participants may only touch the ground on the outside of the outer square and the inside of the inner square as they complete the task. The area in between the squares is off limits. The entire group must participate. They may not stand or sit on each other's shoulders; everyone must be touching the ground. The objective is to have everyone on the inner square without touching outside of it. After the group creatively attempts this exercise, they must hold everyone off the ground for 10 seconds (the time it takes to sing "row, row, row your boat. . .")

An inner 2' x 2' and outer 6' x 6' tape outline of a square should be arranged prior to the exercise. Facilitators should take great care in ensuring participant safety throughout this exercise.

Variations: If the group is slow to actively attempt the exercise, after a few minutes, announce a time limit by which they must finish. If a participant touches the area between the squares, tell them that they may no longer use that body part. If one member dominates the group, take away his/her ability to speak.

Processing Questions:

- What were some of the challenges in completing this activity?
- How did you overcome them?
- What similarities do you find between this activity and your house operations?
- What did this activity demonstrate to you about leadership?

### **BEACH BALL TOSS (10 minutes)**

Illustrates: Collaboration and Commitment

The group's goal is to hit the beach ball 100 times in a row without it falling to the ground. In addition, each team member must hit the ball five times (and no participant can hit the ball twice in a row). If the ball ever hits the ground, the group must start over. A group may exceed 100 hits, if that's what it takes to get everyone to hit the ball five times.

Processing Questions:

- If you were successful, what caused this success?
- What strategies did you use to make sure that everyone was included?
- What was challenging about this exercise?
- What did this exercise illustrate to you about leadership?
- How does this activity relate to our group?

### **YURT CIRCLE (10 minutes)**

Illustrates: Trust, support, and the importance of each person's contribution.

The group forms a circle facing each other and counts off by two. You must have an even number of participants for this exercise. Individuals with shoulder and/or arm problems should not participate in this activity for their own safety. Members grasp hands in the circle. Make sure that height and weight of participants is evenly distributed around the circle.

Instruct the group to simultaneously lean in the opposite direction while supporting each other. This means that the 1's lean forward and the 2's lean backward. Lean gradually, not all at once. Do it again. Change directions. Do it with eyes closed.

Variations: Do it silently. Face outward and work through the process.

Processing Questions:

- Was anyone tentative at the beginning of this exercise?
- How did it feel to be reliant on others for support?
- What would have happened if only one person let go? How does this relate to working in teams?
- How is this exercise representative of our houses?
- How can we develop more trust in our group?
- How important is the support we give to others?

### **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 you 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). For a few participant, use negative numbers, "0", really high numbers, 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.

Some participants can be restricted even more by not allowing them to use their right arm, etc.

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?

### **SHERPA WALK (10 minutes)**

Illustrates: Industrial vs. Postindustrial leadership, empowerment (good transition activity from one location to another)

Assemble the group in a single line and then blindfold them. Each person holds onto the shoulder of the person in front of him/her. The leader is not blindfolded. He/she will lead the group from one place to another. The facilitator may choose to limit talking or allow talking only for safety commands. The leader works to navigate the surroundings and keep his/her group safe. At different points, the leader may change; the former leader will now join the rest of the group and be led.

Processing Questions:

- How did it feel being led by only one person?
- How trusting were you of the person in front of you? Of the leader?
- Did anyone ever question where they were going or demand an explanation?
- Why did so many individuals simply follow the person in front of them?

How many times in our houses, do we just follow our leaders (i.e., President, RA/CA, Peer Mentor) because we are supposed to?  
Why do they continue to “go with the flow” and not question what we are doing?  
What happens if we trust certain leaders and they lead us astray?  
How do we encourage more team-based leadership?

### **PICK A SIDE**

Students are asked to choose their preferences between the following dichotomies. They go to one side of the room or the other (designated by the facilitator) to show which one they prefer. No one can be in the middle. Discuss why people made the choices they made.

- 1 - Play before you work or finish your work so you can play
- 2 - Design a car or build one
- 3 - Jeans or Khakis
- 4 - Would you rather be a bat or a baseball
- 5 - Texas or Montana
- 6 - Plan your vacation or decide what to do when you get there
- 7 - Liberal or conservative
- 8 - Morning or night
- 9 - Would you rather go see a play or go to a football game
- 10 - Chocolate or strawberry
- 11 - Love or money
- 12 - New York or California
- 13 - Hangout with a few close friends or get together with a large group of people
- 14 - Listen or speak
- 15 - Country or pop music
- 16 - 007 or Batman
- 17 - Happy Gilmore or Terminator (I or II)
- 18 - kissing in public, “get a room” or “isn’t that sweet”
- 19 - Memorized your ISU ID or have to get it out
- 20 - ISU or Iowa

### **BUILDING A GUMDROP STRUCTURE**

Materials needed: gumdrops & toothpicks. In an area unseen to the participants, structures made of gumdrops and toothpicks should be previously constructed by the facilitator. These are the structures that the participants will need to re-construct (within the given guidelines) in their groups.)

This is a teambuilding exercise for larger groups & most groups will have six people.

Each group will be told to choose one “Seer,” three “Runners,” one “Builder” and one “Observer.”

Explain:

In a separate room (or space) is a structure made of gumdrops and colored toothpicks.

**Seer:** Only person allowed to see the structure. Unlimited opportunities. Must communicate what the structure looks like to the Runners.

**Runners:** Carry messages from the Seer to the Builder. Runners may not ask questions of Seers. Nonverbal signals are ok, but only the Seer can talk to the Runner. Runners may only talk to the Builder, and then only one at a time.

**Builders:** will be in a separate space where they cannot see the Seer or observe the instructions being given.

Builders are provided with building supplies. Builders may not face each other or look at each other’s work. They may not speak to anyone.

Once a Runner has received instruction, he/she will go to the Builder. The Runners may then (one at a time) relay the instructions to the Builder, using words only. Runners may not touch or respond to what Builders are doing. Relay instruction only. The Builder may only listen, without asking questions or responding.

Observer: observe the group's process without visibly reacting to them or interacting with them. Observations and comments will be a crucial part of the discussion at the end of the activity.

There is a time limit of 25-30 minutes (depending on how things are going). At the end of the time, we will bring over the original structure to compare to each of the new creations. How close did everybody get? Colors count!!

Wrap-up in large group:  
What was difficult about this process?

How did the Seers feel? Was it hard to give instructions without seeing what was needed? Or was it liberating? How did you feel about the lack of concrete feedback about what was happening to your careful instructions?

How did the Runners feel? Was one-way communication difficult? Was it frustrating to envision one thing and see the Builder doing something else?

How did the Builders feel? Was it easy or hard to construct something with only verbal instructions and without being able to ask questions? Or did anybody feel liberated by having only instructions to follow?

Does anybody have personal reactions or challenges to share?

What does this activity tell us about our communication styles? What are the benefits of two-way communication? Would it have been easier to construct something resembling the original structure if questions were allowed? What would you have done differently? What if only a certain number of questions or words were allowed? Would you have known what to ask? Would it have helped?

### **ROOTS AND LEAVES**

Provide group members with paper and markers and ask them all to draw their own personal tree. It must include **ROOTS**: things about you that are not easily visible (where you are from, values, important life events, achievements, things you struggle with, long term goals, secret dreams, etc.) and **LEAVES**: things about you that are readily visible (hobbies, demographic information, important people in your life, distinguishable personal traits, favorite music, things you do well, etc.) Have members share and describe their trees to the group.

### **BEACH BALL**

Get a beach ball and write questions all over the ball. Then, get the group together in a circle. Throw the ball to someone and the first question they see they must answer. Then that person passes the ball and the game continues. You can add in that people need to say the name of the person they are throwing it to in order to learn names better.

*This list is a compilation of teambuilder lists from and individual memories of many different people. For this reason, no citation is available.*

### Helpful Hints for Successful Team Builders

- Use Humor and Be Excited!
- Make it personal by letting the group know about you.
- Allow for spontaneity.
- Call the students by name.
- Be Inclusive.
- Be considerate of weather conditions.
- Change the team builders once in a while to make things more interesting.
- Practice unfamiliar exercises ahead of time.
- Don't ever force an individual to participate if he or she is reluctant or uncomfortable.
- Ask students for help if you need it.
- Make sure you allow ample time for the exercise but keep in control of the group.
- Take suggestions from others who have facilitated the actual team builder.

### Team Builder Rules

- Never just say find a partner.
- Mix the team builders up, do some "physical" ones, and some mental ones. Not everyone has the same strengths.

### Team Builder Levels

There are three levels of teambuilding. As you are selecting a team builder to do, make certain that it fits into the level of activity that you are trying to do. Do not try to do an intermediate or advanced team builder in your first meeting! Each time a Team builder is used, it should have a purpose.

- **Basic** – Should be done early on when the group is still trying to get to know each other.
- **Intermediate** – Should be done after a day or so when the group has warmed up to each other and is comfortable with sharing more information with each other. Some of these icebreakers are also more physical so keep that in mind.
- **Advanced** – Should only be done with groups who are really comfortable with each other. These activities are really deep and reveal very deep thoughts from the participants.

The following team builders are arranged by levels, which should make your job easy! Have Fun!

### Basic

**Arch Ball** – Players (10-30) are divided into two equal teams. Each team forms a line, one in front of the other, about arms distance apart. The ball starts in the front and must be passed over the head to the back of the line. When the last person receives the ball, he/she must run with it to the front of the line and continue passing the ball. The first team to return the ball to the original lineup wins.

**Cocktail Party** – Put names of famous people character, (alive or dead-fictional or real) on nametags. Put one on everyone's back. The object is to guess whom you are by mingling around and asking Yes or No questions. (Examples: Hillary Clinton, Bugs Bunny, Ghandi)

- **Famous Pairs** – This is a variation of Cocktail party and is a great way to pair people up. The only difference is that all the names are famous pairs (alive or dead-fictional or real) and after they figure out who they are they have to find their partner.
- Cocktail party can also be modified to group people into larger groups, just use larger topics. (Like, Fast food restaurants, Disney Characters, Cast of Friends, etc).

**Comic Strip Chaos** – Each participant takes a turn at picking a comic frame out of a large container. After the entire group has each chosen one, the participants begin to search for others with the same comic strip sequence. After the participants have found everyone in their group, they must arrange themselves so that the sequence of frames are in chronological order to form the comic strip correctly. Upon completion of sequence, the newly formed group sits down together.

**Count Off** – Ask the group to count to 20 without pre-planning who is going to say each number. There is a catch, there are no verbal or signals allowed, and the group must do it without any two people saying the same number. See how fast they can do it!

**Creative Name Tags** – Give everyone 15 minutes to make their own nametag. They can list hobbies, draw a picture; give a self-profile, etc.

**Group Juggling** – Have participants stand in a circle. The leader tosses a ball to the person across the circle saying his/her name, and then puts their hands behind their back. This repeats until

everyone has been tossed the ball and had their name said. The leader throws the ball again to the same person, and everyone must throw the ball in the same pattern as the first time, calling out the person's name and throwing the ball. Each time the ball returns to the leader another ball is added in. Continue adding balls and see how far the group can get without messing up. This can be tried nonverbally if everyone knows each other's names, and other objects in addition to balls may be used.

- **Warp Speed** – The group starts in a circle formation. Warp Speed has the same beginning as Group Juggling. Instead of adding objects, the group must comprise a way of moving the object in the same name pattern under time constraints. Let the group come up with the time constraint. The object is to move the ball (or whatever) through EVERYONE'S hands as fast as possible. One person cannot hold onto the object at all time.

**Hometown** – Post a large outline of Colorado (or the country) on the wall. Leave border space for those born outside the USA. Have participants put their hometown and first name on the map.

Then ask them to share about their hometown and how they decided to go to Purdue University.

**Hum That Tune** - Each person in the group is given a small piece of paper with the name of a nursery rhyme or other song written on the paper. (i.e. "Row, row, row, your boat," "Rock-a-bye baby," etc.) All of the people who are given the song must hum that tune and find everyone else singing the song. They then form a group.

**Human Bingo** – Before the meeting, make a bingo matrix and at the top of each square put something that someone in the group might have done – for example, is from a state other than Indiana, gone scuba diving, played a sport in high school. Everyone gets a copy and is asked to circulate, getting other group members to sign on square that is true of them. The first person to get "bingo" wins the prize (a candy bar or some other small thing).

**Human Scavenger Hunt** - The paper will have a series of questions on it (in a bingo format-in squares). Participants are required to find another participant who can answer "yes" to a question. They must have that person sign their name within the square. The object is to meet as many people as you can and fill a "BINGO!" (A complete line either horizontally, vertically, or diagonally). You can only use each participant once. Note: the center circle should be a freebie. Here are some examples:

- Knows the zodiac sign
- From a northern state
- Knows when Martin Luther King's birthday is
- Member of a sorority or fraternity
- Has been a competitive athlete
- Has traveled abroad
- Knows how to polka

**Ice Cubes** - Divide the players into two equal teams. At a starting signal, each team picks up an ice cube and tries to melt it as quickly as possible. Players can rub it between their hands or against their clothes, but they may NOT have it in their mouths. While they are trying to melt the ice cube, it should be passed around the team frequently. No player should keep it for more than a few seconds at a time. Players should keep it off the ground too. The first team that melts its ice cube wins. On a really hot day you may want to play more than one round of this one!

**Introductions with a Twist** – The master plan of this icebreaker is to give people an opportunity to learn something silly about each other and to divulge something personal about themselves. As a kick-off to the meeting, everyone is asked to introduce themselves by telling something informative (name), something silly (where you'd be if you could be anywhere right now, your favorite dessert), and something reflective (what you hope to get out of this meeting/BGR/college). Facilitators should, during the rest of the meeting, spontaneously recall specific things people said as a way maintaining humor and giving members opportunities to connect.

#### **Line-Ups**

- **Alphabetic by Last Name** - Explain to the group that this is a nonverbal exercise. The group is to form a single straight line alphabetically by last name. For example, people whose last names start with A will be at the beginning of the line, last names that start with Z are at the end. Persons with the same last name share the same place in line. You must communicate nonverbally (no lip-reading or spelling in the dirt allowed). When the line is completed, each person will shout out his/her last name starting with the A's.
- **Alphabetic by Middle Name** - Explain to the group that this is a nonverbal exercise. The group is to form a single straight line alphabetically by middle name. For example, people whose middle names start with A will be at the beginning of the line, middle names that start with Z are at the end. Persons with the same middle name share the same place in line. You must communicate nonverbally (no lip-reading or spelling in the dirt allowed). When the line is completed, each person will shout out his/her middle name starting with the A's.
- **Birthday Line-up** – Explain to the group that this is a nonverbal exercise. The group is to form a single straight line, according to birthdays. For example, person with January

birthdays will be at the beginning of the line, earliest birthdays at the end. Persons with the same birthday share the same place in line. You must communicate nonverbally (no lip-reading or spelling in the dirt allowed). When the line is completed, each person will shout out his/her birthday, starting with January.

- **Blindfold Line-up** – Ask the group to close their eyes and keep them closed for the remainder of the game (if they feel comfortable). You may also use blindfolds. In the bumpers position for protection, ask the group to mill around without talking. After 10-15 seconds, ask them to stop and put their hands down. Assign each person a number by tapping them on the shoulder and saying the number at the same time. Then tell them to line themselves up by number without talking or opening their eyes.
- **Height Line-up** – Ask participants to close their eyes (if they feel comfortable). Without opening their eyes, they group is asked to arrange themselves by height in a straight line. They may choose to arrange by feeling height or some say their height out loud. The only restriction is that they may not open their eyes.
- **Shoe Sort**

**Lollipop** – Pass out lollipops to the group. For every letter that appears in the flavor, the participant has to share something about him/her with the group.

**M&M Swap** - Have the group form a circle standing up. After everyone is given a plastic spoon, the first player is given four or five M&M's to hold in his/her spoon. Everyone must put the spoon into their mouths holding the handle between their teeth with the scoop of the spoon facing up. The group must pass the M&M's from the first person to the last without using their hands. The object is to get ALL of the M&M's to the end, without dropping any.

**Make A Date** – Give each participant a paper plate. Have them draw the face of a clock on their plate with a line next to each number (no digitals!). Then have participants walk around to find a "date" for each hour, writing their name by the hour. The catch is, no one can make a "date" with more than one person per hour. After everyone has made their dates, speed up time and allow 1-3 minutes for each hour. The facilitator then asks a question for discussion on each date. The pairs will have a chance to get to know one another.

**Meaningful Musical Chairs** – Arrange chairs in scattered pairs, semi-facing each other. Play some upbeat music. Instruct the students that they are to mingle around the room to the music. When the music stops they must find a chair. Beforehand a poster has been displayed listing by number 12 topics for introductory discussion i.e. Home life, Jobs, Hobbies, Favorite person, etc... Now, the facilitator rolls the dice and whatever subject the number corresponds to dictates what topic each pair will discuss (they must introduce themselves to their partner before discussing). When the music begins again they know to get up and mingle waiting for the music to stop and the next round of discussion with someone new to begin.

**Motion Name Game** - Have everyone stand in a circle. Anyone can begin by saying his/her name and demonstrating a physical motion to go with it. When the person is done, the entire group repeats the name and the motion. Then, the second person who is standing beside the first person to the right or left will introduce him or herself and do a motion. The entire group repeats that name/motion and then the first name/motion. This will continue until each person has given their name and done their motion, and the entire group has repeated everyone's name and motions.

- **Line Dance** - This is best if the group has 10+ members. Everyone lines up shoulder to shoulder. One member starts off the game by doing a motion across the line to the other end of the line and saying his/her name at the same time. The group responds by saying, "Hi \_\_\_\_\_!" The game continues as each member goes across to the other end of the line. Once that is complete, the group pairs off with the person next to them and they do a motion together and say both of their names to get to the other end. The group goes in twos until this is complete. The group works together to pick out a motion and should say each name as they get to the other end. The game continues until the whole group is working together. This is a good game to show the power of individuals coming together as a team.

**Name Games** - Go around the circle, one person states their name and a/an \_\_\_\_\_ that starts with the same letter. The next person repeats their name and adds theirs. (Continue until you've gone around the circle (it's hard for the last person). You may want to have the first person go at the very end – and even have people move around.

Suggestions to fill in the blank are listed below:

- Adjectives
  - Animals
  - Favorite Hobby
  - Food
  - Movies/Music/TV Shows
- **Blankets Name Game** – Have your group divide itself into two groups. Tell them to sit on the floor facing each other. Hold up a blanket between the groups so that each team cannot see the other. A member of each team is quietly selected to move up on the blanket. On the count of three, drop the blanket so that each of the selected members is

facing each other. Whoever says the other person's name first, wins. Whoever loses, goes to the other team.

**Poetry in Motion** – Instruct each person to write a poem about him or herself. It must include his/her name and something about him/her, and must be a minimum of four lines. Each person reads his/her poem to the group as a way to introduce his or her self.

**Putting the Pieces Together** – Cut one large square (about 8 in. x 8 in.) out of colored cardboard for each student. Cut each square into 8 smaller pieces of various shapes (rectangles, triangles, pentagons, etc.) Each square should be unique. Divide the group into groups of 5 and give each group the scrambled pieces for 5 of the squares. Each member of the group must be given 8 pieces. Their job is to put the squares together again without talking. Participants cannot ask for someone else's piece. They can only take another participant's piece without asking and give that participant one of theirs. Participants continue giving and taking pieces until everyone in the group has made a square. This should take about 5-10 minutes. When they finish they can talk about what they just did. If the activity is successful and moving along quickly enough, have groups swap squares and repeat the activity.

**Puzzles** – Make a giant jigsaw puzzle and give everyone a piece. Have them work together to put it together. To make it more challenging, you can have several puzzles, pictures on either sides, or pieces that fit more than one place.

**Scissors** – Split the group into small groups of any number you would like and have each group sit in a circle. The first person starts by turning to the person to his/her right and saying, "I am passing these scissors to you..." (And they fill in either "crossed" or "open.") The phrase they choose to end with depends on whether their legs are crossed or open. They can do whatever they want with the scissors in terms of how they pass them to the person next to them. The person who is receiving the scissors must, "I am receiving these scissors..." (The ending should reflect how the person before had his/her legs positioned – NOT how they passed the scissors.) Game continues around the circle...play until everyone has figured out the game. NOTE: Participants can get easily frustrated if they cannot figure out the game...be patient and encouraging.

- **Bang! Bang!** – A variation on "Scissors." One person starts by saying (in a rather dramatic way and in any version of these words he/she would like), "Bang, click, click, click, bang, click, bang! Who's dead?" (The person can pretend to shoot an individual or individuals if they would like.) The group must figure out who is dead. The person who is dead is the FIRST person who speaks following the "dramatic" act. It may take the group some time to figure out how the game works, so be patient and encouraging. Game continues until everyone figures it out.

**Self-Introduction Exercise** – The objective of this exercise is for members of the team to become acquainted with one another to work more effectively as a team. Each individual needs to complete the paragraph below and then, if they feel comfortable disclosing, may be asked to share answers with the rest of the group.

**Seven Elevens** – Have group get into a circle on the floor. A volunteer from the circle will start the game by saying, "one." The person to his or her right counts off the next number loud enough so everyone can hear him/her. The game continues around the circle until the number "seven," a multiple of seven (14,21,28,35,etc.), "eleven, or a multiple of eleven (22,33,44, etc) comes up. The individual who has that number will nod their head instead of saying the number aloud. When that person nods his/her head, the game continues in the opposite direction around the circle. If a mistake is made, the game restarts with that person.

**Shoe Factory** – Have the group stand in a large circle shoulder to shoulder. Then have everyone remove their shoes and put them in the center. After the group has formed a pile with their shoes, the leader has everyone choose two different shoes other than their own. They should put them on their feet (halfway if they are too small). The group then needs to successfully match the shoes and put them in proper pairs by standing next to the individual wearing the other shoe. This will probably result in a tangled mess – and lots of giggles!

**Shoe Game** – Have the group stand in a large circle shoulder to shoulder. Then have everyone remove their shoes, tie them together, and place them in the center. Have one volunteer choose a pair of shoes other than their own and make one statement about the owner of the shoes (i.e. "The owner of these shoes must be very thrifty and economical to wear shoes in this condition!"). The owner of the shoes then comes forward, introduces him/herself, and picks out another pair of shoes to introduce. Game continues until all participants have introduced themselves.

**Slaps** – The group begins by lying on their stomach in a circle with their heads facing the middle of the circle. Every participant's right arm goes underneath the left arm of the person to his or her right. The left arm should be over the right arm of the person on the left. One person will be designated to start by slapping the ground once with one of their hands. The person whose hand is to the right will do the same and so on counterclockwise. If someone decides to slap the ground twice, the direction will reverse. If a hand messes up by hesitating too long, slaps prematurely or out of order, that hand is out of the game. Once a person has lost both hands they are out of the game. The game ends when there are only two people remaining.

**Story Time** – The facilitator starts a story by saying a sentence. It then goes in a circle, each person adding a sentence onto the story-after repeating each sentence that's already been added.

**String Game** – Participants select pre-cut lengths of string from the group facilitator. Each member holds the string between his/her thumb and forefinger. For each "wrap" of the string around the finger, participants must share one thing about themselves.

Think Fast

**Toilet Paper Game** – Get a roll of toilet paper and explain to your group that they are going camping and need to take as much toilet paper as they think they may need for a three-day trip. Once everyone has an ample supply, explain to the group that for every square in their possession, they must share something about themselves. NOTE: If anyone knows the activity, ask him or her not to give away the secret under any circumstances.

**Where Ya From?** – In a room (or set space indicate north, south, east and west. This center represents the center. Have people move to the spot in the room that would be the location of where they came from. Link up with other people in your geographical area and do intros and where you are from.

**Zoomie-Zoomie** – The rhythm for the game is slap, slap (on the knees), snap, and snap (one on each hand (right, then left)). Group sits in a circle. One person is designated as the leader, the "zoomie-zoomie," and he/she sets the pace. The object of the game is to get the leader's spot. The leader begins the rhythm, and on one set of snaps says his/her name on the first and someone else's on the second (the names MUST always be said on the two snaps). The person whose name is said must respond on the next set of slaps and snaps by saying his/her own name and then someone else's. If the player does it correctly, the game continues. If the player does not do it quickly enough, that player must move to the seat to the right of the leader, and the seat to the right of the leader, and the rest of the group moves up a seat (toward the leader's spot) to fill in the seats. Game continues until group has learned names well. The pace can be as fast as desired.

## Intermediate

**All Aboard** – The object of the game is to get all of the people in the group onto the board. (You can either use a poster board or a wood board, etc). Everyone must have at least one foot on the board. HINT: Try not to give solutions, but tell them to listen to other's ideas. You may enlarge or decrease the size of the board, depending on degree of challenge you would like.

Artist, Clay, Model

**Balloons Over and Under** – A single line is formed with one person behind another. Four or five balloons filled with water are placed in front of the first person. One by one, the first person takes each balloon and passes it over their head to the person behind them. That individual passes it under their legs to the next person; the next passes it over their head, and so on. When the balloons get to the last person, they run to the front of the line and pass it over their head. Adventurous groups can choose to toss the balloon over their head and hike it (toss it) between their legs. Play continues until group reaches the destination line. Note: When playing water balloon games in hot places, balloons will burst all by themselves if left in the hot sun. Put them in a bucket of water to keep them in better shape.

**Bird Hunter** – One player is the "hunter" and the others are "birds." The hunter throws a ball at the birds, which may run freely about within the boundaries determined by the players before the start of the game. When the birds are hit with the ball, they become dogs and help the hunter by recovering and throwing the ball to him. The hunter is the only one that may hit the birds. The last bird to be hit becomes the hunter for the next game. Hint: To distinguish between dogs and birds, have dogs get down on all fours and crawl; make birds flap wings.

**The Brady Bunch** - Divide the students into groups. Give each group a copy of the Brady Bunch theme song. Each group should be assigned a different type of music. The groups then have to perform the Brady Bunch theme song with choreography to the specific type of music. If you want to have them introduce themselves, they can even take on the personality of the Bradys'. Give each group approximately five minutes to prepare. You can have the rest of the students try to guess what type of music is being performed.

Here's a story of a lovely lady who was bringing up three very lovely girls all of them had hair of gold, like their mother, the youngest one in curls.

Here's a story of a man named Brady who was busy with three boys of his own they were four men living all together yet they were all alone.

Until one day when the lady met this fellow and they knew that it was much more than a hunch.

Then this group must somehow be a family and that's the way all we became  
the Brady Bunch  
the Brady Bunch  
the Brady Bunch  
that's the way we became the Brady Bunch.

#### Types of Music

|           |            |             |            |
|-----------|------------|-------------|------------|
| Opera     | Punk       | Heavy Metal | R&B        |
| Country   | Rap        | Reggae      | Jazz       |
| Classical | Show Tunes | Grunge      | Top 40/Pop |

**Capture the Flag** – The playing area is divided in half; at each right-hand rear corner is a rectangle that is known as the jail or prison (you could also use a goal if on a soccer field). The group is divided into two teams. Each team should decide where to place their flag (a towel, shirt, or whatever) on their side of the field. The object of the game is to get the other team's flag. Once the game is started, anyone who steps over the center line into the opponent's half is eligible to be caught and taken to prison. A player must get through the enemy's lines without being tagged. Prisoners may be rescued by teammates who get through enemy lines without being tagged and can touch the prisoner's hand. (The prisoners can line themselves up by holding hands and stretching toward the centerline as long as one person is still holding the goal or in the jail area.) If rescued, both the prisoner(s) and the rescuer must walk back to their own side with their arms up. To win the game, a player must get the flag back across the mid-line of the playing area. If a player has the flag and gets tagged, the flag can either go back to where it was, or be dropped where the person got tagged. That player goes to jail. Teams may have only one person protecting the flag.

**Cat and Mouse** - Before the game begins designate one player as the "cat" and another player as the "mouse." The rest of the players should join hands and form a circle around the mouse, while the cat remains outside the circle. The mouse starts the game by darting outside the circle and around the players. The cat must try to tag the mouse while standing on the outside of the circle. The players may lift their arms over the mouse's head in order to help him/her. Likewise, the cat will try to block the cat. When the cat finally tags the mouse, the mouse becomes the new cat, the cat joins the circle, and another player becomes the mouse.

**Catch Me If You Can** – Players should be paired up. All players divide into two lines (facing in) shoulder to shoulder, with partners facing each other. Participants should be given approximately 30 seconds to look at their partners, taking in all details about the individual. The leader then instructs the two lines to turn and face away from the center. One or both lines have 15-20 seconds to change something about their appearance (i.e. change a watch to different wrists, unbutton a button, remove a belt, etc.). The change must be discrete, but visible to the partner. The players again turn in to face each other and have 30 seconds to discover the physical changes that have been made.

**Catching the Snake's Tail** - A fish is formed with all the students holding hands in a line. One end is the head and the other is the tail. The head tries to catch the tail while the tail tries to escape. Let participants know that they should not break their grip. A variation is to have more than one group and have the heads of the groups chasing the tails of the other groups.

**Chubby Bunny** – This activity starts by one group member volunteering to stuff their mouth full of marshmallows. The leader will give the volunteer one marshmallow at a time. Without swallowing, the volunteer will place the marshmallows in their mouth one by one. Between each marshmallow placed in the mouth, the person must successfully say, "Chubby bunny!"

**Circle Within a Circle** - Divide your group into two equal groups. One of the two groups forms a tight circle facing away from the center of the circle. The other group then forms a circle outside of the previously formed circle. The members of this circle are then facing the members of the first circle. Each person should be standing across from someone. Thus, each person has a partner. You as the leader then read off a question that the pairs of inner and outer circle people should discuss. After about one minute the outer circle people move one to the right and you then read a new question. Repeat until the outer circle people are across from their original inner circle partners. Questions you can use include:

- What is your favorite place in your parent's home?
- If I could order any magazine, I would choose...
- On whom did you have your first crush?

- My favorite time of the year is...
- When I make a mistake, I...
- One person I would like to visit is...
- I like to in my spare time.
- If could have any job, I would...
- I am really good at...
- My favorite movie is...
- The best trip I ever had was...
- One thing about me that I would like to change is...
- The best compliment I ever received was...
- My favorite meal is...
- What do you do to relax?
- Who is your favorite movie star?
- One thing I excelled in at high school is...
- I have never...

**Clam Free** - Start by defining the boundaries of the playing field. One person volunteers to be the "nuclear reactor" and activates him/herself with a Frisbee or nerf ball, preferably day-glo. The rest of the participants are clams and signify that by being as happy as possible. The object of the game is for the nuclear reactor to contaminate all of the clams by tagging them with the day-glo device. Once contaminated, the clams become frozen in place. As the reactor chases and tags the clams, it would appear that doomsday is just around the corner- at least for the no longer very happy clams that are getting zapped one after another. There is hope, however. A frozen clam can be defrosted if two mobile clams manage to link hands around him/her in a clamshell alliance and shout "Clam free!" Even better, if seven clams can manage to link up in a circle and count to ten, then the nuclear reactor is shut down forever.

**Coin Toss** - Divide into 2 lines sitting, facing each other. Hold hands. The two front people watch a coin being tossed. If it's head, they should squeeze and pass the squeeze down the line. When it gets to the end of the last person raises their hand. It's a race. Tails does nothing.

**Commonalities** - Get in groups of 4 or 5. They have 2 minutes to come up with as many things as they can that they have in common. It needs to be unique to this particular group, and not just things that everyone has in common (Like, "We all breath"). The more unique things (like, "we all have a sister named Julie") are the better. If groups come with the same item, they both cross if off and it doesn't count. As facilitator, you are final judge about what counts and what doesn't. You can decide that especially that especially good ones get double points.

**Confusion** - Give each participant a sheet with various tasks and ask them to complete it when you say, "GO!" Here is a sample:

- o Get someone to do five push-ups and sign here.
- o Stand on one foot with your arms outstretched for 20 seconds.
- o Have someone time you and sign here.
- o Leap frog over someone 5 times.
- o Get someone to whisper the pledge of allegiance and sign here.
- o Play "Ring around the Rosy" with two other people and have them sign here
- o Get someone to recite a nursery rhyme.
- o Shake hands with someone you do not know and continue holding hands while debating the merits of your favorite ice cream flavor.
- o Have someone teach you a dance step (even if they make it up).

First person to complete the entire sheet, wins.

**Crows and Cranes** - Players are divided into two teams. Mark two safety lines not more than 40 feet from center. Midway between the safety lines, form players in two teams facing the leader. The lines of players are about 5 feet apart. One line is "crows," the other is "cranes." When the leader calls "Crows," the crows run for their safety line, attempting to reach it before the cranes can tag them. If the leader calls "crawfish" no one runs. The leader should use deception and precede his call with a "crr" sound, so players will not know what is going on. Each team receives a point for every member of the opposite team tagged before that team reaches safety. Each team loses a point for every one of its people running in the wrong direction or running on the call "crawfish."

**Dizzy Izzy** - Split the group into 2 teams. Have them line up so they are about forty feet from the bat, which is lying on the ground. There should be one bat and one spotter for each team. When the game begins, the first person in each line must run to the bat, pick it up, place one end on the ground, bend over so their head is near or on the bat, and spin around 5-10 times. They must then run back toward their group and tag the next person's hand in line. The entire group must complete the task. The first team done wins.

**Do You Love Your Neighbor?** - The group stands in a circle with room in the center. (Best if played with group of 20 or more.) One person begins in the circle and says to an individual in the group, "\_\_\_\_\_, do you love your neighbor?" The individual pointed out can either say, "Yes I love my neighbors \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, but I REALLY love people \_\_\_\_\_(wearing green, from

IN, etc)" or "No, I do not love my neighbors \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_." If the individual uses the first phrase, all members of the group with that characteristic must find a new spot in the circle at least three spaces from where they are standing. The person with no space (last person remaining) becomes the caller. If the individual uses the second phrase, his/her two "neighbors" must switch places with one another. The group members move in quickly to "lose" their spaces. The last of the two becomes the caller.

**Egg/Balloon Toss** - Split the group into two teams. Have all of the members of each team spread out so they are about ten feet away, but still in a straight line. The first person in each line tosses an egg or balloon to the second, who will catch it and pass it on. If the balloon or egg breaks, the group must begin again with a new balloon or egg.

**Egg Drop** - Participants are given small, miscellaneous objects (string, paper clips, tape, pencils) and several raw eggs per group. The task is to drop an egg from as high as possible without having the egg break. The objects can be used to help protect the egg from the fall.

**Evolution** - It is essential that every group member knows how to play "Rock, Paper, Scissors." Everyone starts out as an egg, and waddles around going "Whobble, Whobble!" When an egg finds another egg, they play "Rock, Paper, Scissors." The winner will evolve to a chicken, and hop around making chicken noises until they find another chicken to play "Rock, Paper, Scissors." The loser will become an egg again; an egg is the lowest species once can be. The winner of the chickens will become a dinosaur. The dinosaurs walk around repeating, "Auh, Auh!" The winner of the dinosaur match becomes an ultimate being. Ultimate beings walk around with their arms in the air repeating, "Ultimate being, ultimate being!" The loser of the dinosaur match becomes a chicken again. Once an ultimate being has won his/her final match up, they are out of the game, or may continue to try their luck.

**Ha!** - Have the group lie on the ground or floor. Position each to lie their head on another's tummy. One of the end people will start. The one that starts say one "HA!" The person that has his/her head on their tummy goes next and says, "HA HA!" With each person, add one "HA!" If there are 30 people, then the last person should say 30 "HA!'s"

**Hula-Hoop Pass** - Have everyone stand in a circle and join hands. Pick one person to start and on each of their arms place a hula-hoop, one slightly smaller than the other if possible. Have the group pass the hula-hoops completely around the circle so that the hula-hoops end up on opposite arms of the person you began with. No one can unlink his or her hands throughout the process.

Human Knot

**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

**Human Taco** - Stick labeled note card (with taco ingredient) on the back of everyone's shirt. (i.e. the word meat printed on a note card) Have each player mingle around asking yes/no questions to find out the taco ingredient that is on their back. Explain the correct order of ingredients in a Human Taco shell, meat, cheese, lettuce, tomato, salsa and then give the start command. "I'm hungry! Let's eat! Run for the Border!" Each individual must find out which ingredient they are and then find enough to form a complete Human Taco.

**I Love You, Baby!** - Have everyone sit in circle. The "it" player approaches one person and says "I love you, baby." The player must respond by saying, "I love you baby, but I just can't smile." If that player smiles while speaking these words, he/she becomes "it." If the player does not smile, "it" must approach a new person until "it" makes someone smile. "It" is not allowed to touch a player as he/she speaks, but anything else is fair play. This is a funny one, but make sure participants feel comfortable with one another first!

**Jolly Green Giant** - This game is very similar to Sharks and Minnows. Two lines need to be established about forty yards apart. Everyone starts from behind one of the lines. Two group members are chosen to be giants. The giants stand between the lines. When the giants say, "Jolly Green Giant," the rest of the group runs to the other line trying to avoid being tagged. If a group member gets tagged, they become sprouts. Sprouts go down on their knees, and they can tag others with their hands, but they cannot move from their permanent position. The giants continue repeating "Jolly Green Giant," until the remaining are at the appropriate end. The last two to avoid being tagged become the giants in the next game.

**Killer** - Everybody will start close together with their eyes closed and thumbs up. The leader will squeeze the thumb of one group member. That group member is the "killer." With eyes still closed, the killer will squeeze the thumb of another group member twice. That group member becomes the sheriff. Once the two positions have been established, everyone can open their eyes. Nobody should know who is the sheriff or the killer. Everyone begins walking around, making eye contact with everyone else. The object of the game is for the killer to kill everyone without getting caught. The killer does his/her kill by winking one eye at someone. If the killer winks, that person that was winked at is dead. Anyone killed by the killer must count to twenty and only the sheriff may guess who the killer is. The killer also can kill the sheriff. If the sheriff's guess is correct, he/she wins. If they guess wrong, they immediately die, and the killer wins.

**Lemonade** - Divide the players into two teams. Have the teams line up at opposite sides of a playing area, which is clearly defined before play begins. One team is selected to go first. The members huddle and secretly choose two things: a place to be from (any city, state, or country) and some action to perform (washing dishes, playing basketball, painting a picture, etc.) The 'acting' team moves to the center of the playing area, saying, "Here we come!" The other team asks, "Where from?" The first team replies with the place they have chosen. The second team then asks, "What's your trade?" and the first team replies, "Lemonade!" After the first team says, "Lemonade," they begin to perform the action chosen earlier. The other team tries to identify the activity, yelling out its guesses. When someone on the second team calls out a correct guess, a game of TAG begins. The first team turns and runs back to their starting line as the second team tries to catch them. After both sides have had the chance to act out their trade, the team that has tagged the most players can be declared the winning team.

**Listening Skills Drawings** - You will need a piece of paper and a writing utensil for each participant. You also will need two different diagrams for each pair. Have partners sit back to back and decide who will be the "listener" and who will be the "talker" first. Each will eventually have a chance to play both roles. Give each "talker" a copy of a diagram. The Listener must sketch what they hear described, and in this round 1, is not allowed to speak or ask questions. This pair is using "one-way communication." There will be 1-2 minutes allotted for this round, or longer if time permits. Partners compare drawings when finished to see how close they came to the original. The second round can begin and partners switch roles, still sitting back to back. The dyad together must try to improve results. In this round 2, the talker gets a different diagram, and the listener can speak and ask questions. After the allotted time has passed, partners would compare results again. Then bring the two groups together to talk about the benefits of both types of communication.

**Log Roll** - Have the entire group lie down on their stomachs, shoulder to shoulder, forming a straight line. Then the person on the end rolls over everyone's back until they reach the end. Everyone continues to do this until the entire group has rolled over. The first team done first wins.

**Paper Plates** - Write the numbers 1 through 20 on paper plates and place them on the ground together, but not in order. Tell the group that they are to step on the numbers in numerical order, (1,2,3,4,5...20) as quickly as possible. Time them trying several times and have them try to beat their best scores. The plates cannot be moved from where they are.

**Pass the Pebble** - All players stand about while one goes around pretending to drop a pebble into the hands of each of the players, who hold their palms together. When the pebble has been completely around the group and has been left in one player's hands, the one who has it slyly slips away and runs for the goal previously determined by the group, and all try to catch him/her. The one who succeeds passes the pebble in the next round. If no one succeeds in catching the player, that player passes the pebble in the next round. **HINT:** Ask players to spread out so no one knows who holds the pebble.

Pirates Gold

### Races

- **Balloon Races** - Divide groups into teams of at least 6 people on each team. Each team lines up in a single line and each team member is given a balloon. Each team member puts the balloon between their knees and their hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them the teams race to the finish line, but if anyone on the team drops their arms down or loses their balloon, the whole team must stop, that person goes to the end of the line, and then the team keeps going.
- **Frog Races** - Split the group into two teams. Each person should jump towards the finish line as a frog would and jump back. The next person does the same. First team done wins.
- Rolling Down the Hill Race

**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 circles until it comes back to the leader who then changes the sound (snap fingers, clap hands, slip thighs, stomp feet, and then in reverse order). The sensations created are akin to the sounds of a rainstorm.

**Red Rover** - Divide the participants into two equal teams. Team members hold hands and face each other with about twenty feet between them. The team that begins will yell, "Red Rover, Red Rover, send \_\_\_\_\_ (name of player) right over!" The person whose name has been called must leave his/her team and attempt to run THROUGH the other team by breaking through two peoples' hands. If the person is successful, he/she is allowed to go back to join his/her team. If the person was not able to break through, then he/she becomes a member of the opposing team and joins hands with that side. The game ends when time is called. The team with the most players is the winner.

### Relays

- **Banana Relay** - In this activity a banana is placed between the knees of the first person, and it must be placed between the next person's knees-without using any hands. If the banana drops, it starts with the first person in line. First team to finish successfully wins.

- **Line Relay**-Divide the group into two equal teams. Designate a starting line and an end line. On the signal, the first person in each line lays down (parallel to line) with arms spread out to side. The next person in line jumps over the first person and lies down, spreading their arms. Fingers must be touching. This continues until the whole team is over the end line. Once a team member is over the end line, they are allowed to stand up and cheer for the remaining teammates.
- **Neck Races**-Split the group into two teams. Have them line up male-female, if possible. Give the person in the front of the line a rounded object (i.e. orange, tennis ball, etc.). The object should be placed under the chin of the first person, and it must be placed under the chin of the next person in line- without using any hands! This pattern continues until the object reaches the end of the line. If the object is dropped, it must be returned to the beginning to start again. The first team to finish successfully wins.
- **Orange Pass/Relay** – Break into groups of 6 to 10 people. Have them form rows standing one behind the other. The leader begins with an orange under their neck. The object of the game is to pass the orange down the row as quickly as possible without using any hands. If the orange is dropped, that team must start over.
- **Posture Relay** – Two teams line up side by side. The first person in the line runs up and around a cone and back with a beanbag on his/her head. He/she then hands off the beanbag to the next person in line and so on. The bag cannot be held with one's hands. The game ends when one team completes the relay. That team wins.
- **Toilet Paper Relay** – Split the participants into as many teams as you want. There should probably be at least four on each team. Give each team a roll of toilet paper. When the whistle sounds, the first member of the relay team places the roll of toilet paper on the ground and begins rolling it out along the floor. If the paper rips, they have to discard the ripped piece and go back to where they started. When that person gets to his/her teammates on the other side, the teammate must begin to roll the toilet paper back up again. This goes on and on, back and forth until one team finishes.
- **Tunnel Relay** - Each team stands in a single line (players one yard behind each other with feet apart). At the signal, the first player of each team rolls the ball between their legs so that it passes through the legs of the other players on their team and is caught by the player at the end of the line. The player then runs with the ball to the front of the line, and repeats the procedure. The game ends when the first player of one team has again reached the top of the line. If the ball rolls out on one side of the tunnel, it must be brought back to the same place, and rolled to the end. NOTE: You can vary the game by having players run to front of line with the ball between their legs, or by pushing the ball with their head, on their hands and knees.

**Rock, Paper, Scissors** – This activity is great for a larger group. Two Teams meet face to face in a line and do Rock, Papers, and Scissors. The loser is chased and if tagged before they cross the safe line, they go to the other team.

- **Giants, Wizards, and Elves** – The group is split up into two equal groups. Each of the two groups will huddle up away from the other group. As a group, they will decide to be a giant, wizard, or elf. Once the groups have decided on a group identity, the two groups will line up parallel to one another in the middle of a squared off area. On the leader's count of three, the two groups will show the other group their chosen identity. A "giant" stands nice and tall with their arms over their heads and growls. A "wizard" slightly bends at the knees with their arms out in front saying, "ZAP, ZAP, ZAP!" An elf bends totally at the knees, and with their hands, they make a pointed ears and elf noises (your choice). A giant beats an elf; a wizard beats a giant; and an elf beats a wizard (similar to Rock, Paper, Scissors). The team with the more powerful identity will chase the other group. Anyone tagged before crossing the coned line will join the other team. Anyone not tagged will remain on the same side. In the event of a tie the groups will decide on a new identity. Note: To save time in the event of a tie, it is good idea to have groups think of an alternative identity.

**Rope Square** – Get a large amount of rope (about 40 feet) and tie the ends together so that it is a circle. Blindfold all the participants. Have everyone hold on to the rope and tell them that they need to work together to make the rope into a square. If the group is having difficulty, one or two people can be un-blindfolded to assist, but they are not permitted to talk. To make it more challenging, the rope can be criss-crossed between them rather than having them start out in a circle.

Silent Sorting

**Sing Down** – Teams are created of anywhere from three to ten in a group. The leader will give the groups a word (i.e. love, boy, dance, etc.), and give the teams one minute to think of as many songs as they can with that word in it. Once the minute has passed, one team begins by singing a part of a song with that word in it. All team members must sing it. The other team then responds.

NO SONGS MAY REPEAT. The group, who has the most songs, wins. The process then can be repeated with another word.

**Solemn and Silent** - The instructor will explain that this exercise will take self-control. Members pair back to back. On the count of three, everyone must face their partner, look each other in the eyes, and then try to remain solemn and serious. No speaking! The first to smile or laugh must sit down. All who remain standing then take a new partner and the activity continues until only one person has not smiled or laughed. (Second round of playing can involve two teams competing to outlast each other.) If you get a pair at the end who are both keeping a straight face, the rest of the group can act as hecklers to disrupt them.

**Spud** - One person is picked to be it. All of the other participants are given numbers. The person who is it will throw the ball into the air and call a number. The person whose number was just called scrambles to retrieve the ball, while the others scatter about. As soon as the person whose number was called retrieves the ball, he/she shouts, "Stop!" Everyone must freeze in their places while the person with the ball is allowed to take three steps and throw the ball at whomever they think they can hit. The person who is hit by the ball is then it, and gets a letter (S-P-U-D). The whole cycle starts over again. If one person gets all four letters (S-P-U-D), that person is eliminated from the game.

**Stand Up** - Have the two people sit on the ground with their feet pushed up next to each other firmly. The two people grab hands in the middle and pull each other up so that both are standing. When everyone has accomplished this successfully. Have two groups combine and do the activity again, this time with four people. Keep combining groups until everyone who is participating is in one group and does it together.

**Stinger** - Have the group form a circle and close their eyes. Facilitator circles the group and selects a "stinger" by squeezing an individual's shoulder. The group then opens their eyes and spends time introducing themselves to others while shaking hands (and trying to spot the stinger). The stinger tries to eliminate everyone without getting caught. The stinger strikes by injecting poison with their index finger, while shaking hands. A person stung may not die until at least five seconds after they are stung. The more dramatic the death, the better! When someone thinks they have discovered who the stinger is, they may announce that they know. If they get a "second" from someone else in the group within 10 seconds, they too of them may make an accusation. If the person does not get a second, he/she must wait to challenge again, after another person dies. If another person does step forward to second the challenges, both point to who they think is the stinger on a count to three. If they do not point to the same person, or they both point to the wrong person, they both are automatically dead. If they select the correct person, the stinger is dead and the game is over.

### Tag

- **Balloon Tag** - Tie strings to balloons and then tie one balloon to each person's ankle. It's everyone for themselves in this activity. The object of this game is to pop everyone else's balloons while making sure that yours does not get popped. Once your balloon is popped, you are out of the game.
- **Blob Tag** - This is a great game to play with other groups. First establish the boundaries and pick one person who wants to be "it." This person is beginning the "blob." That person now chases people and everyone that he/she tags grabs onto the person that is "it." As more and more people are tagged, the blob will get bigger and bigger as you can split into smaller "blobs" if you wish. The last person to get tagged is the winner.
- **Clothes Pin Tag** - Give each player four clothespins. Each player tries to get rid of the pins by attaching them to the other players' clothing. A player's four pins must end up on four separate players.
- **Elbow Tag** - Everyone gets a partner and hooks elbows. The pairs spread out around the designated playing area. Two individuals are chosen to be it. One will be the chaser, the other being chased. The person being chased may hook elbows with any pair at any time. The member of the pair at the opposite end of where the chaser hooks is now being chased. If the chaser catches the chaser, the chaser spins around three times and becomes the new chaser. The previous chaser now becomes the chaser. Note: A time restraint may be needed to prevent limited participation from the rest of the group.
- **Freeze Tag** - This is played just like tag except that once you have been tagged you are frozen. The only way to get unfrozen is to have someone go under your legs. To make the game harder, have more than one person be "it."
- **Guard The Bone**-This game is played in groups of four. One person is the dog and sits on his/her hands and knees. The dog must protect a towel or shirt, which is placed underneath him. The other people, also on their hands and knees, must try to get the towel. If they do, they become the dog. If the dog tags them before they get the towel, they are "out" until the next game.
- **Hill Dill**-The person who is "it" stands in the center of the play area while the other players stand behind one of the goal lines marked across the ends of the play area. Half of the players stand on one side of the play area and the other half stands on the other side. The

person who is "it" call out "Hill Dill, come over the hill!" On this signal the players run across the center to the opposite side. The person who is "it" tries to tag them. The players who are tagged go to the center and help tag the remaining players. The game is played until one person is left. Hint: Place the goal lines 40' apart.

- **Kabaddi**-Any playing area can be used with boundaries set and a center line created. Two teams are created. Each team is on one half of the playing area. The game is started by one player from only one team running across the mid-court line trying to tag as many players on the opposite team as possible while yelling the word "kabaddi" (cubbedy) repeatedly in one breath. All those tagged now belong to the other team. Once the player loses his/her breath though, he may be tagged. If this happens, the player then is on the opposite team and all those tagged remain on the same team. Players take turns running to the other side.
- **Line Push Tag**-One person is "it" and one is "not it." The rest of the group lines up in a straight line shoulder to shoulder. The chaser tries to tag the chasee. If the chasee does not want to be chased any longer, he/she can change places with a person in the line by coming from behind and GENTLY pushing that person forward out of the line. That person becomes the new chasee. If the chaser tags the chasee, they switch roles. Participants may not cut through the line at any time during the game.
- **Loose Caboose**-Groups (trains of 3 or 4) depending upon the size of the group are made up with the individuals lining up behind each other forming a train. The game is a tag game. Two people are designated as "it" and two are the "loose caboose." The object of the game is for those who are "it" to tag the players who are the loose caboose. The loose caboose, however, can avoid being tagged by hooking onto the end of the train. Once a player hooks on to the end, the first player in the train then becomes the loose caboose. The train can also try to avoid being hooked onto. Once a player has been tagged, they then become the "it," and the "it" becomes the loose caboose.
- **Partner Tag** - Link arms with a partner. When you are linked, you can't be tagged. One person is it, and another is being chased. That person can link with another pair, and that "unlinks" the 3<sup>rd</sup> person who is then being chased.
- **Raid**-The leader begins by choosing two "exterminators." Everyone else is an ant. The "exterminators" will be doing the chasing. Once an exterminator has tagged an ant, the ant falls on their back and puts all four limbs facing upward. Four other ants may pick up their hurt buddy by their limbs, and place them on a designated hot spot (i.e. bases or rubber mats). The once dead ant has been resurrected and may continue playing. Note: Any time a live ant is helping a dead ant; the exterminators cannot tag them.
- **Sewing Up the Gap**-The object of this game is to tag the chasee before he/she can "sew up the gap." (All of the gaps between players.) The group stands in a circle leaving room in between each other. The chasee sews up the gaps by weaving in and out among players. When the chasee sews up a gap, those two players join hands and the chasee can no longer run through it. The chasee wants to sew up all of the gaps, before getting tagged, with him/her on the inside of the circle, and the chaser on the outside. If the chaser tags the chasee, the roles are reversed.

**The Big Wind Blows** - The group starts by sitting in a large circle. There should be some room between each person, but not in abundance. One person will stand in the middle. The person in the middle will say, "The Big Wind Blows for anyone who \_\_\_\_\_." The middle person will fill in the blank with any characteristic or trait they wish (i.e. anyone with blue eyes). If the trait or characteristic applies to any group member, that group member must get up and move to an open spot more than three spaces away from their original spot. If the trait does not apply to a group member, they stay where they are. The last person to find a spot is the new middle person. Note: Remind the group to keep it clean!

**Two Truths and a Lie** - Good for pairs or the entire group. People say three things about themselves. 2 are true and one is a lie. People try to guess which one is false.  
Ultimate Frisbee

**Wanna Buy a Duck?** - Participants sit in a circle. One person starts by turning to the one of the people sitting next to them and say, "Do you wanna buy a duck?" That person says, "A what?" The first person says, "A duck." The second person asks, "Does it quack?" The first person answers, "Of course it quacks!" The second person then starts the conversation over with the next person. There is a catch however! The person says, "Do you wanna buy a duck?" The next person says, "A what?" The second person in line then turns and says, "A what?" to the first person. The first person responds by saying, "A duck." The second person says, "A duck" to the third person. The third person then says, "Does it quack?" The second person turns and repeats to the first person the same question. The first person then says, "Does it quack?" The second person turns and repeats to the first person the same question. The first person then answers and then the game continues in the same fashion until the entire group is involved in the conversation.

**Water Gun Killer** - The leader needs to take pictures of all participants ahead of time. Each person is given a picture of another individual and a water gun. The object of the game is to collect as

many pictures by "killing" others. A person can kill another at any time by squirting them with the water gun. When a person successfully kills the individual in their picture, they take the picture that individual had and try to kill that person. Game continues until everyone is dead except for one person.

**Whomp 'Em** – One person is the "Whomp 'Em Master." That individual stands in the middle of the circle with the "Whomp 'Em Sword." (Could use Styrofoam tube or rolled up tube of newsprint, etc.) The rest of the group sits in a circle with legs out toward the center of the circle (leaving enough room for one person standing in the middle). The object of the game is for the "Whomp 'Em Master" to get stuck in the middle of the circle. Someone starts off the round by saying the name of a member of the group. The Master must "Whomp" (hit) the legs of that member, before that member says the name of another member. The game goes on until the Master hits an individual before that individual can say the name person's name (can not repeat name that has been said in that round already.) When the Master succeeds in "Whomping" an individual, that individual becomes the New Master. Best if played following another name game, so everyone has an idea of each other's names.

## Advanced

**Affirmative Fold-Ups** – Have group comfortably sit in a circle. Give each participant a sheet of paper and ask him or her to write his or her name on the top of the paper. Place all the papers in the center of the circle. Have each participant draw a sheet from the center (not their own) and ask them to write one (or a sentence) positive word about that person at the bottom of the sheet. They then fold the paper up to cover up the word. Have them place the sheet back in the center and repeat on another sheet. Participants will continue to select other's sheets from the circle to write affirming words on, until the name is the only thing showing on the paper. The leader can then distribute the papers to their owners. This is a great game to do at the end of a retreat, the end of a year for an organization, at a staff meeting, etc.

Autograph Sheet

**Commercials** – Have people prepare a 30 second commercial for themselves highlighting their skills and what they have to offer other people in the group. (visual aids may be used)

**Floor Puzzle Collage** – Make a giant puzzle (out of poster board or construction paper), with enough pieces for each person. Each person makes a collage that describes them on their piece, then as a team builder, put the puzzle together. The puzzle is displayed in the hall. \*\*It's important to remember to mark, which side is the front of the puzzle piece, and which is the top/bottom, so that when the collages are all made, they fit together the right way.

Important Item

**Islands (Carpet Squares)** - this game should be played with at least 6 people. Lay squares of carpet in a line putting down 1 more carpet square than the number of people playing, (if you don't have carpet squares, use paper or a plate). Have half the people line up on the squares on one side and have the other half line up on the other side, with the empty square in the middle of the line. Have everyone face toward the empty square. Tell the group that they have to transfer all the people to the opposite side from where they now stand of the empty square. People can only move if they are stepping past one person in front of them and on to an empty square. (They can't move if there is not a person in front of them, or if there is more than one person in front of them). Only one person can be on a square. A lot of people find this game pretty tough! At the end of the activity everyone should be on the square exactly opposite from where they began.

**Levitation** – One person will lie on the ground on his/her back, with eyes closed (if they feel comfortable). The rest of the group will place their hands underneath the person lying down. One person will be designated to be the captain, and therefore should place him/herself at the person's head. Once everyone is ready, the captain will softly count to three. At this time, the group will pick the person up to their waist. The captain will again softly count to three, and the group will bring the person to shoulder height. The captain will softly count to three and the group will bring the person overhead. Finally, the captain will count to three, and the group will gently rock the person (forward and backward) down to the ground. It is the volunteer's responsibility to stay stiff as a board. It is the rest of the groups' responsibility to take this activity very seriously, not to talk and to keep the head higher than the feet at all time.

**Life Boxes** – Take a sheet of paper and fold it in half then in half again. Unfold and you have 4 boxes. Have markers or crayons available and have people write the following headings in the 4 boxes 1) Childhood 2) High School 3) College 4) Future. In each of the boxes they are to draw a simple picture that represents an event or action that was extremely important to that particular time of their life. Have people go around and share their squares.

**Lifelines** – Each member draws a line on a paper to represent the highs, lows, significant events, turning points, and etc. of his/her life to date (can also project into future). Members share their lifelines with other members. Members ask questions about each other's lifelines. This exercise also can be done with pipe cleaners and verbal explanations.

**Pipe Cleaners** – Have a person take a pipe cleaner and use it to form into something that represents who they are. (Something that they are good at, they like to do, about their family, etc...) It can be an actual representation or a symbolic one. When they are done, have them walk around and pair up with someone and try to guess each other's shape. Then pull the group together and have people share.

**Sentence Stems** – For groups of two or three and have participants complete the rest of the sentence. The leader can read the sentence to all of the participants or all participants can have sheets of paper with these listed and take their own time in covering them. Here are some examples:

- Before I came to Purdue, my main interests were...
- The way I would describe my family is...
- The thing I remember most about high school...
- My fondest memories of another person are...
- My most unusual friend is...
- The things I value most are...
- My favorite pastimes are...
- Some of the things that make me happy are...

**Values Discussion** – Have participants find two people who are wearing the same color as them. Have them find a spot where they can talk together. Instruct them they will be talking about some issues and you will give them new topics every few minutes. Here are some samples:

Talk about the most important thing you learned this year.

What are the easiest and hardest emotions for you to express and why?

What is something that few people know about you?

What do you value in a friend?

What do you want to be doing in five years?

What is one goal you have for next year?

What is a motto you try to live by?

What is the greatest challenge you are facing?

What do you like most about yourself?

What do you value in a loving relationship?

What do you value most in life?

**Yarn Toss** – Everyone stands or sits in a circle, with the facilitator holding a ball of yarn. Hanging on tightly to the tail of the yarn, he tosses the ball to someone else while completing the sentence, "You're the best person because..." After the ball of yarn has been passed to everyone in the circle, the group slowly raises and lowers their part of the yarn to reveal the intricate web of relationships in the group.