

Icebreaker Games

Braggs & Bummers

Have each person share one “brag” & one “bummer” from the previous week (i.e. a highlight and a lowlight). This is an easy exercise to use to get feedback concerning their life at that moment. Encourage Small Group Members to be honest and authentic in their responses. Some Small Groups do this most weeks and the Brags & Bummers become more honest in time. Use this time to affirm and empathize with one another.

M&M's Game

Pass around a bag of M&Ms and have each member take two M&Ms of different colors. After the Small Group Members have their M&M's tell them they need to share two things about themselves before eating them.

Have a different category for each color of M&M for Small Group Members to share about. For example: Red-Pet Peeve; Blue-When I grow up, I want to be a...; Green- Something about their Family; Brown-An Accomplishment; Orange-Favorite Superhero; Yellow-If they could get a \$50 gift card to any store, where would they want it? These are only a few examples. Be creative and think of some on your own!

Find & Sign

Hand out sheets of paper with a 10-15 categories that describe Small Group Members. For example: A female wearing contacts, A White Sox fan, Someone with a motorcycle, A guy who can play an instrument, etc. Members then need to have other members sign their sheet. No one can sign a sheet twice. The first person to have all needed signature wins!

Variation: If you don't want to type the sheet, hand out blank pieces of paper and have Small Group Members list 1-10 on the left side. Have a poster board that lists all the categories.

Trait Trader

You have just taken a job as a trait trader in the fictitious exchange, the Personality Market. You are a new executive and it is very important to you that you do well in your new job. To do so, you must trade wisely and end the game with a trait that applies to you.

Everyone gets a piece of paper (trade slip) with a personality or character trait written on it (e.g. tall, creative, adventurous, quiet, etc.) Then everyone writes their name on the slip. Then everyone must trade your slip with someone else. If your new trait also applies to you, write your name on that slip. If not, do nothing and then everyone trades again. The goal is to end up with a trait that applies to you and to have written your name on more slips than anyone else. When the leader calls out “exchange closed.” The game is over. Remember, your goal is to end up with a trait that applies to you and to have written your name on more slips than anyone else.

Allow 12-15 minutes for the game and then call “exchange closed”. Next, ask everyone to turn their trait slip to the side that holds the names of the traders. Ask your first trader to say his or her name and to read his or her trait, stating whether or not it is true about them. Then, ask the others in the group to raise their hands if the trader's name appears on their trade slips. Count

the hands. Move to the next trader and repeat. When done, award the prize to the trader with the most slips signed who has a trait that describes him or her on the final slip.

I Remember

First, everyone gets a coin. Then, after looking at the date on the coin, take a minute to think about what you were doing when that coin was minted. What grade were you in? Who was your teacher? Who were your friends? What was your favorite thing to do or play with? What is a funny story from that time? What was going on in your life at that time? What kind of music did you listen to? etc. (If you were not yet born or prefer not to discuss your life during the year selected, choose another coin.) After taking some time to think about it, you are ready to play the game.

The goal is to find someone with a coin that was minted at least two years before or after yours. Ultimately, the goal is to have the oldest coin in the room. Find a partner; take three minutes each to tell each other about your moments in time.

When you are finished, each of you toss your coin. If they are alike (both heads or tails) exchange coins. If they differ, keep your original coin. Repeat the process up to three times as designated by the host. Allow 5 minutes for each round. At the end of all rounds, call each year in order and ask each participant to stand and give his or her name. Award a prize to the holder of the oldest coin. Use your own coins to ensure an even distribution of years.

Balloon Game #1

Have everyone put one piece of information about themselves in a balloon, then blow up the balloon and throw the balloon in the middle of the circle of participants. Then, one by one, pop the balloons and guess to whom that piece of information belongs

Balloon Game #2

Pass one balloon around the circle and have each person write a question (i.e. What is your most embarrassing moment? Who is your hero? etc.) on that balloon. Then pass the balloon around the circle and each person has to answer three questions on the balloon.

Beachball

Much like balloon game 2, write a series of questions on a beach ball (mix serious with comical) toss the ball around the room. When a member catches the ball, they must answer the question closest to either their left or right thumb.

Tattoo

You have just arrived at Tony's Tattoo Parlor for a tattoo. Tony wants each of his tattoos to say something about the person wearing them. From you, he needs a little inspiration and a design before he can start his work. Everyone gets a piece of paper where you are design a rough tattoo that reveals something about yourself, your school, your hobbies, or your family, in order to help get Tony's creative juices flowing. You must also make a note about how big the tattoo should be and where you will have it applied. Everyone then shares their tattoo ideas with each other, and in the process, they tell a little about themselves. If you want, you can vote on the best tattoo, or everyone can tape their tattoos on their bodies to wear for the rest of the night.

Adjective + Name Game

Go around the circle and have students share their first name preceded with an adjective (or noun) that starts with the first letter of their name. For example: Mischievous Mike, Daring Dan, Packer Paul, Sassy Susan, etc. After everyone has said their name, go around the circle trying to say each name together.

Variation: As you go around in a clockwise order, before a person says her name, she must say all the names everyone else up to that point.

Would You Rather...

Go around the room one by one answering questions such as "Would you rather have hair growing out of your ears or your nose?", "Would you rather eat liver or sushi?", "Would you rather shovel snow or rake leaves?" These types of questions provide for some fun discussion.

As a variation, after the selected person answers, you can take a group vote to see what the majority of the group would choose.

Scar Show & Tell

Many Small Group Members will have a scar with an interesting story. Ask Small Group Members to reveal scars in "appropriate" places to the group and share the background behind the injury or surgery.

Playing Card Clusters

Deal one playing card per person – take out 2's, 3's, 4's, etc. if needed because of size. Then call out categories and have Small Group Members cluster into groups. For example: Suits (hearts, spades, diamonds, & clubs), Number (aces, kings, queens, etc.), Blackjack 21 (must have 4 people and not exceed 21), etc.

Once clustered, have Small Group Members introduce themselves and answer a question like "What's your biggest pet peeve?"

Who Am I?

You need to write the name of a famous person (Ronald Reagan, Bugs Bunny, Brett Farve, ..., etc.) on 3x5 cards and tape a different name on the back of each member. They then need to ask other(s) in the group questions to determine "Who am I?" All questions need to be answered with only a "yes" or "no".

You are only allowed to ask one question to each person in your Group. This forces them to mix it up with many people in the group. As a variation, you can use this for holiday words instead of names.

TP Sharing

Hand out a roll of toilet paper to your group. Tell Small Group Members to take as many sheets as they wish (with enough to go around to everyone!). After Small Group Members have their TP in their hands, they need to share an interesting fact about themselves for every piece of TP they are holding!

I have never...

Sit in a circle. There should be one less chair than people. The person without a chair stands in the middle and says something they have truly never done (i.e.: "I have never left the United States").

Everyone who has done what the person in the middle has not (i.e.: everyone who has left the United States) must stand up and find a new seat. The person left without a seat now stands in the center and begins again.

Two Truths & A Lie

Have each person write 3 statements about themselves on a 3x5 card along with their name. The leader can collect the cards or each Small Group Members can read his/her card. The group tries to guess which statement is a lie.

Hot Seat

Designate Small Group Members to sit in the "hot seat" for 5 minutes while others in the group ask questions. Keep the questions fun and interesting ... while encouraging depth and authenticity. Small Group Members have the freedom to pass on questions if they wish.

Spiritual Journeys

Encourage a Small Group Members to share his or her life story with the Small Group. Ask for volunteers and make sure this person has a week or so to prepare his/her thoughts.