

Breaking the Ice with Ready to Use Icebreakers

As a student leader you will more than likely be in the position—often—to help people and groups you are working with get to know each other. Keep this “cheat sheet” on hand for those times when you need a quick and easy icebreaker to help individuals become familiar and comfortable with one another.

The Story of My Name

Ask participants to introduce themselves and tell what they know about why they have their name (Example: he was named after a great-uncle or her name was the name of a character in her mother’s favorite book).

Monogram

Give participants a sheet of paper and writing utensil. Ask them to write out their monogram (the first letters of each of the names they would identify as their full name). Next ask them to write or draw something about themselves that starts with the each letter of their monogram (Example: TJP—talkative, Jiffy Peanut Butter, pool). Ask everyone to share their monograms, full names and a little about themselves.

Mad Liberation

Create your own version of the popular “Mad Libs” game by simply grabbing a document of some kind. It might be a newspaper article or a greeting card. Delete a few of the nouns, adjectives, and more and then ask group members to fill them with new words. For instance, when you remove the underlined words from the sentence “Students will have an opportunity to enjoy a meal of chicken, salad, fresh bread, and blueberry pie,” and have students give you new words, you could end up with a sentence that looks like “Frogs will have an opportunity to smash a meal of thumbtacks, carnations, smelly bread, and chipmunk pie.”



Discussion Starters and Activities:

- ▲ **The Question Everyone Can Answer**—Example: “What was the highlight of your summer?”
- ▲ **Whip**—Quickly go around the circle and answer questions (or complete a phrase) with one or a few words.
- ▲ **Group Rating**—Use thumbs up/down, 1-5 scale using fingers up or a barometer reading.
- ▲ **Use Passable Item**—A koosh ball or other item can help indicate the person who is speaking. Have them toss it to another person to encourage their involvement. This method also helps control interruptions.
- ▲ **Ask for Questions**—Write a question or concern on paper, collect, and redistribute. Ask the reader to interpret what the writer meant and discuss.

Change is in the Air

Have students sit in a circle with their feet touching—nothing should be able to get past the perimeters of the circle. Grab a handful of change. Explain that you know the year will bring many changes—as a group and as individuals. Then, say, “Change is in the air!” and throw the handful of change upward within the circle. Tell students to scoop up the change nearest them. Then, for each quarter they must talk about what change they are most looking forward to making. For each dime it could be what leadership change they will make, each nickel, an area of growth or change they want to make, and for each penny, one change they hope will not happen.