



Mixers to Build Relationships

Belonging and supportive relationships are foundational to a positive experience for youth. Planning "get to know you" activities at each club meeting offers a safe way for youth and families to shed any hesitation they may feel and can help establish a baseline for getting to know others at a deeper level. Knowing a person's name and something about them is an important first step to forming a supportive relationship.

Youth need to know they are cared about by others and feel a sense of connection to others in the group. As the facilitator, it is important to provide youth the opportunity to actively participate in a space that feels physically and emotionally safe. One way to do this is to use discussion questions that encourage youth to learn from each other and synthesize and use ideas collaboratively. (National 4-H)

Friendship Card

Every person receives an index card on which they vertically write both their first and last name. They then find a person whose name (doesn't matter if it's first or last name) begins with a letter from their name.

A - Abigail

C - Chris

N - Nelson

H - Harold

N - Nancy

R - Ralph

I - Isabelle

Name Tag Scramble

Have everyone form a circle and place their name tags on the floor in front of them. The players march around the circle clockwise. When the leader gives an appropriate signal, they pick up their nearest card and find the owner without speaking. Repeat.

Zip and Zap

Have everyone form circles of 10 - 20 per circle. Ask for a volunteer to be in the center of the circle. This person moves around the inside of the circle, then quickly

points to one player and says either "ZIP" or "ZAP." If they say "ZIP," the player pointed to must respond with the first name of the player on their left before the leader can count to 10. If the leader says "ZAP," the player on the right must be named.

The Story of Your Name

Is there a story related to your name? If not, is there a story you wish were related to your name? Some of us are named after a favorite relative, a close family friend or perhaps even someone famous. Our middle or last names may be significant too. For this activity, invite everyone to share the story of their name—how they came to have it, if they like it or not, who else has their name, if there are cultural naming traditions that influenced their name, etc. And encourage participants to end with the phrase "please call me...(their name of choice)." In this way, everyone will have the opportunity to say how they like to be addressed and what is positive about their name.

Mingle

Have everyone move about in a group "mingling," and as they mingle to say "mingle, mingle, mingle." During the mingling process, shout out various suggestions for forming groups: hair color, shirt style, type of shoes, number of family members, same birth month, favorite flavor of ice cream, etc.

Once in their small group, have them discuss a deeper question about their similar item. For example, what do you like about your shoes, what's the best thing about the number in your family, etc.

Face to Face / Back to Back

Begin by inviting everyone to find a partner and stand face-to-face. Next, have them discuss a question you provide for them. After a minute or two of conversation, call out the phrase "back to back!" and invite participants to stand back to back with their present partner.

Next, introduce a new question to the group & call out "Face to Face" and invite them to find a new partner to discuss the current question. Repeat.

Below are several questions to use. Or make up your own.

Questions

1. What is the most interesting thing you have ever found?
2. Of all the animals you have known in your life, which one is your favorite?
3. If you could have dinner with any 3 people, who would you invite?

4. Who is your favorite teacher? Why?
5. If you could only eat one food for a month, what would it be? Why?
6. What would you do with an extra \$50 right now?
7. What is the farthest you have been from home?
8. What is your favorite candy bar, TV show, sports team, etc.
9. What is/was your favorite subject in school?
10. What is your favorite game to play?

Four Corners

Divide the available space into four quadrants. Inform the audience what each quadrant represents and ask everyone to stand within the quadrant that best identifies their preference. Have each quadrant group complete the corresponding follow-up question or activity.

- Would you describe your leadership Style as - orchestra conductor, military drill sergeant, baseball coach or mountain guide.
 - Why did you choose this?
- Choose which music genres you like best - rock, rap, country, jazz
 - Sing favorite song as a group
- Which sport do you like best to play or watch - basketball, soccer, football, baseball
 - Create a cheer for your sport
- Where would you like to take a vacation - beach, mountains, big city, cruise ship
 - What would you plan to bring along
- Favorite types of movies - action, comedy, romance, science fiction
 - Act out a scene from your favorite movie
- Which food would you choose - hamburgers, fried chicken, salmon, veggie burger
 - Preferred side dish with this food?

Walk & Talk

Invite everyone to partner with someone they don't know well yet. Explain to them that they are going to take a three-minute walk together and to find out three things about each other that they have in common.

When they have identified three things, they stop walking and find another group of two that is ready (to form a group of four). This group of four must find two things they have in common (and these things cannot include any from the previous round). When finished, this group of four finds another group of four (to form a group of eight), and these eight people must find one thing that they all have in common.

Encourage groups to find “level two” commonalities. A level one commonality is, “we both like ice cream.” A level two commonality might be “we both have had ice cream at the same shop in New York City.”

Sources:

University of Minnesota Extension (1973) *Fun & Games Bulletin*

Cain, J. (2012) *Find Something to Do*. Teamwork & Teamplay.

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