

Ice Breakers

Fortune-Teller

Select a trusted adult who is unfamiliar to your kids to help you with this activity. Announce that your adult guest has supernatural powers. He or she can tell strangers about their pasts and predict their futures. Act as if you are randomly choosing two or three kids and invite your guest to describe bits of humorous (but true) information about the subjects. Of course, you have secretly gathered this information ahead of time from parents and briefed your guest with it. After you have had some fun with this, clue the audience in. You can use this activity along with a session on Scripture's perspective on fortune-telling.

Boggle Mixer

Divide your young people into small groups. Each member of the small group writes their first name in large letters on a single piece of paper in a vertical list with a uniform left margin. Each group then tries to make as many words as possible (three letters or more) from the combined letters of the names. Any combination can be used as long as the letters are contiguous in any direction. Give one point for three- and four-letter words. Give two points for five-letter words and three points for six-letter words. Proper names and foreign words are not permissible. Set a three-minute time limit. *Gary K. Sturni*

Cross 'Em Up

On index cards, have each kid write one thing about himself that not everyone knows. Collect the cards and use the information for clues to your own crossword puzzle, with the kids' first names as the answers in the puzzle. Many computers have a crossword puzzle program that makes this project easier to complete. *Mark C. Christian*

Sentence Game

Everyone splits up into groups and each group gets a sentence. Each group must make up a story that ends in that sentence. The crazier, the better!! (i.e. That is how the purple frog became King of England)

Chain reaction

Prepare 8 ½ x 11-inch sheets of paper, each with a different question at the top. The questions may come from the following list or from your own collection.

- What is the most enjoyable part of the day for you?
- What would you consider to be your greatest accomplishment?

- What is it about you that your mother or father brags about the most?
- Which TV shows do you watch the most?
- Have you ever played a music instrument?
- Do you know any good jokes? Tell me one.
- What do you like about school?
- Where have you been that no one else in the room has been?
- What is the most beautiful thing you have?
- What is your favorite seasonal activity?
- Where were you born?
- What were you last Halloween?
- What is your favorite book?
- Where is your favorite place to eat?
- What percentage of the Bible would you say you have read?
- What is your motto for your life?

The question on every paper is marked with the number 1. Now follow these steps to create your own chain reaction:

- Everyone mingles and pairs up. Students ask their partners the one question from their own sheets. They do not need to write down the answer, just listen.
- Then students copy their partners' questions to their own sheets & number it 2.
- Now everyone mingles again & finds new partners. Students ask their new partners the new question they just copied from the latest partner.
- They listen to the answers, then copy their new partners' question 1 to their own sheets and label it 3.

Continue until students have thoroughly mingled or set a time limit.

Always ask the last question on the list, and always copy the first question.

Get that Story

Break your group in half and give each team a copy of the newspaper. Call out story titles, photos, advertisements, etc. The first group to show the leader the correct item gets a point.

Character Analysis

When members of a group don't know each other very well, have everyone write down some information about themselves on a sheet of paper, without their names. Information could include the following:

- Favorite food
- Middle name
- Hobby
- Favorite TV show
- Most embarrassing moment

Have the kids pass them in. They are shuffled and redistributed. Students read their slips of paper to the rest of the group one at a time. The group then tries to guess who the person is from the information. This is a fun way to have kids get better acquainted. *Roger Paine*

Drop The Blankie

This is a great way to get everyone better acquainted. Before starting, make sure visitors are introduced, so that everyone has at least heard everyone else's name. Divide into two teams and have each team huddle at opposite ends of the room. Two people (neutral) hold a blanket in a vertical position, fully opened and touching the floor. Each team sends one person to stand one foot from their side of the blanket. When they are ready, the blanket is dropped. The first person to say the other person's name correctly captures that person for his team. The game continues until only one person remains on one of the teams. If neither of the last two players knows the other person's name, they are introduced and sent back to their teams. *Peter Torrey*

Scrambled Name

Here's a great little mixer for larger groups (15 or more) that don't know each other. Pass out slips of paper and pencils and have everyone write down their own name with the letters all mixed up. In other words, if your name is Harvey Furd, then you might write it as "Vreahy Urfd."

When all the names have been put in a hat, have each person draw one out. On the command of "go," the kids try to unscramble the name on their paper either by themselves or with help from others. Once they know the name of the person, they must seek that person out—either by shouting out the person's name or by asking individuals their names. Once they find the person, they must have the person sign the piece of paper. The game can continue until a time limit is up or until everyone has figured out all the names. *Bob Bilanski*

Appendices Unite!

This game leads into a discussion on the body of Christ or Christian unity [1 Corinthians 12] When the group arrives, give everyone a slip of paper with a part of the body on it like ear, nose, foot, kneecap, hand, eye, etc. Distribute enough "parts" to make up two or more complete bodies. In other words, if you have 30 kids, you might want to have three bodies, each with 10 parts.

When the signal to go is given, the students try to form complete "bodies" as quickly as possible by getting into groups. The body that gets together first is the winner. A complete body has only one hand, two arms, two legs, and so on. If a body has three legs, one of the legs has to find a different body. Once the bodies are formed, start some small group discussions or other activities which require those bodies to work together as a team.

Match Mixer

This is a great way to help kids in a youth group get to know each other better. Give each person three slips of paper or 3x5 cards. Have everyone write one thing about themselves on each slip of paper.

Suggested items could be:

The most embarrassing thing that ever happened to me.

- My secret ambition.
- The person I admire most.
- My biggest hang-up.
- If I had a million dollars, I would...

All the cards are collected and redistributed three to each person. No one should have one that they wrote themselves. On a signal, everyone then tries to match each card with a person in the room. They circulate around the room and ask each other questions to determine whose cards they have. The first to do so is the winner. All the kids may be allowed to finish and then share their findings with the rest of the group. *Cecelia Brown*

Human Scramble

Put one letter of the alphabet on each 3x5 card. Make up enough cards so that you can give each team one-third to one-half of the alphabet plus a few extra vowel cards that you have made up. Give each team 30 seconds to form the longest word possible with the letters they have been given. The team with the longest word wins. Gather up and mix the cards, redistribute them, and play several rounds.

Puzzle Mixer

You know that each of your students is important to the group—but do they? Give each one a piece from a jigsaw puzzle (or two or three pieces, depending on the size of your group and the number of puzzle pieces), and give them 30 seconds to find someone whose piece interlocks with theirs. Small prizes may be awarded to those who are successful with this part of the crowd breaker. Then allow kids 45 seconds to discover as many matches as they can in order to form a large section of the puzzle. The largest group can receive a prize—and all the groups see more clearly how, if they want to be involved in the youth group, they must take the initiative. *Michael B. McKay*

Signatures

This mixer can be used with any age group. It's easy and fun to play. Give each person a sheet of paper and a pencil. Written down the left margin of the paper are the letters in a word or phrase selected because of its association with the holiday or the occasion of the party. For example, at a Christmas party, the words written down the side might be *Merry Christmas*.

On a signal the players go around getting the signatures of the other players. They try to find someone who's first or last name begins with one of the letters in the key word or phrase. When someone is found, they are asked to sign next to the appropriate letter. The first person to get signatures next to all of the letters on his or her sheet is the winner. If no winner has come forth

after a certain period of time, stop the game, and whoever has the most signatures is the winner. In case of a tie, first names that match are worth more than last names—so the most matching first names wins. The phrase can be longer for larger groups or shorter for smaller groups. *Lillian Rossow*

M Miriam Thompson
E John Elroy
R Roger Tulman
R Josh Roberts
Y Renee Yanatone
C Charlie Monroe
H John Hancock
R Reggie Thompson
I Ilene Baker
S Steve Underwood
T Tom Gazaway
M Melissa Jones
A Andy Gray
S Phil Stone

Match Tag

Give everyone a name tag with things written on it, like favorite color, favorite musical group, favorite movie of this year, favorite TV show, favorite place in town to eat, etc. All the kids write in their own answers and then put the tag on. After everyone has filled out their tag, each person tries to find another participant whose choices exactly match or are most like theirs. *Joyce Crider*

Non-verbal birthday lineup

Ask everyone to line up according to the month and day of birth without any talking. This should inspire some interesting means of communication towards a common goal.

People Bingo

Give each player a bingo card of blank squares. Players randomly fill the squares with the names of other players in the game. If there are leftover blanks, players can fill them in with an X. Fill a hat with the names of all the players written on small slips of paper. Randomly pull names from the hat and have kids mark an X through that name on their cards. The first person who has a row of Xs horizontally, vertically, or diagonally wins.

People Bingo

Do you know me?

Each person is given a nametag and an index card. The name tag has the name of another person in the group on it. Everyone is told to circulate, meet, mix and mingle to gather information, insights or stories about the person on their tag from group members. The opening line “Do you know me?” is used to help generate clues and conversation. The index card is to be used to write down the information collected. At the end of a designated time—about 15 minutes, each participant introduces their “name tag” and its person to the group.

I’ve Got Your Number

As kids arrive, each gets a number that they must wear in a conspicuous place on their clothes. Ahead of time, prepare lots of instructions on little slips of paper, and then place them in a box. They should be things like:

- Borrow something from 1.
- Introduce 2 to 7.
- Have 6 get you a glass of water.

Find out 12's middle name.

When everyone has their number, kids each take a slip of paper with an instruction on it. When they have completed the instruction, they come back and get a new one. At the end of the time limit (five minutes or so); whoever has completed the most instructions wins. Make sure you make plenty of instructions. *Arthur Crouse*

Balloon Game

Pass one balloon around the circle and have each person write a question on that balloon. Then pass the balloon around the circle and each person has to answer three questions on the balloon

What Flava is Da Bean?

Give each student a bowl with 10 identical jelly beans. Each student must taste their beans and record what flavor they think it is (After tasting every bean). The student with the most correct wins.

Movie Game

The first person starts off by naming a popular movie (ex. Pretty Woman). The next person must name an actor from the movie (ex. Julia Roberts). The third person must then name another movie that she was in (ex. Runaway Bride). The fourth person names a different actor from the movie (ex. Richard Gere). If someone can't think of anything on their turn, they are eliminated. Keep playing until there is a winner.

Silent Identification

Each participant is asked to either write words or draw pictures that describe themselves. This is done silently. They pin the picture on their chests, walk around and have everyone look each other over. Pictures are then shuffled and participants are asked to identify the person to which the picture belongs.

Sit-Down Game

This crowd breaker is always fun and requires little preparation and no props. It involves everyone. Simply have everyone stand up. Announce that you will be reading from a list of "if" statements. If a statement applies to them, they must sit down. Feel free to come up with your own statements in addition to these:

- You didn't use a deodorant today.
- You have worn the same socks for two days.
- You've played Among Us.
- Your belly button is an outie.
- You have a crush.
- You still suck your thumb.

- You are good looking.
- You hit the snooze button on your alarm clock.
- You ran out of toilet paper at any point in 2020.
- You watch reruns.
- You are the oldest sibling.
- You are the youngest sibling.
- You've eaten a bug.
- You have a hole in your sock.
- You recently got a traffic ticket.
- You have a false tooth.
- You made a New Years Resolution this year.
- You are still keeping your New Year's Resolution.

End by saying something such as "Sit down if you are tired of standing;" this will usually get everyone to sit down.

Name Game

Sit in a circle. One person starts by using an adjective starting with the same letter as their first name, followed by their first name (i.e. Clever Claire, Kind Karen). The next person and following has to repeat the first person's adjective and name and then add their own. It goes around the circle and the last person has to repeat all other names in order and end with their own.

Two Truths and One Lie

Go around the group and everyone has to say two true statements about themselves and one false. The rest of the group has to guess which one is false. You may be surprised. You can learn some crazy things about each other!

Let's Get Acquainted

Photocopy the list below for each person in the group. Kids should fill in each blank with the signature of someone who fits the description. The first person to get all the blanks filled in or the one who has the most signatures at the end of the time limit is the winner. Let's Get Acquainted.

Directions: For each of the following items, get the signature of one student who fits the description.

- I use Listerine: _____
- My house has three bathrooms: _____
- I've gotten more than two traffic tickets: _____
- I have red hair: _____
- I have been yelled at for spending too much time in the bathroom: _____
- I have been inside the cockpit of an airplane: _____

- I play the guitar: _____
- I enjoy eating frog's legs: _____
- I've been to Hawaii: _____
- I use your brand of toothpaste: _____
- I have used an outhouse: _____
- I watch reruns of old sitcoms: _____
- When I went water-skiing for the first time, I got up on my first try: _____
- I know what charisma means: _____
- I love broccoli: _____
- I'm left-handed: _____
- I carry a lighter or a book of matches: _____
- I have a private bath at home: _____
- I don't know your last name: _____
- My last name sounds unusual: _____

Color Jacuzzi

The object of this small group exercise is to get the group to quickly meet the other members. The facilitator calls out a color of the rainbow, for example "Red!"

- **RED** typically is the stop/turn-off color; each member of the group quickly tells the one thing that is really a turn off to them
- **ORANGE** is the motivation color; each member tells what motivates them
- **YELLOW** is the inspiration or creativity color; what is the best idea they've had recently?
- **GREEN** is the money color; what do they plan to do for money? OR What is the dumbest thing they ever did for money?
- **BLUE** is the "sky's the limit" color; what is their favorite dream for the future?
- **INDIGO** is an odd or different color; what is the most daring thing they've ever done?
- **PURPLE** is the color of royalty, if they were the ruler of the universe for a day what is the first thing you would do?

Birthday Barnyard

This game works best with a large group. Give each person a list like the one below. Instruct players to look at the action described for the month of their birthday. When the lights are turned out, they are to stand up immediately and do the appropriate action. As soon as a player finds a person doing the same thing, the two lock arms and look for the rest of the team. As soon as all the team is together, they are to sit down. The first team to find all its members wins.

- **January**-shout "Happy New Year!"
- **February**-say "Be My Valentine"
- **March**-puff up cheeks and blow (like a March wind)
- **April**-hop (like an Easter Bunny)
- **May**-say "Mother, May I?"
- **June**-say "Will you marry me?"
- **July**-make fireworks sounds

- **August**-sing "Take me out to the ball game..."
- **September**-fall down (like leaves)
- **October**-shout "Boo!"
- **November**-say "Gobble-gobble"
- **December**-say "Ho ho ho, Merrrrry Christmas!"

The Pants Game

Assuming that most everyone wears pants, here's a game for just about any time. Give everyone a score sheet & a pencil, & have the students award themselves 10 points for each of the following they have:

- Each pocket
- Each belt loop
- If you're wearing a belt
- If the belt is blue
- If the buckle on the belt is silver
- If there's a Levi tag somewhere on the pants
- If there's ornamental stitching on the pants
- If the hems are frayed
- If there's a grease spot or stain
- If there's gold or yellow top stitching
- If there is elastic in the waist
- If there is a wallet in your pocket
- If there is a hole in your pants
- If your pants are any color besides blue
- If your pants are long enough to touch the floor
- If there is more than one button on the pants

You can add other things if you wish. The person who has the highest total number of points is the winner. An appropriate prize might be a patch or an old pair of discarded pants.

A TO Z BONDING QUIZ:

A – ACROBATIC TRICK you would do if you could.

B – BIRTHDAY AND BIRTHDAY WISH:

C – CAUSE YOU WOULD GIVE MONEY TO.

D – DAD. DESCRIBE YOURS.

E – EGGS. Scramble em, Leave 'em runny, Chuck 'em

F – FRUIT. Play fruit ninja or eat a fruit buffet.

G – GARBAGE. What would you dumpster dive for?

H – HOMEWORK HABITS: describe yours.

I - INSTRUMENT: What can you play or wish you could play?

J – JESUS: miracle you would perform today.

K – KINDERGARTEN: one thing you learned. Describe yours.

L – LUNCH- WHAT DID YOU HAVE TODAY?

M - MILKSHAKE FLAVOR:

N – NERDS: your nerdiest guilty pleasure.

O – OCEAN: surf it, see it, sail it, swim it, snorkel it,

P – POOP. Just talk about it like you're in middle school.

Q- QUIT. What is one thing you would quit if you could.

R – READ. Last book you enjoyed.

S – SWEET TOOTH- What is yours hungry for?

T – TIME TRAVEL- pick a decade & country you would land in

U - UNKNOWN FACT ABOUT ME:

V – VEGETABLES. Love them, hate them, which ones.

W – WIZARDS. Make a potion to do what?

X – XTREME SPORT YOU WOULD PLAY IF YOU COULD.

Y – YOLO. What would you make it stand for?

Z- ZOO. Animal most like you.

HSM Group Activities

A list of fun ideas for you and your students! Getting in your students' world beyond HSM events will speak volumes to them about how much you care. Below are just a few ideas!

GROUP ME/GROUP TEXTING

This might not seem like your typical group hangout, but to the GenZ generation the phone & other devices are a crucial and main way to relate. GroupMe is a free app that can let you all have a group text with all phone carriers with a lot of fun bells & whistles.

STARBUCKS

Low Cost: \$3-5. Meet your students after school, you can find one on just about every corner!

PLAN A SLEEPOVER

Load up on junk food and movies. There is some sort of weird bonding that happens at these that can help your students open up to you more after one long night than 100 Small Group nights.

POOL PARTY

Cost of snacks and/or games.

LUNCH AFTER CHURCH

Food Court, Cookout, etc.

SHOPPING DAY

You don't have to buy anything!

MOVIE NIGHT

Go to the theaters or make it a blockbuster night!

Please watch only PG-13 or lower rated movies with your students

BUNNY HUNTING

Just kidding.

GAME NIGHT

Try to make it out to your students' big games or performances. Maybe tailgate before or grab ice cream after!

SERVE TOGETHER

Look online at www.gethope.net/localhope/ to see what current serving opportunities through Hope or email our amazing Local Hope Lead Carrie at carriem@gethope.net