

DIME Ice-breakers

Why icebreakers?

Icebreakers can play an important role in helping young people integrate and connect with one another in a group environment. Icebreakers can also enhance your teaching by helping to stimulate cooperation and participation. They can provide positive momentum for small group study and discussion by:

- Helping a new group get to know one another
- Helping new members to integrate into a group
- Helping young people feel comfortable together
- Encouraging cooperation
- Encouraging listening to others
- Encouraging working together
- Encouraging young people to break out of their cliques
- Developing social skills
- Building a rapport with leaders
- Creating a good atmosphere for learning and participation

Icebreakers and you

- Be enthusiastic, whatever happens, be enthusiastic!
- Choose volunteers carefully and don't cause embarrassment
- If something is not working move quickly on to the next activity
- Timing is important. Don't flog them to death. Use only 2 or 3 icebreakers as a 20-30 minute introduction to this programme. Finish each icebreaker while young people are still enjoying it.



1. Fact or Fiction?

Ask everyone to write on a piece of paper THREE things about themselves which may not be known to the others in the group. Two are true and one is not. Taking turns they read out the three 'facts' about themselves and the rest of the group votes which are true and false. There are always surprises. This simple activity is always fun, and helps the group and leaders get to know more about each other.

2. Interview

Divide the young people into pairs. Ask them to take three minutes to interview each other. Each interviewer has to find 3 interesting facts about their partner. Bring everyone back together and ask everyone to present the 3 facts about their partner to the rest of the group. Watch the time on this one, keep it moving along.

3. My name is?

Go around the group and ask each young person to state his/her name and attach an adjective that not only describes a dominant characteristic, but also starts with the same letter of his/her name, e.g. generous Graham, kind Kate.

4. Desert Island

Announce 'You've been exiled to a deserted island for a year. In addition to the essentials, you may take one piece of music, one book and one luxury item you can carry with you, i.e. not a boat to leave the island! What would you take?'

Allow a few minutes for the young people to draw up their list of three items, before sharing their choices with the rest of the group. As with most icebreakers and relationship building activities, it's good for the group leaders to join in too!

5. Around the world

The leader begins by saying the name of a country, city, river, ocean or mountain that can be found in the world. The young person next to them must then say another name that begins with the last letter of the word just given. Each person has a definite time limit (e.g. three seconds) and no names can be repeated. For example – first person: London; second person: Niagara Falls; third person: Spain, etc.

6. Supermarket

The first player says: 'I went to the supermarket to buy and Apple (or anything else you can buy in a supermarket beginning with 'A'). The next player repeats the sentence, including the 'A' word and adds a 'B' word.

Each successive player recites the sentence with all the alphabet items, adding one of their own. For example, 'I went to the supermarket and bought and Apple, Banana, CD, Dog food, Envelopes, Frozen fish'. It's not too hard to reach the end of the alphabet, usually with a little help! Watch out for 'Q' and 'X'.

7. Word link

This is a word association game. Ask the group to sit in a circle. The first person starts with any word they wish, i.e. red. The next person repeats the first word and adds another word which link to the first, i.e. tomato. The next person repeats the previous word and adds another word link, i.e. soup and so on. To keep this moving, only allow five seconds for each word link.

8. One Minute Please

The aim of the game is to talk for one minute on a given subject. You announce the topic and a member of the group is randomly selected to speak for one minute. Choose subjects to stimulate the imagination and which may be amusing. Put a stopwatch on each person to see how long they last before drying up!

9. Who am I?

Prepare a self-adhesive label or post-it note for each young person in your group. Write on it the name of a well-known or famous person. This can be an historical character or current sportsman, musician, TV personality, celebrity, etc. Have a good mix of men and women. Keeping the names hidden, stick the post-it notes on the foreheads of everyone in the group. They must then ask questions of the other to find out their identity.

Each person takes a turn to ask questions and figure out who they are. For example; Am I alive? Am I female? Am I in a band? Only yes or no questions can be asked. If the answer is no, their turn is over. If the answer is yes, they can ask another question and keep going until they get a no, or guess who they are. Keep playing until everyone has guessed, or if time is short, stop after the first few correct answers.



10. Backward Clumps

Divide into pairs. Ask each pair to sit on the floor with their partner, backs together, feet out and arms linked. Their task is to stand up together. Once everyone has done this, two pairs join together and the group of four try to repeat the task. After they succeed, add another two and try again. Keep adding people until your whole group is trying to stand together.

