

ICEBREAKERS

Icebreakers are structured warm-up activities that help members of a group get to know one another. They help create a relaxed atmosphere, encourage conversation, and promote participants' confidence. The following icebreakers for students can be adapted for all ages.

Human Bingo

Prepare a Bingo sheet, with the number of rows and columns determined by the number of students in the group. Write a characteristic in each box (for example, has blue eyes, has traveled to Israel, can recite the *alef-bet*, went to overnight camp this summer). Students should get others to sign or initial a square that applies to them. Each student can sign another student's form only once.

What You Don't Know

Hand out slips of paper and ask students to write something about themselves that they think nobody else in the room knows, and that they wouldn't be embarrassed to share. Collect the sheets, shuffle them, and hand them out again, making sure nobody gets his or her own. Each student reads aloud the contents of the slip, and the group tries to guess who wrote it.

Two Truths and a Lie

Have each person tell three things about himself or herself—two truths and one lie. The others have to guess which is the lie. All three statements should be believable, yet a bit unusual so the answers are not too obvious.

Picture Guessing Game

Have students draw a picture that expresses something about themselves, for example, playing soccer, standing with twin brothers, camping. The group leader collects the drawings. One by one, the leader pulls a drawing "out of a hat" and holds it up, and the group tries to guess who drew it. Whoever guesses correctly is the next one to choose a drawing to hold up for the group to guess. Each time, the person who drew the picture should explain its meaning to the group.

Three Things in Common

Have each student pair up with another student he or she doesn't know. Each pair should find three things that they have in common. Then each pair presents their findings to the rest of the group.

Chatterbugs

Set up two concentric circles with the inner circle of chairs facing out and the outer circle of chairs facing in so that chairs face each other. Have students pair up and decide which one is a "cricket" and which is a "lightning" bug. Crickets sit in the inner circle and do not move. Lightning bugs sit in the outer circle and rotate to the right after each round. Give students a topic to discuss (for example, my favorite Jewish holiday is _____ because. ; my favorite subject in school is _____ because...; one movie I

saw recently was _____, and I liked/disliked it because...; etc.). Each pair should discuss the topic. Give the first person one minute to talk, and then switch. At the end of the second minute, the lightning bugs rotate and everyone gets a new topic.

What's the Question?

Have everyone sit in a circle. One student gives an answer (for example, purple), and others have to guess the correct question (for example, what's your favorite color? what color is your room painted? what color car does your mom drive?).

Order Out of Chaos

Ask students to stand in order according to a criterion such as tallest to shortest, alphabetical by first name, "alef-betical" by Hebrew name, youngest to oldest by birth date, in order of their bar and bat mitzvah dates, etc. Students must figure out the correct order by talking to each other. Then present a different criterion and have students stand in order again.



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