

GROUP MODERATION

Ice Breakers

INTRODUCTION

Groups formed by participants who are unknown to each other, chiefly if the groups are made up of members from different castes, religions, education, etc. tend to be inhibited, passive and very slow in opening themselves to one another.

Ice-Breakers are exercises meant to break inhibitions, shyness and awkwardness. Ice-Breakers create in the group an atmosphere of friendliness, informality and mutual acceptance. Ice-Breakers activate communication between the group members and enhance the participants' self-image.

The list of the 18 Ice-Breakers offered below is arranged in such a way as to move from the simpler ones to the more complicated ones. At the beginning invite the participants just to share facts, data and superficial things; slowly and progressively, encourage them to deeper sharing of personal ideas, experiences and feelings.

Index

1. Superlatives
2. Home Town. Village, Locality
3. Demographics
4. Design
5. Progressive Disclosure
6. Merry-go-round Sharing
7. Triad Sharing
8. Information Quiz
9. Mutual Introduction
10. Song Puzzle
11. Introducing Your Right and Your Left Hand Partners
12. Choosing Your Favourite Animal
13. Snails
14. Finding Partners I Do not Know
15. "Who-Am-I ?" Card
16. Learning about Each other Non-Verbally
17. God Introduces You!
18. Your Best Friend Introduces You.

1. SUPERLATIVES

Participants are told to quietly study the composition of the group and to decide on a non-threatening superlative adjective that describes each group member in relation to the others: e.g. youngest, tallest, most relaxed,. Etc.

Each tells his adjectives to the group, the group members will give him feedback on the accuracy of his perceptions.

2 .HOMETOWN, VILLAGES, LOCALITIES

Secure a map of the region, town, locality, etc. the participants come from.

Post the map on the board. Each participant comes forward and writes his name and home town or locality at the proper place.

He tells the group about his locality, house, surroundings, neighbors, etc....

3. DEMOGRAPHICS

On a chalkboard the group lists the – *non confidential* - particulars they would like to know about the participants: name, age, occupation, education, home, hobbies, etc. Participants come forward and tell the group about themselves, the particulars written on the board.

4. DESIGN

The larger group is broken into smaller groups.

The smaller groups discuss what activities the house could have as Ice-Breakers.

Each group appoints a representative.

The representatives discuss and plan in front of the whole house the Ice Breaking activities they would like to have.

Finally, after a break, the activities agreed upon are conducted.

5. PROGRESSIVE DISCLOSURE

Participants come one by one to the board and write one not-threatening thing at a time: e.g. :

My favorite food.

My favorite hobby

My favorite pastime, Etc.

6. INFORMATION QUIZ

A list of questions is written on the board, or handed over in writing to all the participants.

The questions should relate to the members of the group: for instance,

How many in the group got names beginning with P and who are they?

Who is the youngest in the group, the eldest, etc?

Make a list of all the members according to their birthdays or in alphabetical order according to their first names, etc. (*make your own quizzes*)

The participants milling around, have to find the answers to the questions.

Prizes may be given to the best and most accurate replies.

7. MERRY-GO-ROUND SHARING

Participants are numbered 1 and 2.

Ones form the outer circle and twos the inner one. One member faces another (*squatting, sitting, or standing*).

In turn they share the following experiences or similar ones.

The moderator keeps the timing for sharing and calls out the experiences to be shared.

- a) Any childhood experience.
- b) An exciting youth experience.
- c) An event that showed them God's love.
- d) An experience of fear
- e) An experience of being loved by someone.
- f) An experience of being misunderstood, Etc..

After each experience the inner circle moves one place to the left.

If there is extra time more experiences can be added.

At the end, the whole group meets together to share how they felt while the exercise was going on.

8. TRIAD SHARING

The group splits into groups of threes

One of the three takes five minutes to relate about himself as much as he feels sharing

The other two take two minutes each to tell him what they heard him saying.

By rotation the same process will take place with the other two partners.

There may be a general session where each participant is introduced to the group by his two companions.

9. MUTUAL INTRODUCTION

Divide the group into groups of twos. One will be **A** and the other **B**,

They sit together, and exchange

- a) Names, places of origin, family situation.
- b) Studies, training, work.
- c) Hobbies, likes and dislikes.
- d) Ambitions, longings.
- e) Any incident of their lives.

Next, all will meet together: **A** will introduce **B** to the group, and **B** introduce **A**
A and B may add any extra information to complete what his partner has said.

10. SONG PUZZLE

A meaningful hymn or song is taken e.g. "Make me a channel of your peace".

Each sentence of the song is typed on a slip of paper, and divided into two parts

Distribute the slips among the participants..

Each participant has to complete the sentence by finding his partner.

At different corners of the room, post the different verses of the song.

The partners will find the verse they belong to, and stand at the proper corner.

When they gathered, they will sing the song together and share with their group the

Following questions:

- a) What line of the song I liked best and why?
- b) What's the message of the song has for me?
- c) How does it relate to my life and ideals?

11. INTRODUCING YOUR RIGHT AND YOUR LEFT HAND PARTNERS

All sit in a circle and count 1, 2, 3, onwards.

All odd numbers turn to their right and interview their partners next to them.

They will ask them any non confidential personal questions they would like to know about them.

Partners are not bound to answer an embarrassing question. In that case they will say: "I pass"

Then, his partner will ask him a fresh question..

After a few minutes, partners exchange roles. The interviewers will now be interviewed.

Next, all the even numbers turn to those sitting on their right and they in turn interview each other following the same procedure.

After that, each participant will be introduced to the house, by his right and left partners.

12. CHOOSING YOUR FAVOURITE ANIMAL.

The moderator offers the participants a list of animals they can choose from, .e.g. the horse, the cow, the tiger, the cat, the sheep, the snake, the bee, the spider, etc, with which to identify.

He will give as many names of animals as groups he wants to have..

He will write the animals' names on card-board pieces for the participants to choose according to their liking and, specially in the way they symbolize what they are.

Then, the participants will sit at different corners of the room in groups according to their choice of animals.

Next, they will share with their groups:

- a.) Why have they chosen that animal? What appeals to you most in it?
- b) What does it symbolize for you?
- c) Share with the group your likes and dislikes, etc,
- d) Why have you come to the camp, seminar or retreat.

Reporting to the house.

A representative of each group will report to the house the main points shared.

13. SNAILS

Players form pairs. One partner rolling- up into a ball; will imitate a snail withdrawing into its shell cutting itself from the rest.

His partner will try to get him out of his shell by any reasonable means.

Partners Discuss:

How I felt while trying to get you out of the shell?

How I felt when you tried to get me out of the shell?

What means I used and why? What have I learned of "you" and you of "me?"

Sharing with the whole group their answers to the questions above.

14. MEETING PARTNERS YOU DO NOT KNOW WELL

The participants are numbered 1 and 2

The ones line up at one end of the hall and all the twos at the other end.

Each is supposed to call from the opposite side the person he knows least.

When pairs are thus formed, each pair will pick from the opposite side, the pair which they (*combined*) know least.

Then each group of four will join the least known group of four of the opposite side.

When groups of eight are formed, the eight members of each group will ask the others, any personal non-threatening information they would like to know. about them

The interrogated persons will be free to share only what they feel comfortable to share.

15. WHO AM I? CARD

Give to the Participants a blank card

Ask them to fill in silence their card:

My 'Who I Am Card'

My name is:

I am: (*Write five characteristics or traits of your personality*)

- 1.....
- 2.....
- 3.....
- 4.....
- 5.....

Draw a symbolic figure of yourself.

On the bottom half of the card draw any item or figure that symbolizes what you think you are.

Display the Cards:

After preparing the card, pin it on your clothes and in silence, mill around Reading and examining each others' cards.

Sharing and discussing your cards.

After a while, participants will pick a partner and discuss each other's cards.

16. LEARNING ABOUT EACH OTHER NON-VERBALLY

This exercise is to be done in complete silence. It is meant only for mature groups

- a) the participants will mill around aimlessly for 2 or 3 minutes
- b) They mill around again, but this time, they will look intently at one another: and observe how others walk, how they look, how they dress, etc.. (3 or 4 minutes)
- c) Milling around again, they will stop now in front of each one, shake hands, and look at each other's faces. (3 or 4 minutes)
- d) Milling around they will shake hands with everyone, give their first names: (*My name is...*) and smile at one another. (3 or 4 minutes)
- e) Next, they will sit in groups of 4 each, and gather by methods of non-verbal communication as much information as possible about the members of the group. The only words allowed are the first names (7 to 8 minutes)
- f) Verbally now, they will share with the whole group all the information gathered, their feelings, their impressions. The persons alluded to can add, subtract or correct what others say about them.

17. GOD INTRODUCES YOU

This exercise cannot be done with large groups. It's time consuming.

If the group is large, divide the larger group into smaller ones of no more than 10 or 12 each.

Secure good moderators to moderate the small group sessions

Remind the participants that God knows us through and through.

Now, impersonate God, and let God introduce you to the group.

God is more concerned with what and who you are than with the externals of your life: like age, place of birth, degrees" secured, etc.

Tell the group all the beautiful things God sees in you.

Only positive things are to be told. ***Nothing negative should be mentioned.***

Speak of you as a person that is loveable and with great potentials.

After each one's sharing, evaluate, stroke positively, and encourage the person who did the sharing.

18. "YOUR BEST FRIEND INTRODUCES YOU"

This exercise cannot be done with large groups. It's time consuming.

If the group is large, divide the larger group into smaller ones of no more than 10 or 12 each.

Secure good moderators to moderate the small group sessions

Think of your best friend, a person who knows you best and loves you most.

Actually speaking, you are such person, you know yourself best and you are supposed love yourself most. **Your best friend is you.**

Each participant, in turn, will come to the centre, and stand next to an empty chair.

The empty chair represents you. Imagine you are "sitting there" Look at your best friend sitting there. **Look at yourself with tenderness and compassion.**

Now, introduce your best friend - **yourself** - to the group. Tell the group all the good and beautiful qualities your best friend have – **nothing negative should be mentioned** – Say for instance::

- a) He is the kind of person who likes.....
- b) His strong points and talents are.....
- c) What people like in him are.....
- d) He greatly appreciates and values....
- e) He dislikes.....
- d) Someday he will.....

After each one's sharing, evaluate, and encourage the person who introduced his best friend to the group.