

Icebreakers can...

- Be excellent devices to help people feel more comfortable with themselves and with others and feel more at home in a group.
- Break up the "cliques," invite people to form random groupings, and help individuals meet others in non-threatening and fun ways.
- Be used to set a tone for the time a group will be together, will encourage people to feel "safe" and hopefully will evoke lots of laughter in releasing tension.
- Make way for more meaningful interaction and relationships during the life of the group.

Adjective Please

Ask each person to choose an adjective that begins with the first letter of their first name and that really matches their personality. Go around the group and have each person introduce themselves.

Note: Allow participants a few minutes to think of different adjectives.

Variation: You can even make it a "repeat" game, where group members repeat each individual's adjective after it is shared.

Birthday Boggle

Everyone in the group remains silent. They must put themselves in order of birthday (date, month and year), without talking. After they have gotten themselves into what they believe is the correct order, go through the line and check their dates.

Candy Crush

Bring a bag of candy to the meeting (M&Ms, Skittles). Pass the bag around the room, telling each person to take as many as they want, but "don't eat any." Then instruct the group to introduce themselves, sharing something about themselves for each piece of candy they have taken.

Variation: Base the number of things participants have to say according to the candy size.

Dots

Material Needed: Sticky dots in a range of colors.

Purpose: Encouraging non-verbal communication.

Fix a coloured dot onto the forehead of each participant. Ask the participants to stand up and move around the room in silence. Participants must find out what colour their dot is without talking. Once they know what colour their dot is, they find others with the same colour and that will be their group.

Don't forget to give some thought to how you want to mix the groups.

Every Corner

The corners of the room are assigned different levels of agreement, ranging from "strongly agree", "agree", "disagree" and "strongly disagree". Students are then asked series of questions by the facilitator. Based on their reaction to the question, the students will go to their respective opinion corner.

The questions focus on the expectations students may have of their RSO experience, and their goals as a member including the following:

1. Attend all general body meetings.
2. Attend all organization events/activities.
3. Assist the organization with annual goal setting and planning.
4. Know the organizations mission and purpose as needed.
5. Provide recommendations for future programs, events, etc.
6. Know the names of organization members.
7. Be familiar with SIU policies and rules for student organizations to assist with problem solving more effectively.
8. Be aware of additional services offered on campus for students.
9. Show enthusiasm and interest in the student organization.
10. Be receptive to feedback from the group.

Variation: Everyone is given an opportunity to explain why they chose their corner, which ideally will lead to discussion within the group. Discussion is facilitated by students selecting corners and explaining themselves but facilitators should be sure to point out that these things don't just happen, and that students must set tangible goals and make a real effort.

Fly By

Material Needed: Paper & Pen

Time required: 15 -20 minutes

Purpose: Getting to know you.

Give everyone a scrap piece of paper to make a paper airplane. On that airplane, have them each write five facts about themselves. Then, when everyone is ready, have them throw their airplanes straight up. Each person will pick up a random airplane, read aloud the five facts and guess who in the group wrote them.

Grab Bag Skits

Material Needed: A bag of 5-6 random items for each group

Time required: 15 -20 minutes

Group Size: 10-50

Purpose: Physical energizer, just for fun

- Organize people into groups of 3-6 people.
- Hand out bags filled with random items.
- Explain that each group must come up with a skit that uses all of the items in the bag.
- Encourage the groups to be creative with the items in their bag. Objects can be whatever they imagine them to be (i.e. a hairbrush can be a microphone, a roller skate can be a time traveling device, etc.).
- As a facilitator you can create pre-made skit topics for each group, or you can give all of the groups a vague topic relating to your organization.
- Give groups 5-7 minutes to create a three minute skit.
- Have each group perform their skit in front of all the other groups.

Have you Ever?

Material Needed: Place markers.

Organize participants into a circle. Give each person a place marker and have them step on it.

Note: The facilitator should be standing in the middle of the circle directing this activity, not participating.

Explain that there is one more person than there are spots on the circle and the job of the person in the middle is to take one of the spots so that they can get out of the middle. How they get people to move is by asking the question, "Have you ever..." and then fill in the blank with something they have done.

For example: Have you ever been to a concert? Everyone who has been to a concert will then move to a different marker on the circle that is not directly next to the one they are already on.

Once people start to move the person in the middle tries to take a free space. The last person in the middle without a spot then has to say, "have you ever..." and the game continues.

Interview

Assign pairs, and spend five minutes questioning and composing a brief introduction about each other. After five minutes, pairs introduce each other to the group.

Juggling Activity

Purpose: This activity is good for second or third group meetings to test how well participants remember group member names.

Ask the group to form a large circle, with everyone facing the center. Start by tossing the ball across the circle to another person. As you toss, say the name of the person you toss to whom you are tossing. This lets them know the ball is coming to them and lets everyone hear their name. Once that person catches (or retrieves) the ball, they pick someone else, shout their name and toss them the ball. Play continues with the one ball until it makes it to everyone in the group. Once someone has received the ball, they cannot get it again. Last person in the group throws it back to the group leader. Practice the pattern a few times, always tossing to and receiving from the same person in the group.

Once your group has the pattern down, start adding additional balls/objects, this is where the mayhem really begins. Keep going, try to get at least five objects going at once.

Variation: Feel free to try again with a new pattern and mix it up.

Key Slogan

Explain that many companies have slogans or "mottos" which reflect their values. For example, Ford Motor Company uses the slogan, "Quality is Job One." Ask each student to write (or borrow) a slogan to describe him or herself and share that with the group.

Lollipop

Pass out dum-dum lollipops to the group. For every letter that appears in the flavor, the group member has to share something about him/herself with the group.

Marooned

Material Needed: Paper & Pen

Time Required: 10 minutes

Group Size: 3-25

Purpose: Helps learn about other's values, problem solving style, and promotes teamwork.

- Divide group into teams of five.

You are marooned on Saluki Island. What five items would you have brought if you knew there was a chance that you might be stranded?

Note: You are only allowed five items per team, not per person. You can have them write items on a flip chart and discuss and defend their choices with the whole group.

Variation: You can use a different number of team members and items.

Name Motion Game

Purpose: Laugh while learning group member's name.

Have everyone stand in a circle. Anyone can begin the game by saying his/her name and demonstrating a {physical} motion to go with their name. When the person is done, the entire group repeats the name and motion.

- Hello, [insert name and motion]

Then the second person (on either side of the first) introduces him/herself and does a motion. The entire group repeats that name and motion and then the first person's name and motion.

- Hello, [insert seconds person name and motion], [insert first person name and motion]

This will continue until each person has given their name and done their motion, and the entire group has repeated everyone's name and motions.

One Question

Invite a group member to ask one question of the whole group, such as “What is one of the causes you have a passion for?” That person must answer the question first. Then, go around the group, giving each person the opportunity to share their answers too.

Example Questions:

- What would be the most amazing adventure to go on?
- What game or movie universe would you most like to live in?
- What age do you wish you could permanently be? Why?
- What’s the best single day on the calendar?
- What could you give a 40-minute presentation on with absolutely no preparation? What personality trait do you value most and which do you dislike the most?

People Bingo!

Tell the group it's time to play BINGO. Distribute a copy of the BINGO Card to each person.

Each person must get up, move around the room, and find someone who fits a particular blank on the card. That person signs or initials that particular slot.

- For example, if Assia Baker drives a pickup, she would write her name in the appropriate space on the card.

Note: No one can sign another's card in more than one blank, even though they may qualify for more than one category.

Variation: If the game seems to be too long, participants may sign more than one blank.

| B | I | N | G | O |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| PLAYS TENNIS | IS WEARING MAROON | RSO MEMBER | LIVES ON CAMPUS | DRIVES A PICKUP |
| DRIVES A SPORTS CAR | LIKES SPORTS | LIVES OFF CAMPUS | DISLIKES SPORTS | SPEAKS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE |
| PLAYS AN INSTRUMENT | A PROUD SALUKI | FREE | HAS SIBLINGS | BUYS LOTTERY TICKETS |
| HAS RED HAIR | ATTENDED THE INVOLVEMENT FAIR | HAS BROWN EYES | HAS CHILDREN | IS ON FACEBOOK |
| PRESIDENT OF ORGANIZATION | HAS A PET | EDUCATION MAJOR | READS NEWSPAPER | HAS VISITED THE RSO SUITE |

Question Ball

Material Needed: Rubber Ball or Beach Ball

Time Required: 10 minutes

Group Size: 5-25

Purpose: Getting to know you.

- A ball is pre-divided with random questions written on it.
- Ask the group to pre-determine right or left thumb.
- The participants toss the ball around the circle introducing themselves and answering the question closest to their chosen thumb.

Variation:

Allow participants to choose which question to answer.

React and Act

Material Needed: Paper, pens, and a bag.

Pass out sheets of paper and pens to the players. Have each person write an event. Tell them to be creative!

Examples of events can include:

- Being surprised by a large, aggressive bear in the woods.
- You just won the lottery.
- You have just been proposed for marriage with an engagement ring.
- You just got fired by an incompetent boss.
- Making the game winning pass to win the Super bowl.
- You just fell in love.

Once everyone writes an event, fold the paper once and place it into the bag.

Note: Allow the size of the group to determine how you proceed with the rest of the activity.

Ask participants to randomly select an event from the bag. Instruct them to react to this event, without explicitly giving away what the event is. Choose a time limit (usually 30 seconds to a minute works well) and when you say “Go!”, each person will individually react to their event using exaggerated gestures, facial expressions, and their voice.

For example, the person who has just won the lottery could raise his or her arms and scream excitedly, jumping up and down. Participant must stay “in character” and continue reacting and acting based upon what their sheet said.

Variation:

Select five volunteers if it is a very large group to pick an event from the hat.

Story Time

The facilitator starts a story by saying a sentence. It then goes in a circle, each person adding a sentence onto the story-after repeating each sentence that's already been added.

Variation:

Participants do not have to repeat each sentence.

Two Truths and a Lie

Purpose: Getting to know you.

Have each person write two truths and a lie about themselves. They then pass the paper to the group and have the others guess which one is a lie.

Variation: Allow participants to read their two truths and a lie aloud, and allow other group members to guess which one is a lie.

Unique and Shared

Material Needed: Paper & Pens

Ask participants to form groups of five people with the people around them. Pass out sheets of paper and writing utensil. The first half of the activity is the Shared part. Instruct a note taker for each group to create a list of many common traits or qualities that members of the group have in common.

Note: Avoid writing things that are immediately obvious (e.g. don't write down something like "everyone has hair" or "we are all wearing clothes").

The goal is for everyone to dig deeper than the superficial. Allow about five or six minutes and then have a spokesperson from each subgroup read their list. If there are too many groups, ask for a few volunteers to read their list.

The second half is the unique part. On a second sheet of paper have participant's record unique traits and qualities.

Note: Unique items that only apply to one person in the group.

Instruct the group to find at least two unique qualities and strengths per person. Again, strive for qualities and strengths beyond the superficial and past the obvious things anyone can readily see. Allow another five or six minutes.

When time is up, share the unique qualities in one of the following ways:

- 1) Each person can share one of their unique qualities themselves;
- 2) Have each person read the qualities of the person to their right; or
- 3) Have a spokesperson read a quality one at a time, and have the others guess who it was.

Variation: Keep the same group or participants can rearrange themselves into new groups.

Valued Possessions

Members describe their favorite item in their room or home and why.

Wishful Thinking

Place an item of your choice in the middle of the circle, explaining to students that it has the power to grant them three wishes. Give them a few moments to reflect on what they would wish for and then ask willing participants to share. You'll find out a lot about one another based on what everyone choose.

X Marks the Spot

Ask participants to introduce themselves and describe details of the ideal/perfect/dream vacation.

You Choose

Ask members to stand in the middle of the room and have them move to either side to indicate their choice. Participants must choose one or the other. Have them find a partner on the side they have chosen and discuss reasons for their choice.

Note: Allow 2 to 3 minutes to talk about the decisions they made.

Choice Examples:

Are you . . .

- More like a Cadillac or a Volkswagen?
- More of a saver or a spender?
- More like New York or Colorado?
- More religious or non-religious?
- More like the present or the future?
- More intuitive or more rational?
- More like a tortoise or a hare?
- More like a gourmet restaurant or fast food?
- More yes or no?
- More like a student or a teacher?
- More here or there?
- More like a file cabinet or a toy chest?
- More like a roller blade or a pogo stick?
- Winter or summer?
- Sweet or Salty?

- Boxers or briefs?
- Rock music or Classical?
- Chocolate or strawberry?
- Morning person or Night person?
- Would you rather be short or tall?
- Would you rather be rich or beautiful?

After you have concluded with this activity, ask your members what this activity taught them, what they learned about each other, and what surprised them.

Zig Zag-O-phone

Material Needed: Paper (Cut paper into fourths) & Pen

First you need to pass out paper to each person playing. Each person should have as many squares of paper (whole sheets would be too big) as there are people playing. For example, if there are 12 participants, then each of them should have 12 squares of paper.

Second, instruct each participant to write down a crazy statement on top sheet of paper. Make sure they don't say it out loud or tell anyone what it is. The crazier the statement the better the game will be. An example would be "a clown riding a bicycle on a pepperoni moon" or something equally ridiculous.

Once they have each done this everyone passes their entire stack of paper to the right. Now each person should have their neighbor's stack of paper in their hands.

Here's where it gets fun.

Each person must now read quietly to themselves, their neighbor's statement that they now hold in their hands. Once they have read it (not out loud!) they put that piece of paper at the back of the stack and they have to draw whatever they have just read, to the best of their ability, on the next square of paper in the stack.

Once everyone has drawn, everyone passes the entire stack of paper to the right again. Everyone will now have the picture their neighbor has just drawn. They must look at it, move that piece of paper to the back and on the next sheet write down their best guess as to what that drawing is supposed to be. Then everyone passes the paper to the right again.

Now everyone is reading someone's interpretation of the picture they've just seen, and must now move that piece of paper to the back of the stack and now must draw that interpretation. Pass entire stack again, and interpret the picture.

Just keep repeating this process until all the squares of paper have been used. At this point the stack should make it all the back to the original creator. Then you go around the room and let each student walk everyone through the now hilarious progression of statements and pictures.

Variation: Also, to keep the game moving or just to add a fun wrinkle, you can time each phase of the game. Watching participants scramble to try and finish their drawing in time is pretty funny and usually makes the drawings that much more crazy.