



GAMES AND ACTIVITY BOOKLET

This booklet contains a series of activities/exercises and games which you can adapt and use in your Club. Don't be frightened to change the contents to suit your needs but make sure you are totally familiar with the game/activity and that you have worked out how you are going to use and present the activity before using it with members.

With some thought and lateral thinking many of the exercises and activities may be expanded to make an exciting club evening.

Remember prepare, or prepare to fail!

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION:	Various ways to have people introduce themselves and each other	Pages 3-4
NAME GAMES:	To help group learn and remember lots of new faces and names	Pages 5-7
MIXERS:	To liven up the atmosphere, break up cliques, or divide up large groups for discussion purposes	Pages 8-10
GROUP BUILDERS:	Tasks to help build group unity	Pages 11-12
GROUP AGAINST A PROBLEM	Exercise to test a group's creativity, ingenuity, patience and determination while coming to a co-operative solution	Page 13
TENSION BREAKERS:	Exercises to get new group interacting and relaxing - or to warm-up lethargic groups before another discussion session begins	Pages 14-16
GET ACQUAINTED:	Activities designed to help groups get better acquainted by sharing information about themselves	Pages 17-18
PERSONAL SHARING:	Similar to get acquainted games, but at a deeper level such as sharing personal histories	Page 19
COMMUNICATION EXERCISES:	To improve listening habits or analysis communication patterns and problems	Page 20
CLOSING:	Exercises to bring groups back together at the end of competitions, to open up evaluation sessions, or to sum up experiences	Page 21

INTRODUCTIONS

Personal Coat of Arms

Number of Persons: Any group

Instructions:

Provide paper cut out in the shape of a shield for each person. Also needed are markers crayons and yarn. Each person should divide the shield 4 compartments. In each compartment the person will be asked to draw a symbol to represent a part of his or her own life. Depending upon the purpose of your group you may select such areas as my family, my childhood, my favourite activity, my most important hope for the future, etc. Allow considerable time for people to make their coat of arms, then divide them into small groups and ask them to share the meaning of the symbols in each compartment with the others in the small group. At the end each person's may be hung around his or her neck as a name tag, or put up on a wall for others in the larger group to see. This is a particularly effective way of getting people to share significant parts of their personal history in small groups.

Charade

Number of Persons: a smaller group who have not yet met each other.

Instructions:

Rather than saying, 'I am...', ask people to act their names out and have the rest of the group guess.

Interviewing and Introducing each other in pairs

Number of Persons: Any size group

Instructions:

Divide the crowd/group into pairs. (Perhaps asking them to pair off with the person in the group they know least well). Give each person five minutes to interview the other. (Ten minutes altogether). Next have each pair join with 2 or 3 other pairs. In this larger group have each person introduce the individual they were interviewing.

Point for discussion:

What do people consider to be the most important aspect of someone when introducing them to the group.

Variation:

Individually write down the five most important questions that someone should ask you to best get to know the real person, and then do as above having exchanged the list of questions, so that each person is asked their own question. persons can be asked to share their expectations or fears about the coming activities with each other and then with the group.

Superlatives

Number of Persons: 10 plus preferably

Instructions:

In a circle ask each person to give his or her name and one superlative adjective, which describes him or her in relation to the rest of the group.

For example:

My name is Bob and I am the tallest

My name is Carol and I am the oldest one here.

My name is Julie and I am the sleepest.

My name is Mark and I am the furthest away.

Name and Information about Self

Number of Persons: not over 8 or 10 in a group, preferably smaller.

Instructions:

Ask each person to give their name and some bit of information about themselves.

For example:

name and their school.

Name and why they were given that name and what it means.

Name and their favourite television show

Name and the animal they think best describes their personality.

The information asked for will depend upon the type of group and the level of sharing you hope to encourage. For many groups it could be information relating to the topic they will be discussing afterwards.

NAME GAMES

Hot Potato

Number of Persons: 10-20 in a circle

Instructions:

The leader begins by tossing an imaginary hot potato to someone in the group and calling out that person's name at the same time. That person must pretend to catch the potato call out someone else's name and toss it to them. The idea is to keep moving quickly.

Application:

This game can be used to learn names or to loosen up a group or to begin a discussion about non-verbal communication (the signals people give when passing the imaginary potato).

Come to me as a

Number of Persons: about 12-20

Instructions:

Have the group seated in a circle. Leave one seat empty. The person to the right of that seat says '(someone else's name) come to me as a (some animal)'. The person called must move around the circle to the empty seat making sounds and motions like that animal. Then the person who now has the empty seat next to him must call out another name and tell that person to come as a different animal.

Going on a Picnic.

Number of Persons: 10-20

Instructions:

This is a game in which the players must guess the rule as it is being played! In a circle the leader begins by giving his or her name and saying 'I'm going on a picnic and taking'. The thing being taken must begin with the same letter as the leaders name. (My name is Bob and I'm taking some beans).

The next person gives his/her name and suggests something he/she is going to take. If the object begins with the same letter as the person's name the leader says 'OK you can come'. BUT if the person does not select an object beginning with the same letter as his/her name the leader says 'Sorry, maybe next time'. Move onto the next person and so on around the circle, (as many times around as necessary) until everyone has guessed the secret to the game and has used objects beginning with the correct letter. By this time everyone should have memorised each other's names without trying.

Remembering Names

Number of Persons: about 10-20

Instructions:

Everyone stands or sits in a circle. One person gives his/her name and adds a movement or gesture, (holding nose, pulling ear, scratching head, etc.). The next person in the circle then gives his/her name plus a gesture and then the name and gesture of the person before. Continue all the way round the circle, each person giving h/her name a gesture and all of the names and gestures of the others back to the beginning.

Patty Pickle

Number of Persons: at least 8

Instructions:

Everyone sits in a circle. The first person introduces himself/herself by name and then gives the name of a food he/she likes that begins with the same letter. For example, 'My name is Patty and I like Pickles'. The second person repeats what the first person says and then adds his/her own statement. The game should go like this:

- 1 My name is Patty and I like Pickles
- 2 My name is Patty and I like Pickles.
My name is Dan and I like Doughnuts.
- 3 My name is Patty and I like Pickles.
My name is Dan and I like Doughnuts.
My name is Sue and I like Salads.

Continue around the circle until everyone has been introduced.

Name Knee Tapper

Number of Persons: at least 10 people.

Instructions:

All players sit in a circle. One chair or small table is placed in the middle with a baton of rolled newspapers. The leader then walks around the inside of the circle and taps someone on the knee and calls that persons name, and then rapidly returns the baton to the middle and takes the seat of the person who was tapped. meanwhile, the person who was tapped immediately try to grab the baton from the middle and tap the leader with it before the leader take the seat. If the baton falls of the seat in the middle the player who put it there must replace it while the other player is waiting to take it and hit him/her. I If the leader sits down before being hit by the person tapper, the person tapped becomes the new leader. If the person tapped hits the leader before they sit down the leader must tap another person by name.

The Seat on my Right is Free

Number of Persons: 10 or more

Instructions:

All players sit in a circle, one seat remaining empty. The player to the left of the empty seat begins: 'The seat on my right is free, I want (another person in the groups name) next to me'. The game should be played at a quick pace. The sentence called out can be shortened to, 'I want next to me'. After a while to seats can be left empty at any time. Whenever your name is called out, you must move to that seat, and the person to your left will have to call out the mane of a new person to come and sit beside him/her.

Christmas Tree Name Tags

Number of Persons: any large group of persons (conference)

Also: Mixer

Instructions:

Have name tags cut out in the shape of Christmas Trees about 8” high. As each person arrives have him or her put their names on their name tags and then place it around his or her neck with a piece of yarn. (A hole will need to be punched in it and the yarn fairly long). Before the first session begins, each person is asked to ‘decorate’ his or her name tag by getting the signatures of as many other people in the group as possible. Use this to occupy time while everyone is assembling and also to help people learn each others names.

This could be varied for other holidays.

MIXERS

Pa, Ma and the Baby

Number of Persons: a fairly large group, 20 plus.

Instructions:

Beforehand, write out three slips for each of several groups of animals. (Enough slips for each person in the group). For example PA CAT, MA CAT, BABY CAT, PA MONKEY, MA MONKEY, BABY MONKEY. Have the group seated in a circle. Place all of the slips on a table in the centre. When a signal is given (the word GO) each person is to run up to the table, pick up a slip, and then begin making the sound of that animal. Next, everyone is to find the other 2 people making the same animal sound. When they have found each other, they find a place to sit down - all three on the same seat - with PA on the bottom, MA in the middle and Baby on the top. The last trio seated and in the right order is eliminated. Their slips are removed from the pile and all of the others are placed back on the table. another signal is given and the process repeated. Play until only three people are left. one round of this can be used as a simple mixer to form threesomes for discussion.

Mingle

Number of Persons: 20 plus.

Instructions:

A leader calls out various numbers and the crowd must form into groups of the same number. The object is always to be in a group of the correct number of persons. If your group does not have the correct number of persons you are out for that game. For example if the leader calls out five and there are only 4 people in your group they are out of the game. The game can be played until there are only two people left and these are the winners.

Non competitive version:

If a group does not have the right number, no one is out, the leader simply calls out another number and the group try to do better the next time around. If this version is played the added rule is that each time a new number is called out all the people you join up with must be different than those you joined with to make up the last number for a group. At the end you can call a number that you want the group divided into for discussion purposes and the discussion is held with those people they have ended up with by random selection.

Famous Personalities

Number of Persons: any number over 10.

Instructions:

Write on little slips of paper the names of famous personalities and place a slip on the back of each person as he enters the room. The individuals see each others slips, and are to talk with one another as if they were actually speaking to the person named on the slip. The object is for each person to guess who he or she is supposed to be. When each person has guessed correctly, he or she moves the name tag to the front and continues giving clues to others still trying to guess their famous personality.

Who's There

Number of Persons: at least 12

Also: Conversation Starter

Instructions:

Post 4 sheets of paper at different places in the room. On each piece of paper put a categorical item (eg Summer, Autumn, Winter, Spring). At a signal people go to the paper they somehow identify with (they may go there because it is their favourite season, the time of year they were born etc). When the groups are formed, have them find out the names of the others in their groups first and then why each person chose that category.

Other Categories for Variations:

Cartoon characters which describe their personalities: feelings on a spectrum like politics and religion don't mix, Christians should take an active interest in politics, but churches should stay out. Churches should take political decisions and try to influence politics. If the churches don't deal with political issues they are irrelevant.

Face to Face

Number of Persons: any fairly large group - 16 plus

Instructions:

Ask each person to find a partner and stand facing that person. Everyone is told to follow your instructions and move quickly whenever you speak. There are three commands:

Face to Face: the partners stand face to face;

Back to Back: the partners stand back to back;

Change: the individuals must find new partners and stand in the same position they were in with the last partner. Continue the game with a variety of commands (face to face, back to back, change, back to back, change, face to face, change, change) until people have moved around several new partners and become thoroughly confused. In the end, the person who is your partner can also become a partner for some sort of sharing in pairs relating to the session you are beginning.

Song Partners

Number of Persons: a fairly large group - 16 plus

Instructions:

Write the names of some familiar songs on duplicate slips. Give one slip to each person. At a starting signal everyone begins singing his or her song. Each tries to find his or her partner who is singing the same song. When they find each other they become pairs for some discussion exercise.

Variation:

This can be done with two halves of a picture, or duplicate keys etc.

Find Your Puzzle Members

Number of Persons: a large group, which will later be divided into smaller discussion groups.

Instructions:

Using as many pictures as there will be groups, cut out each into the number of people you wish per group. Mix up the pieces and distribute one to each person. Each person, being one piece of the puzzle, will look for the people with the puzzle parts corresponding in his/her and will work until the puzzle is back together. At the end you have groups for your next activity.

People Bingo

Number of People: Any size group

Instructions:

Make bingo cards (individual) for each person. In the squares, where the numbers would usually be, put items describing people, like; lies about age; plays soccer regularly; has scar three inches long; etc. Walk around the group and ask each person one point, do you lie about your age? If the person answers yes, put his or her name in the square. Let that person ask you a question. Then move on and ask someone else a question. Keep going until someone has enough yes answers and names in a row to call out bingo. A sample sheet is found below.

Question one person at a time. If he or she answers 'yes' put that person's name in the square. (You may select any square to ask the person about.) Let the person you approach respond by asking you a question to see if you 'fit' any of the squares. Then move to a new person and begin again. Keep going until someone has five yes answers in a row, horizontally, vertically and diagonally.

Can whistle "Swanie"	Has eaten watermelon	Is a male chauvinist	Eats natural food	Believes in women's liberation
Owens a motorcycle	Loves Bach	Likes the Beatles	Plays the recorder	Has a Skoda
Is not Irish	Lives in Scotland	Refuses to walk under ladders	Watches soap operas	Writes poetry
Has read 'Day of the Jackal'	Dislikes Mondays	Can touch tongue to nose	Can touch toes	Goes jogging
Watches Crime watch	Is a detective story fan	Has travelled out of the British isles this year	Once danced the Charleston	Has smelly feet

GROUP BUILDERS

Motorboat

Number of Persons: several small groups 6-8 in each.

Instructions:

Make believe you small group is a motor. See how much speed you can get up, At the word GO, the first person turns his head to the right saying the sound for the specific motor, then the next person turns her head to the right, repeating the sound, etc, The first group finishing the number of the laps should clap.

Round 1: Go-carts, for 5 laps and the sound is putt

Round 2: Motorcycles, for 7 laps and the sound is RRRRR

Round 3: Racing cars, for 10 laps and the sound is ZOOOOOOOOMMM.

Co-operative Musical Chairs

Number of Persons: 15-30

Also: Tension Breaker

Instructions:

The rules are the same as for musical chairs except that each time the music stops one chair is removed but no one is put out of the game. As the game proceeds the number of people remains the same, but the number of chairs decreases - so that more and more people sit on each chair.

Frisbee Pass

Number of Persons: 6-10 for each circle

Instructions:

Everyone gets down on hands and knees in a circle with heads facing inwards. A Frisbee or plastic saucer is placed on one persons back and is then passed from back to back without the use of hands. If it falls it is replaced by hand. The group succeeds when the Frisbee or saucer is passed completely around the circle without falling.

Competitive Version:

The first small group to successfully pass the Frisbee around the circle wins.

Circle Knee Sitting

Number of Persons: at least 8

Instructions:

The group forms a very tight circle with all facing the same direction around the circle (nose to back of head). There must be no gaps and the circle needs to be round. All players then slowly sit down until they are sitting on the knee of the player behind. This takes both trust and group co-operation.

Water Pass

Number of Persons: 5 or more in each circle.

Instructions:

Everyone forms a circle on their hands and knees with heads facing inwards. Each person holds a paper cup in their teeth. One person's cup is filled with water, which he or she must pour into the next person's cup without using his hands.

Competitive Version:

The group getting the most water around the circle wins.

Needs and Resources Matching

Number of Persons: at least 10

Instructions:

Ask each person to make a tag which identifies something he or she needs (EG attention, love, security, a back rub..) Have them place the tags around their necks with bits of string or yarn. Everyone then walks round the room to find someone who has a similar need. With that person (or persons) they then are to list the resources they can offer each other to help meet their common need.

People Machine

Number of Persons: several groups of 4-6

Instructions:

Each person in a small group is to act out a mechanical part (a piston that goes up and down - raise and lower hands or a gear that goes round and round - move arms in circular position) The challenge is to assume a creative position and develop creative and original motions that utilise more than one part of your body. When every one has started his or her own motion and thought of a sound to go with it the small groups must interlink all of the individual motions and sounds (while also physically touching the other parts of their machine) to form a 'People Machine'. Each group can be asked to display their machine in operation before the others.

The outsider

Number of persons: use a group of about 6-8

Instructions:

Each group forms a very tight circle with all but one member by putting their arms around each others' waists. The excluded player is to try to get inside the circle by any means. The group tries to keep the 'outsider' out. Afterwards discuss how the outsider felt and how the others felt. This is particularly useful for groups dealing with acceptance, rejection, discrimination, and other topics - or for newly formed groups wanting to emphasise the need to allow everyone in and not leave any outsiders.

GROUP BUILDERS - GROUP AGAINST A PROBLEM

Over the Rope

Number of Persons: your whole group, whatever size.

Instructions:

Have the whole group go to one end of a room or side of a field. Position a rope in the middle of the field about shoulder height. The group is told that they must somehow get everyone over the rope without pulling it down. The group must then devise a way to co-operate in order to get everyone over.

The Knot

Number of Persons: at least 15-20

Instructions:

Players join hands in a circle. Make on break in the circle. The player to the right of the break starts to weave through, round, over and under and between all of the other players, pulling the rest of the group along until a large knot is formed, which cannot be tangled further. The group must then untangle without letting go.

or

Have everyone stand in a circle facing inward with their arms extended in front of them and their eyes closed. Have them all walk forward until they find two other hands to grasp - hopefully two different people's. Then, have everyone open their eyes and try to unravel the knot and form a large circle without letting go of each others hands.

TENSION BREAKER

Elephant/Alligator

Number of Persons: 15-30

Instructions:

Sit in a circle. One person is it and stands in the middle. That person turns around and points to one person sitting down and says "Elephant". The person pointed at must make a trunk out of his/her arms. The person on the left of the person pointed to must hold up her/her right hand to the person to's head to make an ear, and the person on the right of the person pointed to must hold up his/her hand to make the other ear. If any of the three have not done the proper thing by the time the person who is it counts to three out loud, than that person becomes it. If all three do the right thing, the person who is it must turn around and point to another person. After playing for a short time add "Alligator" as another command that can be shouted out. The person pointed to must use both arms to make an open jaw. The person on either side must form the arm on the side of their body furthest from the person pointed to into a fin (bent at the elbow and hand on rib cage).

Barnyard

Number of persons: at least 8 but not over 15

Instructions:

Sit in a circle. Each person chooses an animal name for himself. (Dog Chicken, Kangaroo, etc). Go round the circle slowly and allow each person to state his animal name. Everyone should try to remember the names of the others. One person becomes it and stands in the middle with a rolled up newspaper. The person who is it points to one individual to begin. That person calls out one of the animal names. The person who is it tries to remember whose animal name that is and tap that person with the newspaper BEFORE the person whose name was called out calls out another animal name. If the person who is it succeeds in doing so, the person called out becomes it. The person who is it must stay in the centre until he taps someone whose name is called out before that person calls out another name. If someone calls out the name of the person in the middle or an animal name which no one selected, then that person automatically becomes it.

Hand to Knee

Number of persons: at least 12, preferably more.

Instructions:

Divide the group into pairs. Give each pair a card with instructions to place one part of the body of the first person on the part of the body mentioned for the second person, for example: Nose to cheek, arm to waist, toe to shoulder. Make a long line. Each pair must move down the line maintaining the designated position. Others watch the pairs try to manoeuvre.

Tip the Cans

Number of persons: at least 10 in a large circle - preferably more.

Instructions:

Have everyone form a large circle with hands around each other's shoulders. Stack cans three high in the centre of the circle. The group makes an effort to pull people into the cans to make them tip over. Each person tries NOT to be the one who knocks over the cans.

Shoulder rub down

Number of persons: any group.

Instructions:

Stand in a circle, then turn to the right, rub down the shoulders of the person in front of you. (Each person will be getting a shoulder rub.) Then turn in the opposite direction and do the same after a few minutes.

Fingers Up

Number of person: any number, in pairs.

Instructions:

Pair off, facing each other. Put your hands behind your back. On the word GO, everyone brings his or her hands out in front with any number of fingers up. The first person in your pair to call out the correct total number of fingers up (between you and your partner) wins. Repeat several times.

VARIATION:

After doing the above several times, add this new rule. Each person puts just one hand out in front of him AND calls out a total BEFORE seeing any fingers (ie at the same time as putting the hands out) Keep playing until one of the partners happens to guess the right number.

Change (All those)

Number of persons: at least 12

Instructions:

Have everyone sit in a circle with just enough chairs. Leader stands in the middle. When the leader calls out a category, all of the people who fit it must change seats. While they are doing so, the leader tries to get into and must call out a new category. FOR EXAMPLE:

Leader: Everyone wearing red, change.

CHANGE

New Leader: Everyone over 18 change.

CHANGE

New Leader...

This is a cup

Number of persons: at least 10 in a circle.

Instructions:

Each passing 2 objects around the circle in opposite directions at the same time. (One person holds a cup and the person on the right of that person holds a saucer.)

At the word go, the person with the cup turns to the person on the left passes the cup and says, "This is a cup". That person asks "A what?" And left, pass the cup and say "This is a cup". The next person says, "A cup." The third person turns to a fourth and says , "This is a cup" etc. In other words, each time that the cup is passed, the "A what?" must be asked all the way back to the original person and the answer "A cup" must be returned all the way. At the same time that the cup is going to the left, the saucer is going to the right. "This is a saucer". "A what?" "A saucer." Etc.

VARIATION: With 2 or more circles, the first to finish wins.

Money Give-away

Number of persons: a fairly large group.

Instructions:

A member of the group is secretly given a coin. The others do not know who has it. The leader announces that the person holding the coin will give it to the eight (or tenth or fifth or whatever) person who shakes hands with him/her. Everyone gets busy shaking hands. The one with the coin keeps count and gives it to the eight person who shakes his/her hand. Repeat several times.

(Suggestion: Use a small coin so that the bribery is insignificant in the end!)

Mirror

Number of persons: any size of group in pairs.

Instructions:

In twos, one person puts his/her hands up, fingers out, and proceeds to hand-dance, moving the hands up against a class. The partner, with his/her hands about an inch away tries to keep up with the movement exactly as though being a reflection in a mirror. Reverse the roles and do it again.

VARIATIONS: For added fun allow body and feet movements as well.

1-2-3 Move

Number of person: 15 or more in a circle.

Instructions:

ONE person stands in the centre of the circle. Everyone else is seated. It is important that there are only enough chairs in the circle for each person, not including the person in the centre. The person in the centre calls out "1-2-3 Move" and everyone must move one seat to the right. While people are moving, the person in the centre tries to get a seat. Whoever is left without a seat goes to the centre and calls out "1-2-3 Move" again. Keep the game moving rapidly.

GET ACQUAINTED

Revolving Wheels (Wagon wheels) (good for exchange groups)

Number of persons: 2 fairly equal groups wanting to get to know each other and find out about each other's background.

Instructions:

Form one circle with members of one group FACING OUTWARD. The members of the other group are to sit facing a person on the inner circle and thereby form an outer circle. In these newly formed pairs allow five minutes to share with each other on a particular topic supplied by the leader: eg your school life - describe it for the other person. Have each of the pair describe his or her situation. After both have done so, the leader calls time and instructs the people on the outside to move one place to the right while the inner circle remains still. In these new pairs the leader supplies a new topic for sharing (sports in their area, politics, religion) At the end each person will have shared with a number of people from the other group.

Who Are You?

Number of persons: any size group in pairs.

Instructions:

Ask people to pair off with the person they feel they know least well in the group. Have each pair sit down facing each other (knee to knee). One person begins by asking "Who are you?" . The other person feels that he or she has said all that he can think of for the moment, he asks the other "Who are you?" (Each successive time a person is asked the question, the answer given will hopefully be a deeper level.)
RULES: You can only ask the one question no others. You cannot interrupt the other person, you must simply listen until he or she turns the questions back on you. Afterwards, have each person introduce the one he or she was speaking to. (To the whole group, or in small groups with 2-3 other pairs).

Is That You?

Number of persons: a large group 15-50

Instructions:

A leader makes up some funny statements (eg if you are wearing the same socks you had on yesterday; if you kiss with your eyes open; if you have on red knickers; if your mother always made you wear wellies; etc.) Everyone stands in a circle. As each statement is read, everyone who fits it sits down. Play until everyone is seated. OR: Have everyone seated and make them stand up each time a statement applies.

Back to Back

Number of persons: any number in pairs

Instructions:

Sit down back to back with someone you don't know very well. Without looking or talking, answer these questions about your partner (on paper if available): (a) Colour of eyes, (b) number of dimples, (c) weight, (d) shoe size, (e) favourite singer, etc. (Obviously you can use any questions to suit your purposes). Afterwards have the partners share their answers with each other to see how accurate they are. This is a good exercise to make a point of paying closer attention to the people we meet.

Find Someone Who..

Number of persons: a fairly large group 15 plus.

Instructions:

This requires a stencilled sheet for each participant. Make a list of things about people, like...
Find someone who...

- is wearing red
- is over six feet tall
- has more than 8 sisters
- has milked a cow
- has never milked a cow
- etc.... (about 20 items will do)

Each person take a pencil and his or her sheet and tries to find someone who fits each statement. If a person fits the statement you ask for his or her autograph next to that line.

LIMITATIONS:

Each person can sign next to one item only three times. Also the same person can sign your sheet only three times.

The first person to get all of the lines filled in (or the most lines filled in) wins. Afterwards read down the list and ask for hands up:

For example; How many of you are wearing red?

How many of you have milked a cow?

How many of you were born in another country/ Where?

Why did you move here?

(Some of them will lead to more information being shared with the whole group)

What's in your Suitcase (Wallet or Handbag)

Number of persons: small groups of four to six

Instructions:

Ask each person to select three items from his or her suitcase, wallet or bag to share with the others. The items should reveal something significant about their personality or values. For example ask for the most valuable item to them, the most useless, the one with most sentiment attached to it. Ask each person to explain why they selected the items to share which they did and what they think they reveal about them.

PERSONAL SHARING

Body Collages

Number of persons: small groups (because of mechanics)

Instructions:

Using large sheets of paper, have each person outline the body of another person the group with magic markers. Each person should then take the outline of his own body, and cover it with words and pictures from magazines which illustrate his life. This collage then becomes a starting point for personal sharing in small groups. Each person might be asked to describe 3 or 4 of the things they have placed on their outline to represent themselves.

This can be simplified by omitting the step of outlining each other's bodies and simply using smaller blank sheets of paper to begin with.

COMMUNICATION EXERCISES

Non-verbal signals back to back

Number of persons: 10-20 in pairs

Instructions:

Sit down with a partner, back to back. The leader calls out various emotions (anger, hurt, excitement, joy, love, sympathy, frustration, etc.) one at a time. Each pair are to communicate that emotion to their partners using only the movement of their backs. At end: Have each pair link arms and try to stand up together (still back to back).

Gossip

Number of persons: at least 12.

Instructions

Divide the group into 2 or more teams (at least 6 in each team - preferably 8-10) Seat each team in a straight line. Hand each person at the end of their team a story or news clipping (a funny one if possible). After these end persons read the story, ask them to whisper it to the next, and so on down the line. The last person is asked to write down what is received. Compare the different group accounts. Lead into a discussion on effective listening or the way rumours get started.

Who's Leading

Number of persons: 10-20

Instructions:

Have one person leave the room. Everyone else sits in a circle. Appoint a leader. The leader starts a motion (slapping knees, clapping hands scratching nose, etc.) The rest of the group follows whatever the leader begins. The leader must change the motion about every 30 seconds. Call the person who went out back into the room. That person is to stand in the middle of the circle and keep watching the motions carefully to see if he can spot the leader. The leader must continue to switch motions frequently, but will try to make the changes while the person in the centre is not looking. The person remains in the centre until he spots the leader correctly. Then a new person goes out of the room and a new leader is appointed and the game is repeated.

APPLICATION: This game can be played simply for fun or used to begin a discussion about leadership in groups and how it is established, how trends grow etc.

CLOSING

Web

Number of persons: not over 20 generally

Instructions:

Use this as a way of emphasising the bond or connections built in the group during a time together. Sit in a circle (preferably on the floor). Have one person hold the end of a large ball of yarn or string and toss the ball to another person in the group. That person holds on to the yarn with one hand and tosses the ball to another person etc. until the ball has been tossed to each person. A web of connections will be binding the whole group together. The leader should then talk about the links or bonds developed in the group. Afterwards the group can have fun trying to get the web undone by going in reverse.

VARIATION: Each person can be asked to say a word or two, or a short sentence about how he or she feels before throwing the ball on. (Or mention something he or she is thankful for from the time together as a group).

Hug

Number of persons: any size up to about 30

Instructions:

At the end of a session, or of a competitive activity use this as a way of emphasising group unity or closeness. Have everyone join hands in a circle. Ask one person to let go of your hand then stand very still while everyone winds around him or her. That person will become the centre of the one big hug. To unwrap, have the person in the centre come out under the arms of others and pulling everyone else along behind. You will end up in a circle once again.

Completion Sentences...

Number of persons: any size group - then divided into smaller units for discussion.

Instructions: At the end of a session or weekend ask each participant to complete the following questions and then share his or her answers in a small group:

- I learned that (I)
- I discovered that (I)
- I was pleased that (I).....
- I was displeased that (I).....

Note: the I's in brackets are for experiences geared toward self awareness. Make up your own sentences.