

Icebreakers and Energisers

August 2015

Ice breaker games are regarded with a slight air of cynicism by some youth group leaders. They think that members are likely to be excited enough when they arrive at a club night, and therefore that they don't need to play games. However, a well chosen, well run ice breaker can be the difference between a club made up of individuals, and a club whose members are looking out for each other.

So what is the point of an ice breaker game?

The idea is to break the ice between young people who possibly haven't met before, don't know each other very well or to form stronger bonds between existing friends. This is a very worthwhile aim, as it is in your interests as a club officer/leader to ensure that the members are getting on well. Members that trust and respect one another are more likely to have a successful and functional club.

But how do ice breaker games help to build relationships between the members?

Team games

The simple action of putting members into teams with others who they may not know acts as a relationship-building mechanism. They are obliged to acknowledge their peers and to work with them towards a common goal. Whether they achieve that goal or not is less important; they are bound to share a response to the game together, whether it be disappointment or success. The human ability to offer condolences or to rejoice is a very strong one, even in young people whose emotional responses are not yet mature. So through team play, young people will be forced to 'break the ice' by forming alliances with their peers.

Funny games

One excellent type of ice breaker is the funny or amusing game. The power of laughter to bring people together has always been well known, and young people are most susceptible to this. One of the effects of communal laughter is to erase the natural boundaries that every person has. When you really laugh, you are at your most natural; you don't care about how you look or even what noises you're making in the process. This openness will often carry on even after the laughter has stopped, meaning that games designed to amuse are an excellent way of starting off a club session.

Get-to-know-you games

These function well as ice breakers if the group are mid to late teenagers. For older members, get-to-know-you games are a great way to play, and at the same time to learn about their peers in a relaxed setting. No one likes small talk – not even adults – so give the young people a chance to have their curiosity satisfied and their questions answered in an informal way. You may even want to participate yourself, so that they can find out a bit about you – though this is a scary proposition to some!

Ice breaker games offer many options to a club officer/ leader wishing to build an affinity between the members who have come along. Learning to play together is a great first step to learning how to work together. Young Farmers clubs are a great way for young people to start to interact with their peers, and ice breaker games are not only useful, but necessary for this purpose.

You should start using them today 😊

Ice Breaker Ideas

Spaghetti Towers

Resources

Spaghetti – 50g per team of three

Mini Marshmallows – 25g per team of three



Objective

To construct a tower as high as possible using spaghetti and marshmallows, no additional materials are allowed, pieces of spaghetti may be broken into desired lengths.

Rules of the challenge

Suggested team size is three

30 minutes are allowed to complete the challenge

Only the materials provided may be used. The highest tower at the end of the day will be the winner

The judge's decision in all matters is final!

Top Tips

1. Make sketches of any good ideas you have and make plans for how you will construct the tower – good planning and design are essential to building a successful tower
2. Where you choose to use shorter pieces of spaghetti, be sure to cut them accurately. If you don't use pieces of equal length in a particular section of the tower, it may start to twist and topple.
3. Use shorter pieces of spaghetti or put in braces (triangular supports) to help support squares or rectangles in your tower
4. Think carefully about whether the spaghetti should pass all the way through the marshmallow, or not, remember that the strength of a joint is dependent on how well the marshmallow can grip the spaghetti strand without it slipping.
5. There will be most stress at the base of the tower – think about how to add strength here.

Ice Breaker Ideas

Roll of honour

Resources

1 roll of toilet paper

Objective

Getting to know each other better

Rules of the game

Hold up a roll of toilet paper and inform group that it will be passed around and each person may take off as many or as few sheets off as they like. After each person in the group has taken their share, break the news to the group that for each sheet they took, they have to tell the group something about themselves. Example: For 4 sheets...."#1. My name is Bob, #2. My favourite subject is Science, #3. I like to play football in my spare time, #4. My favourite car is the Corsa."

Top Tips

Have a few prompt topics to question those young people that take many sheets



Ice Breaker Ideas

Human Bingo

Resources

Human bingo sheet

Pens



Objective

To get to know the group better

Rules of the challenge

Each participant must try to complete their human bingo sheet by moving around the room and talking to members of the group.

A person's name can only be used in two separate boxes.

When the first person has completed their human bingo sheet shout 'house' and they are the winner.

Example human bingo sheet (decide your own questions)

Can ride a bike	Has a sister	Can read music	Can play poker
Has been to America	Can sing	Has their ears pierced	Has a pet
Has been on holiday this year	Likes cheese	Can drive a car	Had cornflakes for breakfast
Loves pizza	Goes to concerts	Listens to music	Can touch their nose with their tongue

Ice Breaker Ideas

I Have never.....

Resources

A circle of chairs

Objective

To get to know each other better

Rules of the game

Have everyone sit in a circle except one person. The person in the middle says something that they have never done (i.e. I have never drank. or I have never worn a dress).

All the people who have never done that have to get up and find an empty seat (from someone else who just got up).

The person stuck without a seat is now in the middle.

This game has no time limit.



Ice Breaker Ideas

The Sweet Truth

Resources

A large Bag of Skittles or M &M's



Objective

To make the group feel relaxed and to share information informally

Rules of the game

Pass around a bag of M&M's and have each person take as many as they want.

For each colour of the M&M's have a question that they have to answer.

For instance, red can be, "Describe your best holiday."

Blue could be "Describe your best Christmas"

Questions can be tailored to a particular subject i.e. bullying, self esteem, alcohol, relationships



Ice Breaker Ideas

Spider Web

Resources

A ball of string

Objective



Getting to know each other and to demonstrate the need for participation and teamwork to succeed

Rules of the game

Get the group to sit on the floor in a circle

Give the ball of string to one of the members sat in the circle

Have the first person answer a question when they have the string in their possession, ask them to hold the end of the piece of string

They then hold on to the end of the string and throw the ball to another member so they can answer the next question.

You eventually create a web after many questions have been answered.

In the end whilst the young people are still sat holding the web, describe how the web shows the group that they all played a part in creating the web, and that if one person was gone it would look different.

Likewise, it is important that we all take part to make the group what it is, unique and special.

Ice Breaker Ideas

Like, dislike, love, hate

Resources

Paper

Pens

Scissors

Magazines

Glue

Like	Dislike
Hate	Love



Objective

To discover the feelings and emotions of the group

Rules of the game

Give everybody a sheet of paper divided into quarters

Ask them to write like, dislike, love and hate in separate sections

Then give the group time to look through the magazines and discuss between them which items they will stick in each square.

Once the group have a few items in each section of their paper ask them to sit in a circle

Invite those that would like to, to feedback on why they stuck certain things in each section and invite discussion from the rest of the group



Ice Breaker Ideas

SShhhh (Communication Game)

Resources

YFC members!



Objective

To encourage the group to find an alternative way of communication rather than speech

Rules of the game

Instruct the group not to talk

Ask them to stand in a line

Ask them to organise themselves in height order (tallest one end, smallest the other)

Then ask them to put themselves in age order (oldest one end, youngest the other)

The ask them to put themselves in order of their birthday (January-December)

Remind the group throughout that they are unable to talk and encourage them to communicate with signs and expressions.

Ice Breaker Ideas

Desert Island

Resources

Paper and pens



Objective

To be aware of the needs of other and the difference in what is important to one person may matter to another

Rules of the game

Announce to the group - '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

One luxury item you can carry with you i.e. not a boat to leave the island!

What would you take and why?

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!

Ice Breaker Ideas

If.....

Resources

Question cards



Objective

To allow the group to think about who they are, their opinions and thoughts

Rules of the game

Ask the group to sit in a circle.

Write 20 'IF' questions on cards and place them (question down) in the middle of the circle.

The first person takes a card, reads it out and gives their answer, comment or explanation.

The card is returned to the bottom of the pile before the next person takes their card.

Keep it moving and don't play for too long. Write your own additional 'IF' questions to add to the list.

- If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?
- If I gave you £10,000, what would you spend it on?
- If you could watch your favourite movie now, what would it be?
- If you could talk to anyone in the world, who would it be?
- If you could wish one thing to come true this year, what would it be?
- If you could live in any period of history, when would it be?
- If you could change anything about yourself, what would you change?
- If you could be someone else, who would you be?
- If you could have any question answered, what would it be?
- If you could watch your favourite TV show now, what would it be?
- If you could have any kind of pet, what would you have?
- If you could do your dream job 10 years from now, what would it be?
- If you had to be allergic to something, what would it be?
- If you sat down next to Jesus on a bus, what would you talk about?
- If money and time was no object, what would you be doing right now?
- If you had one day to live over again, what day would you pick?
- If you could eat your favourite food now, what would it be?
- If you could learn any skill, what would it be?

Ice Breaker Ideas

Would you rather?

Resources

Statement cards

Objective

To give young people the chance to assess how they feel about certain things in the lives and the process of making choices. Questions may range from silly trivia to more serious content. On the way you might find out some interesting things about the young people!

Rules of the game

Place a line of tape down the centre of the room. Ask the group to straddle the tape. When asked 'Would you rather..?' they have to jump to the left or right as indicated by the leader. Don't forget to encourage your adult helpers to join in too!

Would you rather..?

- Visit the doctor or the dentist?
- Eat broccoli or carrots?
- Watch TV or listen to music?
- Own a lizard or a snake?
- Have a beach holiday or a mountain holiday?
- Be an apple or a banana?
- Be invisible or be able to read minds?
- Be hairy all over or completely bald?
- Be the most popular or the smartest person you know?
- Make headlines for saving somebody's life or winning a Nobel Prize?
- Go without television or fast food for the rest of your life?
- Have permanent diarrhoea or permanent constipation?
- Be handsome/beautiful and dumb or be ugly and really smart?
- Always be cold or always be hot?
- Not hear or not see?
- Eliminate hunger and disease or be able to bring lasting world peace?
- Be stranded on a deserted island alone or be stranded with someone you don't like?
- See the future or change the past?
- Be three inches taller or three inches shorter?
- Wrestle a lion or fight a shark?

Ice Breaker Ideas

The Tree of your Life

Resources

Paper

Pens

Colours



Objective

To allow young people to look at things that have past, where their life is at the moment and what they would like to happen in the future (the activity can include fallen dreams if the group are able to discuss aspects of their life that have sad or disappointing memories for them)

Rules of the activity

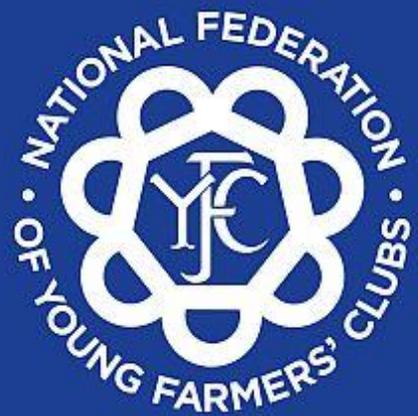
Ask each member of the group to draw a tree and colour it

The roots of the tree represent the events of your life that have past, they can be memories or achievements anything in your history

The trunk of the tree represents your life now – what you are doing at this point in your life, hobbies, interests, friends and family

The branches and leaves at the top of the tree represent your dreams and aspirations

Young people



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