

Really Cool Ice Breaker Games

From

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You've sent the invitations, prepared the food and planned the activities and now your family is arriving. How do you make everyone feel welcome, relaxed and ready to participate at your family reunion? Ice breakers!

Sometimes when families first come together, they feel a little timid until they get reacquainted with the group. Ice breakers are designed to create a welcoming, open atmosphere and can really accelerate the process of getting reacquainted with each other.

Don't limit ice breakers to the beginning of the reunion, use them to revitalize the group at any time. We have an Uncle Scott in our family, and anytime a family reunion or party starts getting a little slow, he will get everyone playing "Do You Love Your Relative". It's a high-energy game and will inject a little life back into your family reunion. Here's a couple of our favorite "high-energy" ice breaker games for your family reunion:

DO YOU LOVE YOUR RELATIVE?

The group sits in a circle with room in the center. The person that is "IT" does not have a chair and stands in the center of the circle. "IT" walks up to one of the people in the circle, points to someone and asks, "_____, do you love your relative?" The individual pointed to can say one of two things:



"Yes I love my relatives (everyone sitting in the circle must move to a new chair)

"No, I don't love my relatives but I love everyone _____." Fill in the blank with things like- everyone that is wearing green, everyone that likes chocolate, everyone that has a dog or everyone that wears glasses. (Only the people that meet the requirements move to a different chair.)

In both situations, the person that asks the question runs to sit on a chair. The person left standing, without a chair to sit on, is the new "IT".

ELECTRIC CHAIN



This is such a fun game! You will need a quarter and a set of keys! Players make two equal teams, facing each other in two long lines. Everyone sits down cross legged (for an older crowd, you could sit in chairs). The two lines should be about 4 feet apart. The game leader sits at the head of the line. This game is played in silence. Begin by introducing yourself to the person sitting on each side of you.

All players join hands with the person beside them. Everyone closes their eyes except the two players sitting by the leader (the lead players). When everyone has their eyes closed and is silent, the leader flips a coin in between the two lead players. **Heads**, do nothing. **Tails**, the lead players squeezes the hand of the person beside them. The squeeze passes as quickly as possible (remember, eyes closed) down the line.

When the last person feels the squeeze, they grab for the keys which are placed in between the last two players. The team who gets the keys rotates...the head player goes to the end and everyone shuffles up one spot. If it was a false alarm, (accidental squeeze of the hands - no calling out "OOPS" allowed!) it doesn't count. Game continues until one team has been completely through its' lineup and the original head player is back at the head of the line.

Pass the Hoop



This great game requires tactical thinking and encourages team work. Instruct the group to form a circle with a 12-inch space between each participant. Once everyone is in place, add a Hoola Hoop to the circle and instruct everyone to pass the hoop between each other and around the circle without it touching the ground. Once it gets to its original position the game is over. To make this game a little trickier add more than one hoop to the circle.

Don't introduce an icebreaker game that will make others uncomfortable- physically or mentally. I HATE games that leave me feeling embarrassed or like a fool. Only choose games that help your family members feel welcome and comfortable at your family reunion. Some very non-threatening "icebreakers" are listed below:

LICENSE PLATE:

License plate is a fun game that family members can work on as they arrive at your reunion and then can come together to share answers. You can download a copy of the game and the answers at www.familyreunionhelper.com.

After writing down the state that each license plate comes from family members are given additional points for each state they have visited- 1 point, and 2 points if they were born in one of the states.



PENNY FOR YOUR THOUGHTS

All participants are given a bag with pennies (each participant should have one penny for each member in the group - if there are 20 people, players each should have 20 pennies). Participants go around the room to each other and trade "a penny for a thought." Participants trade pennies - and positive thoughts. Activity continues until all participants have shared with every member of the group and have a new bag of "pennies for thoughts."

COLORS OF LIFE

Take a bag of M&M's or Skittles candy and tell everyone to grab a handful...or specify a number (I prefer this if you have a large group so it doesn't take so long- I suggest each family member take 5) You might also choose to split up in smaller groups such as children under 12, 12 and over, young adults etc.

Assign a different meaning to each color, blue= family, green=hobbies, yellow=animals, brown= work or school etc. Participants must tell one thing about themselves for how many candies they have in their hands using the colors as their guide. They may also eat them as they share their information. ("Blue...I have two sisters.", then eats the candy. "Yellow...I have a dog named Kodi.", and eats the candy etc.)



Icebreakers are a great way to learn the names and interests of your relatives. Try some of these “getting to know you” activities:

NAME TAGS

As people arrive at your family reunion give them a name tag and ask them to write the following on it:

1. Name in the center of your card.
1. In the upper left corner, write one thing that you like to do.
2. In the upper right corner, write your favorite color.
3. In the lower left corner, write your favorite hobby.
4. In the lower right corner, write your favorite food.



At some point in your reunion, ask family members to find someone in your family that likes the same color as they do, has the same hobby etc. You may also ask them to find the person they have the most in common with. You don't even need to play a game with the name tags, but by listing some of your favorite things on your name tags you will learn a little more about your family members.

NAME TAG VARIATION

Participants are given a name tags and a magic marker. They are asked to print their name on the upper portion of the name tag and then to **draw** four objects that represent who they are on the in each corner of the tag.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU POSTERS

You will need a poster board for each family group attending your family reunion and a large stack of magazines that you don't mind being cut up. Each family group is given a large sheet of poster board and are asked to decorate it (using magazine cutouts, stickers, markers, whatever!) in a way that best represents who they are. Display the posters during your reunion and encourage family members to look at the posters on your “Wall of Fame”. At various times during your reunion (maybe before each meal), ask a couple of questions about family members and give small prizes to the first person to shout out the answer.

TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE

The group sits in a circle and each person has a paper and a marker. Everyone writes down on their paper three things about themselves, two that are true, one that is a lie. Give people about two minutes to do this. Encourage them to be creative and try to make it difficult for everyone to determine the lie. Take turns around the circle showing everyone what is on your paper. The group has to guess which one is the lie (spouses and siblings are usually requested to remain silent!). This game helps people to reveal interesting things about themselves in a fun way. If it is a large group (over 20) you might want to divide into two groups if time is an issue.

NAME BOP!



This is a test for once everyone thinks they know everyone else's name. The group sits in a circle, with one person "it" sitting in the middle. "It" has a soft club (like a long sock with stuffing in it, a swim noodle or a rolled up newspaper) The leader begins by saying someone's name. That person must say their own name and the name of someone else before they get "bopped" (softly on the leg). And so it goes 'til someone messes up, or gets bopped, then they become "IT".

Another fun way to get acquainted with relatives at your family reunion is to mix things up a bit. Following are a couple of fun "mixers":

CLUSTERS

All players move about the room. The leader calls out a number. The group must then make clusters of players to match that number. Whoever doesn't get into a cluster is out. Variations can be clusters made of players with the same shoe size, the same sock color or the same eye color, etc.

SIGN HERE

This a fun game to help family members more comfortable at your family reunion. Give each participant a sheet with various tasks and ask them to complete it when you say, "GO!" Here are some ideas:

Find someone to do five push-ups and sign here _____

Find someone to give you a kiss and sign here _____

Find someone to whisper the pledge of allegiance and sign here _____

Find someone to do five jumping jacks and sign here _____

Find someone to recite a nursery rhyme and sign here _____

Find someone to shake hands with and sign here _____

Find someone to do a cartwheel and sign here _____

Find someone that likes chocolate ice cream and sign here _____

Find someone who is your same age and sign here _____



BACON AND EGGS

In a sitting position in a circle, designate one person to be "it." Go around the circle and tap each person on the head and say "bacon" each time. When "it" says, "eggs," that person that got tapped must run the opposite way. When they meet together, they must stop, shake hands and say, "Good morning. My name is _____." They continue around the circle and sit down in the empty spot before the other. The one that is left standing is "IT" next.

