

Icebreakers, Games and Activities

a. Icebreakers

Name of Activity: Wink Murder

Objective/Outcome: Make the youth comfortable with each other through a fun and mysterious game.

Time: 15-20 minutes, depending how many rounds you play.

Materials: None.

Instructions: Sit the youth in a circle, facing each other. Choose one youth to be the 'detective'. Send this youth out of the room or get him to shut his eyes and look away. Ask the remaining youth to close their eyes and put their heads down. Pick a 'murderer' by tapping one of them on the shoulder. The role of the murderer is to outsmart the detective by killing off everyone without being discovered. To do so, he must make eye contact and wink at someone without the detective seeing him (note: no one knows who the murderer is besides the facilitator who chose him). After someone is winked at, he or she must wait five seconds, then loudly 'die' and lay back on the floor. The detective has three chances to guess who the murderer is. If he does not accurately identify the 'murderer' in three guesses before everyone dies, the murderer wins.

Name of Activity: Squeeze Murder (similar to Wink Murder)

Objective/Outcome: Make the youth comfortable with each other through a fun and mysterious game.

Time: 15-20 minutes, depending on how many rounds you play.

Materials: An area large enough for the youth to walk around in.

Instructions: Choose someone to be the 'detective'. Send this person away from the group. Ask everyone else to close their eyes and put their heads down. Select the 'murderer' by tapping someone on the shoulder. Tell the youth to begin walking around, shaking hands with everyone, and ask the 'detective' to come back into the room. The role of the 'murderer' is to outsmart the detective by killing off everyone without being discovered. To do so, she must squeeze the person's hand while shaking it. The person whose hand was squeezed must wait five seconds (while still walking around shaking hands), then loudly die and fall to the floor. The detective has three guesses. If he does not accurately identify the murderer in three guesses and before everyone dies, the murderer wins.

Name of Activity: Balloon Master

Objective/Outcome: Be the last person remaining with an un-popped balloon.

Time: 5-10 minutes.

Materials: String, enough balloons for each person.

Instructions: Have everyone blow up a balloon and tie a string (about 2 feet long) to it. Now have everyone tie the other end of the string around their ankle. Players must run around and try to pop others' balloons by stepping on them. The last person with an un-popped balloon wins!

Name of Activity: Clump

Objective/Outcome: Youth have fun in an interactive and mobilizing game.

Time: 10 minutes.

Materials: None.

Instructions: Have the youth walk around and mingle. Randomly call out a number. The youth must try and get into groups of that number. Any youth that do not end up in a group are out of the game.

b. Getting to Know Each Other Games

Name of Activity: String You Together

Objective/Outcome: Learn each other's names and unique facts.

Time: 15 – 20 minutes.

Materials Required: Ball of string/yarn.

Instructions: Arrange everyone in a circle, standing or sitting. Begin by stating your name and one unique fact about yourself (for example: "I have 7 siblings, I have a pet iguana, I can lick my elbow...", etc.). Hold onto your end and toss the ball of string to someone else in the circle. This person now must say her name and one unique fact about herself. Holding onto her place on the string, she then tosses the ball to someone else. Continue this until everyone is holding a piece of the string. Now work your way backwards, rolling the ball of string back up. You must, however, call out the person's name and remember their unique fact before you can toss it back to him or her!

Name of Activity: Autograph Bingo

Objective/Outcome: Initiate conversation between youth and learn about each other (names/facts).

Time: 10-15 minutes.

Materials Required: Pre-made Bingo cards, pens/pencils for youth, prizes.

Instructions: Hand each person a Bingo card with each square containing a statement (for example: "I have blue eyes, a pet rabbit, traveled outside of Canada, run in a marathon, a birthday in March..." etc.). Tell the youth they have 5-10 minutes to fill up their Bingo cards by finding people to sign in each box. Remind them that they will have to verify the answers they sign for! Have the first three people done read off their Bingo cards, explaining why each person signed in order to win (for example: "Billy has a pet rabbit named Ralph, Sally traveled to Mexico last winter...", etc.).

Name of Activity: M&M Game

Objective/Outcome: Youth get to know each other, share facts about themselves.

Time: 10 minutes.

Materials Required: Bag or two of M&Ms or Skittles.

Instructions: Each youth grabs a handful of M&Ms. For each candy they grab, they must answer a specific pre-determined question allocated to each color (for example: red = favourite hobbies, blue = most embarrassing moments, yellow = favourite movies, etc.). The number of candies of each color the youth grabs determines how many responses

they must come up with for that question (Ex: 3 yellow M&M's, must say three favourite movies).

Name of Activity: Line Up!

Objective/Outcome: To acquaint the youth with one another with regards to both physical and personal characteristics. Emphasizes cooperation and collaboration.

Time: 5 minutes.

Materials Required: None.

Instructions: Divide the youth into two even groups. The object of the game is to compete to see which group can line up the fastest according to the criteria identified by the facilitator. After naming the characteristic (height, age, alphabetical order, etc) give them to the count of ten to organize themselves. If a group finishes before the facilitator reaches ten, they should all raise their hands. The group that lines up fastest with fewest errors wins. A series of best two out of three can be done.

c. Team-Building Games

Name of Activity: Amoeba Tag

Objective/Outcome: Gets youth moving and running around, while requiring them to work together in order to tag other people.

Time: 10 minutes, or depending on how many rounds/how long before they get tired of running.

Materials Required: An area large enough for youth to run around in.

Instructions: The game begins with one person being 'it'. When he tags someone, they must hold hands and work together to tag others. When four people are joined, they break off into two groups of two, both groups being it. The person who avoids becoming 'it' the longest wins.

Name of Activity: Mine Field

Objective/Outcome: Builds leadership and trust amongst team members.

Time: 20 minutes (may vary depending on size of course).

Materials Required: Blindfolds (one for each group of two), objects to represent 'mines' if an outdoor course is not available.

Instructions: Guides must lead a blindfolded individual through an obstacle course (mine field), using verbal cues only. Ask the youth to find a partner and decide who will be the guide (youth can take turns). Tie a blindfold around the remaining individual and spin him around a couple times to disorient him. The guide must lead the blindfolded individual through the course without stepping on any mines (for example: "take three big steps forward. Take two little steps to the left," etc.). The guide learns how to be responsible for team-mates while the blindfolded person learns to rely on team-mates.

Name of Activity: Get a Clue

Objective/Outcome: Gets youth moving around and talking to each other in a fun and interactive way.

Time: 20 minutes (more or less, depending on how many people and how quickly they ask questions and guess).

Materials Required: Pre-made pieces of paper with names of animals on them (or whatever topic you choose), tape that will stick to foreheads or clothing.

Instructions: Stick a piece of paper naming an animal (or other category) on each youth's forehead or back, in a way that allows everyone to see it but them. They are allowed to ask ten yes or no questions to anyone in the group they want, a maximum of two questions to the same person (for example: "does it live in the rainforest? Does it have a tail? Does it have 4 legs?"). After eight questions, they have the choice to guess their animal, but if they are wrong they lose. At the end of their ten questions, they can guess their animal. If they do not guess it correctly, they can ask two more questions, and guess one last time. If they are still incorrect, they lose. The object is to correctly identify your animal. Those that do can move onto a bonus round, where they only get five yes or no questions to identify a new animal.

Name of Activity: All Aboard!

Objective/Outcome: Requires the group to work together in close proximity to solve a practical, physical problem. Emphasizes group communication, cooperation, patience and problem solving.

Time: 20 minutes (five to explain, fifteen as a limit to complete the task).

Materials Required: Tarp or blanket large enough for everyone to stand on.

Instructions: Begin by getting everyone to stand on the tarp. Challenge them to turn the tarp over without anyone touching the ground in the process. Give the group a time limit of fifteen minutes to do so.

Name of Activity: The Lava Pit

Objective/Outcome: Group needs to work together and communicate effectively in order to beat the game.

Time: 20 minutes (a time limit can be placed, such as fifteen minutes plus five minutes to explain)

Materials: Paper plates (the number depends on size of groups. Each group receives a third of the number of plates as there are players - a twelve player team gets four plates, etc. - tape (to mark the sides of the lava pit).

Instructions: Make up a scenario that the youth are being chased and need to cross a field of hot lava in order to escape. Divide the youth into two even teams. Give each team the paper plates explaining that when they step on these plates they will not sink into the lava. The group must figure out how to get from one side of the lava pit to the other (Point A to Point B, marked on the floor with tape). Only one person can be on a plate at a time, and the plates may be picked up and moved. Key to the game is that only one person will need to work their way back across the field to help the rest across.

Name of Activity: Name Game

Objective/Outcome: Create a collective identity and uniqueness within your group.

Time: Ten minutes.

Materials: Paper and markers.

Instructions: Each group must create a team name and team slogan or cheer. Give each group ten minutes to do so. Tell the groups that at the end of the time, each group must

present and explain their team name to everyone else, and demonstrate their team slogan or cheer. The group with the most creative team name and slogan/cheer wins.

Name of Activity: Dizzy Lizzie

Objective/Outcome: Get dizzy and win the race!

Time: Ten minutes.

Materials: Bat or stick, tape to mark beginning line.

Instructions: Have each group line up at the starting line. The first member from each group will run to the bat, put their forehead on one end and spin around the bat ten times, while keeping the other end of the bat on the ground. After spinning, they must run back and tag the next member of their team, who runs and does the same thing. The first team to have all of its members back across the starting line and sitting down wins.

Name of Activity: How Well Do You Know Canada?

Objective/Outcome: To work as a team to answer as many questions about Canada as possible.

Time: Fifteen minutes.

Materials: Pre-made quizzes containing all sorts of questions about Canada, pen/pencil for each group.

Instructions: Hand each team one copy of the quiz. Answer as many questions as possible within ten minutes (for example: “name all the provinces and territories, what two colors are on the flag, whose picture is on the back of the dime, what city is hosting the 2010 Olympics, etc.”). The team with the most correct answers after 10 minutes wins.

Name of the Activity: Better Letter

Objective/Outcome: To work collaboratively as a team to come up with as many words as possible.

Time: Ten minutes.

Materials: Cut-up pieces of paper (five for every player), pen/pencils for every player

Instructions: Divide youth into teams. Hand each youth five pieces of paper (roughly three inches x five inches). Ask them to choose any five letters of the alphabet, and write down one letter on each piece of paper (remind them to not show these letters to the other members of their team. After everyone has done this, have each team put all their cards in a pile. Set a time limit (five – six minutes) and challenge the teams to use their cards to make as many words as possible, using each of their letter cards only once. Words must be three letters or more and short forms are not allowed. The team with the most words at the end of the time limit wins.

Name of Activity: Canadian Pictionary

Objective/Outcome: Youth have fun guessing common Canadian stereotypes, phrases, objects or places.

Time: 20 minutes, or until all papers have been drawn.

Materials: Pre-made slips of paper containing common Canadian stereotypes, phrases, objects or places, chalkboard and chalk or paper and markers.

Instructions: Divide youth into groups. One member from each group grabs a piece of paper at a time. They must somehow draw whatever it is in on their piece of paper, while

their teammates must guess what it is they are drawing. Each team has a maximum of one minute to guess. The team that guesses what their drawer is drawing the quickest gets a point. After each team member has had a chance to draw, the team with the most points wins. (Examples include: "Parliament", "Igloo", "Poutine", "Eh", "Beaver", "Toque" etc.)