



## ***Icebreakers and Mixers that Promote Inclusion***



*Camryn Krause, VISTA, UW-Extension, Fond du Lac County 2012* The University of Wisconsin-Extension does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender/sex, creed, disability, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital or prenatal status in the admission or access to, or treatment or employment in its programs or activities, or in the provision of services.

## **Icebreakers and Mixers that Promote Inclusion**

One of the easiest ways to promote inclusion in your club is to promote members to interact with each other.

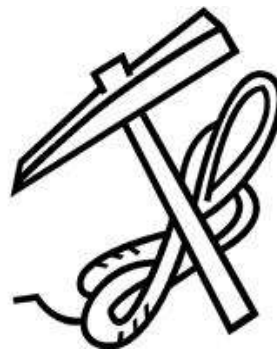
A good way to do this is to have activities for members and families outside of meeting times. Have a club picnic, game night or potluck. Encourage members to come early to meetings, or stay late to play kick ball or tag. These are great ways to involve the whole family and they allow for conversations outside of official club business interactions, in a more relaxed setting.

Some families might not be able to attend activities outside of meeting times, however. It is also likely that people will interact with the people that they are already comfortable with at these activities. So, while they provide an opportunity for members to get to know each other, they might not actively encourage it.

Including an ice breaker or mixer at each meeting is a quick, easy and fun way to actively get members acquainted with each other. The ice breakers and mixers on the following pages are focused on getting members to interact with people they might not know well, and getting them comfortable with each other. To make sure they accomplish to goal of making all members feel included, make sure that members are not staying in their comfort group and that people are not being excluded. If needed, you can assign partners or tweak the rules so that it is a requirement to work with someone new each time, etc.

Ice breakers and mixers might not seem to be a critical part of a meeting, but they can go a long way to making a member, and their family, feel like they belong. They also provide an injection of fun into meetings, without taking up a lot of time.

Another way to enhance the impact of ice breakers and mixers at club meetings, is to assign a member to explain and lead a mixer or ice breaker at each meeting. This will also ensure a variety of options. For more ideas, look online or ask for resources from the UW-Extension office.



### **My Favorite ...**

<http://www.volunteerpower.com/resources/Icebreaker.asp>

Have everyone write on a piece of paper their answers to these questions: What is your favorite food, animal, TV show, hobby, and color? Sign your name. Don't let anyone else see the answers. The leader then reads the answers to the whole group, and members try to guess whom each set of answers belongs to. Award one point for each right guess. The person with the most points wins a prize.

### **What Do We Have in Common?**

<http://www.volunteerpower.com/resources/Icebreaker.asp>

Have everyone get in groups of three and stand in a circle. Tell them that their assignment for the next two minutes is to find five distinctive things that the three of them have in common. The three things cannot be job related or obvious (all are girls). Examples: All born in the same city, all have two siblings, all show an animal at the fair. Have the first groups that finish sit down. When the two minutes are up, tell the first three groups to introduce themselves and find out what they have in common.

### **Lost on a Deserted Island**

<http://www.icebreakers.ws/team-building/lost-on-a-deserted-island.html>

This is a teambuilding activity that also helps people share a little about themselves. Given the scenario that everyone is lost and stranded on a deserted island, each person describes one object that they would bring and why. This game is a *teambuilding* and *get-to-know-you* icebreaker. The recommended group size is medium, although small and large group sizes are possible too. An indoor setting is ideal. No special props or materials are required. This icebreaker works well for any age.

#### **Instructions for Lost on a Deserted Island:**

The situation is dire — following a shipwreck, everyone has been stranded on a deserted island! Each person is allowed to bring one object to the island — ideally something that represents them or something that they enjoy. The first part of this icebreaker is simple: each person is asked to describe what object they would bring and why. It doesn't have to be realistic; if someone loves music, he or she might choose to bring a guitar, or an animal lover might choose to bring a dog, a food lover might choose to bring sirloin steaks, and so on. Encourage people to be creative. After everyone has introduced their object and why they have chosen that object, teambuilding follows.

Divide into smaller groups and ask everyone to work together to improve their chances of survival by combining the various objects that they introduced. If necessary, you can add more objects, but be sure to use all the objects that everyone mentioned. If you wish, you can reward the most creative group with a prize. Lost on a Deserted Island is an easy way to get people to open up and share a little bit about themselves and what they enjoy or value.

## **Ice Breaker Questions**

<http://www.icebreakers.ws/get-to-know-you/icebreaker-questions.html>

A great way to help people open up is to ask them fun questions that allow them to express their personality or interesting things about them. Here is a list of twenty safe, useful icebreaker questions to help break the ice:

1. If you could have an endless supply of any food, what would you get?
2. If you were an animal, what would you be and why?
3. What is one goal you'd like to accomplish during your lifetime?
4. When you were little, who was your favorite super hero and why?
5. Who is your hero? (a parent, a celebrity, an influential person in one's life)
6. What's your favorite thing to do in the summer?
7. If they made a movie of your life, what would it be about and which actor would you want to play you?
8. If you were an ice cream flavor, which one would you be and why?
9. What's your favorite cartoon character, and why?
10. If you could visit any place in the world, where would you choose to go and why?
11. What's the ideal dream job for you?
12. Are you a morning or night person?
13. What are your favorite hobbies?
14. What are your pet peeves or interesting things about you that you dislike?
15. What's the weirdest thing you've ever eaten?
16. Name one of your favorite things about someone in your family.
17. Tell us about a unique or quirky habit of yours.
18. If you had to describe yourself using three words, it would be...
19. If someone made a movie of your life would it be a drama, a comedy, a romantic-comedy, action film, or science fiction?
20. If I could be anybody besides myself, I would be...



## **1+3=4-H Power**

*Camryn Krause, VISTA, UW-Extension Fond du Lac County*

The purpose of this activity is to get to know those around you. It is a quick and easy way to learn a little more about those you may know, and something about those you don't. It also helps you develop the skills needed to introduce someone. When the work is divided up, the task goes much faster!

Turn to the person sitting next to you. [If you are on the end of a table work with the person sitting across from you or find a partner.] You have 30 seconds to interview them. You may ask any questions but here are some examples:

1. What is your name?
2. What is the name of your club?
3. Are you a 4-H volunteer?
4. What are some of your hobbies?
5. What is the most exciting thing you have done this year?

Now your partner has 30 seconds to interview you!

You and your partner must turn around to face the set of partners sitting behind you. Each person in the group of 4 must take a turn to introduce their partner to the other 3 in the group. You have just been introduced to 3 people by interviewing 1!

## **Creative Handshake**

*[http://www.firststepstraining.com/resources/activities/archive/activity\\_large\\_ice.htm](http://www.firststepstraining.com/resources/activities/archive/activity_large_ice.htm)*

Have members find three people they don't know very well (one at a time), shake their hand and look them in the eye. Now, have them find three more people they don't know well, and one at a time look them in the eye, and perform high fives. Now, have them find three more people they don't know well, look them in the eye, and perform over the back high fives. Finally, have them find three more people in the room, look them in the eye, and create a completely "new" handshake for themselves. Each of the three handshakes must be unique (although all of your participants will be watching and learning from the creative attempts going on around them). Ask any who are particularly proud of their handshakes to demonstrate for the whole group.

## **Ten Second Objects**

<http://dramaresource.com/games/warm-ups/ten-second-objects>

This is a very popular drama warm-up game. It encourages creativity, physical awareness, and helps develop cooperation in group work. It is also easy and a lot of fun! Divide everyone into small groups (4-6). Call out the name of an object and all the groups have to make the shape of that object out of their own bodies, joining together in different ways while you count down slowly from ten to zero. Usually every group will find a different way of forming the object. Examples could be: a car, a fried breakfast, a clock, a washing machine, a fire.

Develop the Activity:

- Encourage groups to think about using different levels with their body shapes, eg. high, medium and low.
- Groups can also be given a couple of minutes to devise an object of their own which the rest of the club try to guess.
- You could make it a rule that after 10 seconds they must be completely frozen in position.
- On the other hand it can be fun if they are able to make objects that use movement.

## **The Mirror Game**

<http://www.life123.com/parenting/education/drama/drama-warm-up-games.shtml>

This staple of drama classes is often overlooked in favor of newer games, but this classic acting game can be fresh and fun. It is a good way to get people comfortable with each other socially and spatially.

Divide members into pairs. Make sure that the partners don't know each other well. Choose one person in each pair to lead; the other will follow. Members sit facing each other, and the leader begins large, slow movements that the follower will imitate, as if the leader is their own reflection in a mirror. After a minute or two, switch.

## **Knots of People**

<http://www.kimskorner4teachertalk.com/classmanagement/icebreakers.html#Knots>

Divide the group into teams of 8 to 12 members. Have each person join right hands with another person in the group, but it has to be someone who is NOT standing immediately to the left or right. Then have each person join left hands with another person in the group, but it has to be someone who is NOT standing immediately to the left or right and someone other than before.

Now the groups have to untangle themselves without letting go of hands. They may have to loosen their grips a little to allow for twisting and turning. They may have to step over or under other people. The first group to untangle their knot is the winner.

*SPECIAL NOTE: There are four possible solutions to the knot: One large circle with people facing either direction, two interlocking circles, a figure eight, a circle within a circle.*

## **House, Inhabitant, Tempest**

<http://books.google.com/books?id=oh7mdqfRwl0C&pg=PA50&lpq=PA50&dq=%22house,+inhabitant,+tempest%22&source=bl&ots=MqW 18Fow4&sig=qcrq Ri DhUXEDSPW qeXGyivls&hl=en&sa=X&ei=WeBXT-qXA4iG2qX-k7juDg&sqi=2&ved=0CB4Q6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=%22house%2C%20inhabitant%2C%20tempest%22&f=false>

This game provides a joyful rehearsal of the chaos and confusion that often accompany creative activity. It also introduces the idea of people working and playing together to achieve a common goal within constrained conditions.

Have one member or adult serve as “joker.” Divide participants into groups of three. In each group two participants face one another, standing a foot or 2 apart, raising and linking their hands to form the “roof” of a house. The third participant, the “inhabitant,” stands inside this newly created “house.” (This physical positioning appears to be a variation on the children’s game London Bridge).

When the joker calls out “inhabitant,” all inhabitants must leave their house and run to a different one.

When the joker calls out “house,” the inhabitants stay where they are, while the participants forming houses must separate and find a new partner to form a new house with, over a new inhabitant.

When, the joker calls out “tempest,” everyone moves! Someone who was a “house” can decide to stay a house or change to become an inhabitant. Then chaos reigns, and everybody moves, changing roles, choosing either to be a house or an inhabitant.

If the number of players is not divisible by 3, the player who finds her/himself outside the house/inhabitant groups of three can call out the category instead of the joker.


Variations: 1. Have more than one “inhabitant” per “house” – ask houses to set the “stage,” opening their roofs and making room for two! This is a particularly useful variation when working with a number of participants indivisible by three. 2. Choose one “inhabitant” to be “A,” the other, “B,” wants to leave the house; “B” wants “A” to stay. Ask inhabitants to immediately play a short improvisational dialogue based on their distinct motivations. The houses may also become animated and take sides. – or just play one round of rock paper scissors. Winner decides who goes.




**Mix it Up!**

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**This is the format used at the Awards Night Banquet 2011. A blank template is on the following page, so you can create your own!**

received a Gold Award tonight.	showed the same project at the fair as you.	has been a 4-H member for 2 years more or 2 years less than you.	who is a member of a neighboring club.	entered their first project in the fair last year.
lives in a different village/town/city than you.	you have never met before.		was on the Record Book Review Committee this year.	parents were not in 4-H.
was a Cloverbud.	whose club holds meetings on a different day of the week than yours.	who has gone on a 4-H trip.	shares your birth month.	is a member of the Teen Leader Association.



# ***Mix it Up!***