



Icebreakers

Why Use Icebreakers?

Starting volunteer meetings with an icebreaker is a great way to get people talking and relieve some of the awkwardness. It's akin to a muscle warm-up before a gym session - it helps everyone to loosen up and relax!

Icebreakers are also a great way for new people to meet. For new adult volunteers, walking into a meeting full of people who already know one another can be a daunting prospect and a well-placed icebreaker can be a great way to help them integrate.

Know Your Audience!

Change your icebreakers depending on whether or not your group already knows one another. If not, a getting-to-know-you type of icebreaker may fit best. If the group is already comfortable with one another, go with something silly and fun that gets everyone laughing.

Keep it short

Keep the momentum going and don't let people get bored - this may mean limiting the time people can speak for and/or putting everyone into smaller groups.

Benefits

- ❖ Establish a friendly and informal climate.
- ❖ Put everyone in a positive frame of mind.
- ❖ Help to break up cliques.
- ❖ Promote fun and laughter!
- ❖ Enhance communication.
- ❖ Encourage self-discovery.
- ❖ Facilitate relationship building.
- ❖ Provide "tools for their tool belt" - games and exercises they can use with their troops.



Getting to know you

These icebreakers can be used for groups who don't yet know each other well and are a great way to learn names and interesting facts about each other!

Rather Than

This is a light introductory activity that doesn't take too long.

Have everyone sit so they can all see each other (e.g. in a circle). Start by telling the group one thing that you would like to do in Girl Scouts (e.g. learn wilderness first aid). The person to your left restates what you said and then says something they would rather do (e.g. "I would rather make s'mores on a campfire than learn wilderness first aid."). The person on their left then continues by repeating everything that has been said, and adding something they would rather do (e.g. "I would rather go kayaking than make s'mores or learn wilderness first aid.") Continue until everyone has spoken.

Hint: if you have a large group, split into smaller groups for this activity!

A Penny for Your Thoughts

Supplies needed: a penny for each participant, minted within the last 20-30 years.

Give a penny to each person. Ask them to introduce themselves to everyone else by giving their name and something interesting or significant that happened to them in the year the penny was minted.

Sweet Stories

Supplies needed: a bag of colored candy (e.g. M&Ms, Skittles)

Each participant takes a candy. Going round the group, ask each person to share a story based on the color of the candy they have. Examples: red candy - share your biggest success. Green candy - give a reason why you are proud to be a Girl Scout. Yellow candy - a time when your plans failed, and what you learned from it. Orange candy - a funny Girl Scout story.

One Thing in Common

It's best if everyone starts out standing in a group for this one!

Pick one person from the group to stand at the front. They should call out one fact about themselves (anything goes - "my favorite ice cream is neopolitan!" or "I lead Girl Scout Brownies!" or "I am bilingual!"). Anyone in the group for whom this fact is also true should come to stand next to the first person. First person to get there stays, and everyone else returns to the group. The "winner" calls out a different fact about themselves and, again, anyone for whom this is also true should race to stand next to the second person. Continue until everyone is standing in a line, joined by their commonalities. The last person to join the line should close the circle by calling out facts about themselves until they find something they have in common with the first caller. If at any time nobody shares the fact that has been called, the caller should choose a different fact.

Snowball Fight

Supplies needed: a piece of paper and a pen for each participant.

Have everyone write their name and a few interesting facts about themselves on a piece of paper and then ball it up like a snowball. Spend a couple of minutes having an indoor snowball fight and then stop the fight and ask everyone to grab the nearest snowball and unroll it. If they have their own, they can throw it at someone else, who has to then throw the one they have back. Each person should then share the name and the facts on their paper.

Chaos

Supplies needed: 4 or 5 small, soft objects that can be tossed.

Participants get into a circle. Go around the circle and have each person say their name. One person begins by tossing an object to someone else and saying "Hi, *name of person*". The person who catches it says "Thanks, *name of tosser*" and repeats by throwing it to someone else in the circle. Names must be said each time an object is thrown and caught. As everyone gets comfortable with the game, start to add more objects in play and work your way up to 4 or 5.

This or That

Supplies needed: list of this or that questions. E.g. coke or pepsi, spring or fall, cats or dogs...

Start with everyone seated on chairs. Read out the questions rapid-fire and have everyone stand up for the first option and remain seated for the second.



Team Building

These icebreakers can be used for groups who already know each other fairly well, and are great for building stronger connections.

Your Biggest Fan

Start off by pairing people up to play a game of rock, paper, scissors. The winner progresses to the next round to play against another winner, and the loser becomes their biggest fan. Cheer, applaud, encourage and make some noise! After the second round, the loser and their fan become the biggest fans of the winner. Continue until there is one ultimate winner, and everyone else is their biggest fan!

Soul Mates

Supplies needed: name tags, each with one half of a popular pair (e.g. Tom/Jerry, peanut butter/jelly, salt/pepper etc.)

Stick a name tag to each person's back. Participants mingle and ask yes/no questions until they figure out who their soul mate is. Once they have found each other, they should sit down together.

Apple, Orange, Banana

Have the group stand in a circle with their hands on the shoulders of the person in front. When you shout apple, orange, or banana, they should perform the corresponding action. Apple = move forward (and keep moving until you shout another word). Orange = move backward. Banana = spin around and face the other direction. Speed up the rate at which you call words to create chaos!

Picture Hunt

It's best to split a large group into smaller groups for this one, so that each person has time to expand on their story a little. The premise is simple - open your picture gallery on your phone, find the last Girl Scout picture you took, share it with the group, and tell everyone what the activity was and a rose, bud, and thorn from the activity (rose = what went well, bud = opportunity for improvement, thorn = a struggle or challenge).

Air Band Battle

Split your large group into small groups of 3-4 (or more if time is limited) and provide each group with a song to act out on air instruments. Provide each team with a scorecard (just a piece of paper will do!) and have the teams score each others' performances.

Common Threads

Split into smaller groups of 4-6. Provide each person with a pipe cleaner. The group's challenge is to find something they all have in common (not Girl Scouts!) and then each create an individual pipe cleaner model. All should be different, but all should be tied together by a common theme.

Matching Pictures

Supplies needed: In advance of the meeting, print Girl Scout images showing a variety of Girl Scout activities. Try to include all aspects of the EGSE in the pictures. You will need one picture for every 2 meeting attendees.

Cut the pictures in half diagonally. As people enter the meeting, tape one half of a picture to their back. Their objective is to find the person who has the other half of their picture. They are only allowed to ask yes/no questions in order to determine what their image depicts. NB: make sure each picture has a partner! If you're not sure how many people will attend, it's best to wait until everyone is there and determine how many pictures you'll need before you stick them on!

Pictionary Telephone

Supplies needed: index cards and pencils.

Divide into groups of 4-10 people. Give each person in the group a stack of index cards (each stack should contain the same number of cards as there are people in the group, plus one). On the top card, write a noun or phrase which could be drawn (e.g. "Eiffel Tower" or "Needle in a Haystack"). Each person should keep their word/s hidden from the others. Everyone looks at their card, places that card on the bottom of the stack, and then draws their word/phrase. This card is now at the top of the pile, which should be passed to the next person in the group once everyone has finished drawing. On the next round, everyone guesses the word or phrase based on the drawing, moves the drawing to the bottom, and writes their guess on the next card. The stack is passed, and on the next round, everyone draws the word/phrase that is now at the top of the stack. Keep going, alternating guesses and drawings until the stacks return to the original drawers. Time to reveal where your game of telephone took you!

Tip: use a 1 minute timer for each round to avoid people taking a long time!