

# GTKYG

## (Getting To Know You Games)

### **Ha Ha**

Teams competing lay down side by side on floor or ground. The first person lays back of hand on next people stomach and that person lays back of hand on the stomach of the next to him and so on. The first person in line is to laugh one HA. The next person in line is to laugh HA HA (two times). The third person is HA HA HA. And so on. Any person that breaks out into a giggle is out of the game and must get up and the hole is filled in. The last one to giggle, wins.

### **Gum Game**

*Required: Clean garden gloves, packs of gum*

Set up teams of five. Each team will receive one pair of new garden gloves and one pack of gum (5 pieces per pack). On go, the first person in each team is to put on the garden gloves, open the package of gum, pull out a piece, unwrap it, chew it, and then pass the gloves to the next person. The first team to complete the task wins. You can choose to have two packs of gum per team so that they would have to go around twice.

### **Dress the Mummy**

*Required: Rolls of toilet paper*

Set up teams with 2-4 players on each team. One person on each team will be the mummy and each team will be given 2 rolls of toilet paper. They will have 5 minutes to complete the game. The team players are to circle around the mummy and pass the toilet paper to each other while wrapping the mummy in it. The leader of the group will be the judge and decide which team has created the best mummy design.

### **Rumor**

The first person from each team is to go out and make up a message together. All teams will use this message. Once signaled to start, the first person on each team is to whisper the Rumor to the next person on their team. They will whisper the Rumor to the next - and so on. The last person to receive the Rumor will run to the black board and write the message. The team that is the closest to the correct Rumor wins.

### **Scavenger Hunt**

Make a list of things for teams to look for through their wallets, purses, and possibly what's on their bodies. Divide into teams by tables, pairs, individuals or what seems best. Here is a list of ideas of what they can look for but modify the list to your liking. Do not list where they might find these items. 1975 Penny, \$2 bill, \$100 bill, red ribbon (found in a bible), hologram (usually found on a credit card, don't tell them this!!!), a bird (usually found on a credit card), pick a few states from the new quarters (Delaware, Michigan, Florida), pearl (earring or ring), black sock, roman numeral (found on a watch), Susan B Anthony dollar, picture of a tree, tic tac, paper clip, measuring tape, ruler, peppermint candy, toothpick, the word Moses (if they have a bible), M&M, Tums, children's Tylenol, thermometer, white button, pink nail polish, screw driver, nose ring, tweezers, mirror, ankle bracelet, red hair, raisin, triangle, charge slip over \$200 and so on. Make a list and copy off the list for each team. Have them check off which items they have, the team with the most checked off, wins!!!! At the end, tell them where they could have found the items.

### **String Toss**

*Required: Ball of string or yarn*

Set up small groups of 8-12 players and have them sit in a circle for this icebreaker. One person is given the ball of yarn and finds the end of it. They will toss the ball of yarn to anyone within the circle while they are still holding the end of the ball of yarn. Now ask the person that caught it one or two questions. If this is a new group that doesn't know everyone they are to introduce

themselves first before answering the questions at the beginning of the game. Here are some ideas as to what questions to ask; What is your favorite color, music group, the person that has influenced you the most, what are you afraid of, your favorite food, time of the year, or any other question that might pertain to this event. That person then holds part of the yarn and then tosses the ball of yarn to anyone that hasn't received the ball yet. You repeat this until everyone has had the ball of yarn and you will notice that you have created a unique web that has connected all the players together in one way. You can pass the ball again to ask more questions from each player.

### **Knots**

The group clumps up tightly and each person takes two hands (cannot be of the same person). They then have to work themselves into a circle without breaking hands.

### **Who Am I?**

*Required: Name tags*

Pre-make tags with each tag having one famous person on it, mainly divas that everyone would know. These tags will be placed on the back of each guest as they arrive. This is done without them knowing who they are. They are to go around the room asking questions as to who they might be.

Questions like "am I a singer?" They can only ask one question and make only one guess as to who they are with each person that they talk to, then they have to move on to another person. They can come visit previous players once they've visited another player.

### **Crossword Puzzle**

Make several large crossword puzzles on pieces of paper. As people arrive, have them to choose a puzzle and begin working on it. See that an equal number of people are working on each puzzle. They end up sharing and working together. The same idea can be used cutting up pieces of a cardboard heart, and participants must put the heart together.

### **Getting into groups**

There are lots of ways to get people into groups. Here are just a few.

A. Get enough round bubble gum balls for each person in your group. Make sure there are several colors (enough for each group you need). On cue, everyone chews their piece of gum. After five to 10 seconds, everyone sticks out their tongues and tries to find those with the same color.

B. Write out colors on pieces of paper (one for each group you want to have). Give each person a piece of paper with a color on it when he/she enters the room. On cue, participants get into groups by yelling out their colors and finding all the others with the same colors.

Alternatives: Tape the pieces of paper under their chairs. Use animal names and have them make the sound of the animal they get. Do a silent grouping by having the participants simply hold up their group name without saying anything.

C. Group the months of the year into as many groups as you need. Have the participants call out the month they were born in to group. You could do the same thing with years people were born in, etc.

### **2 Truths And A Lie**

Have each person write 2 truths and a lie about themselves. They then pass the paper to the group and have the others guess which is the lie.

### **Balloon Pop**

Give everyone a balloon. Each person is to blow up his/her balloon (really big!), tie it off and hold it at his/her stomach. When everyone has a balloon blown up, each person is to work with the others to form a circle. Once the circle is formed, the people begin moving inward until all balloons are touching.

They then keep moving inward until the balloons begin to pop. The object is to pop all the balloons you can. This can be done as teams. The key is to blow the balloons up as far as you can without bursting them.

### **People Bingo**

Each person gets a piece of paper with the following statements printed on it. The object is to get your paper filled out with autographs of people who match the list (Leave room on the paper for signatures). Find someone who can sign each space with the requested information. If your birthday is between January and March, start with number one; April and June, number four; July and September, number seven; and October and December, number 10.

Participants must get autographs from another person who ...

Has the same name as someone in your family.

Drives the same kind of car as your mother.

Was born in the same province as you.

Has the same number of brothers and sisters.

Lived in an apartment at some time.

Opens presents on Christmas Eve.

His or her mother or father walked to school.

Has a great-grandparent living.

Plays a musical instrument (name it).

Has a birthday in same month as you.

Has a nickname.

Had to share a room with a family member when growing up.

### **Paper Roll**

Quick and easy game to set up, similar theme to "2 truths and a Lie"

Don't tell anybody what is going to happen, but get a roll of toilet paper and tell all those playing not to take too much but to take however much they want. Once all the players have taken the number of sheets they want each has to tell one thing about themselves for every sheet they have.

### **Spinning Pairs**

Get into pairs and face each other. Place your palms on other's palms between you a little above shoulder height. Both partners close their eyes and pull their palms apart (approx. 12 inches) while keeping their palms at that height. Both then turn around on their respective spots 3 times at the same time. The goal is to reconnect palms after spinning while keeping your eyes closed.

### **Balloon Game**

Tie a balloon on a string (at least two feet long) to each person's ankle. The objective of the game is to be the last person with an un-popped balloon around one's ankle. Note: this game takes some prep work. Balloons must be blown up and string cut in advance. It is a fun game, though. Don't try in someone's living room if you want to be invited back!

### **ORB**

Get in a circle. Toss an imaginary ORB around the circle. It changes shape, size, and noise when it transfers hands. Whoever catches the ORB demonstrates how heavy it is and what shape it takes by the way she catches it. The person who catches it also has to make the noise of the ORB, which also changes from person to person.

### **Clump**

Everybody mingles, constantly moving until the leader shouts out a number. All players must then try to get into groups of that number, any group/s that don't succeed are out.

Variation: Players find others who have things in common, such as same shoe size.

## **NAME MEMORY**

Go around in a circle. 1st person says her name; 2nd person says her name and also says the 1st person's name over again, and so on all the way around the circle. The last person has to repeat everyone's name. As a variation, have each person say her name AND what plant she would be, if she could be a plant. This way there is more to remember than simply people's names, which makes it more interesting. OR, have everyone say an adjective plus her name, but the adjective must begin with the same letter... ex. Daring David, Ridiculous Rick, Wonderful Wendy, etc.

## **Shoe Pile**

A good way for new people to meet everybody. Everyone takes off one of their shoes and throw it into a big pile. Then each person picks up a different shoe from the pile and finds the person it belongs to. Works well for large groups.

## **Elves, Wizards, Giants**

A team version of the old game of 'Scissors-Paper-Stone,' but has funnier actions and noises which each team has to act out. Each character (Elf, Wizard, Giant) has a specific action or noise. Elf – Squatting down and imitate pointed ears by holding two fingers up by your ears (similar to making bunny ears). Make "Eeeking" noises while doing this.

Giant - Standing on tip toe, arms raised in frightening posture making growling/roaring sounds.

Wizard – Standing normally but with arms outstretched as if casting a spell. Make appropriate spell casting noises.

As with Scissors-Paper-Stone each character/icon can win against one character or lose against the other. In this case if wanted teams can make the appropriate actions for winning or losing.

Winning team Actions:

Elves shoot Wizards: Elves win

Elves pretend to shoot an arrow, Wizards make dramatic gestures as though struck in the heart.

Wizards frazzle Giants: Wizards win

Giants pretend to shrink.

Giants squash Elves: Giants win

Giants pretend they are squishing something small.

Each team finds a quiet corner and decides on a character to be as a team, after choosing their character each team stands facing each other with hands behind their backs. On a given signal (e.g. the count of three) the whole team acts out their character with the points going to the team that chooses the winning character. If both teams pick the same character there is a draw.

## **3 THINGS IN COMMON (great for new group)**

Each person pairs up with another person who she doesn't know. They must find three things that they have in common. Then each pair of people presents their findings to the rest of the group.

## **TOSS THE BALL (requires a ball)**

Get in a circle. Toss the ball around and say the name of the person you toss it to. Keep tossing until everyone has had the ball.

## **THE BIG WIND BLOWS**

(lots of fun) Get in a tight circle, sitting knee-to-knee. Group leader begins by standing outside the circle and saying "The big wind blows for everyone who \_\_\_\_\_ (fill in the blank)." Whoever fits the criteria and the group leader who began the game must get up and move to another vacated seat within the circle. There will be one person who ends up without a place to sit in the circle. This person continues the game by saying "The big wind blows for anyone who \_\_\_\_\_" and the game continues on. The catch is that when changing seats in the circle, no running is allowed. Everyone must hop on one foot, or walk on all fours, or whatever. The big wind could blow for anyone wearing jeans, people who have older sisters, people who ate breakfast, people who listen to Brittany Spears, etc. etc.

### **PICTURE GUESSING GAME (great for the first crew meeting!)**

Everybody draws a picture that expresses something about themselves. The drawings are collected. One by one, the drawings are "pulled out of a hat" and held up, and the group tries to guess who drew it. Whoever guesses correctly is the next one to choose a drawing 'out of the hat' to hold up for the group to guess. When someone guesses correctly, the person who drew the picture must explain it's meaning to the group.

### **ANIMAL CHARADES (great interactive game)**

Get in groups of three. Each group is given the name of an animal. They must come up with a way to demonstrate that animal, or act it out as a team. Then each group presents their demonstration to the group, who has to guess what animal it is.

### **EVOLUTION (very fun)**

Everyone begins as an 'egg', so people have to pretend to be an egg. Find another egg and play 'rock, paper, scissors' with the other egg. Whoever wins gets to 'evolve' into a chicken, so now the chickens have to pretend to be chickens. Whoever loses remains an egg. Then the chickens must find other chickens in order to play rock, paper, scissors. The eggs must play with other eggs. Whoever wins evolves. Whoever loses de-evolves. The loser between two chickens will become an egg again. The winner will become a dinosaur and pretend to be that. Loser eggs remain eggs. Again, like animals play rock, paper, scissors with like animals. Losers de-evolve into what they were previously. Winners between two dinosaurs evolve into the highest form of evolution: either ELVIS or the ENLIGHTENED ONE, in which case they would pretend to be ELVIS or sit down and say OM, depending on how you choose to play the game.

### **ZIP/ZAP/ZOP (group needs to be comfortable with each other to play)**

Get in a circle. Someone begins by pointing to another person in the circle and saying "ZIP!" That person then points to yet another person and says "ZAP!" That person points to another person and says "ZOP!" This continues, but the words must be said in order: ZIP, ZAP, ZOP. If someone makes a mistake and says a word out of order, that person is out of the game. Eventually, the circle dwindles to just a few people, then to only 2 people, who are staring at each other, yelling ZIP!, ZAP!, ZOP! Until one of them makes a mistake.

### **BLIND POLYGON**

(required blindfolds and a rope) The group is blindfolded. They must form a perfect square, triangle, or whatever, using a rope. They all must have at least one hand on the rope at all times!

### **ISLAND**

Find a big stump, rock, or make a circle on the ground two feet in diameter, and dub this the 'island.' The entire crew must figure out a way to stay on the island for two minutes.

### **ORDER OUT OF CHAOS**

Everyone is blindfolded. Each person gets a number. They must line up in order without talking. OR...the group must line up according to eye color...darkest to lightest...without saying a word.

### **MASS STAND UP**

Have the crew sit in a circle, backs to the middle. Now, have everyone link elbows with the person sitting next to her. Then, try to stand up as a group. A lot tougher than it sounds!

### **HUMAN KNOT**

Have the crew stand in a tight circle, shoulder-to-shoulder, and place their hands in the center. Now, have them grab a couple of hands, but make sure no one grabs a pair of hands belonging to the same person, or grabs either of the hands of the person standing directly next to them. Then, unravel the knot you've just created without having anyone break their grip...good luck!

## **HAVE YOU EVER?**

Group stands in a circle. Each takes a turn asking a question, "Have you ever \_\_\_\_?" (filling in the blank). Those who have, answer yes by walking to the center of the circle and slapping a "high five" with whoever else has done the action.

## **INTRO TO THE LEFT**

Group sits in a circle. Each person has to introduce the person on the left. Take five minutes (total) to talk to both the person on your left and the person on your right. One by one, each person introduces the person on their left.

## **YURT CIRCLE**

With an even number of people, form a circle facing inward. One person says, "in", the next person says "out", alternating around the circle. On the count of three, each "in" person leans toward the center while each "out" person leans back. Feet need to be kept stationary. Once the yurt is stable, count to three and have all the "ins" and "outs" switch roles while continuing to hold hands.

## **TOILET PAPER**

One of my favorites is "Toilet Paper" You pass around a roll of tissue and have folks tear off the amount they normally use (to wipe). Most people will tear off quite a bit. When everyone has their piece then you have the group count their squares. The punch line is that everyone must share one thing about themselves for each square that they have. This also serves as a lesson to be more conservative with the toilet paper. I got this from a web site: The Sugar Bowl- games: <http://www.bayweb.com>

## **LIFE MAP**

Each individual in the group draws a map of their life starting from birth to the present, using map symbols (e.g. stop signs, do not enter, other) to represent significant periods in their life. You can get full notes on the activity and many other ice breakers in the book *Global Teacher, Global Learner*, by Graham Pike and David Selby - it's a bible in the field of global ed (you can order it from the Green Brick Road - check out their website [www.gbr.org](http://www.gbr.org) ).

## **WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW**

Hand out slips of scratch paper and ask people to write down something about themselves that they think nobody else in the room knows. Then collect the sheets, shuffle them, hand them out again (making sure nobody gets their own). Each person reads out what is on their slip, one by one, and the group tries to guess who wrote it. This really gets people laughing! Unless you have a lot of time, I wouldn't recommend it for groups larger than 15 or so, because these tidbits about people tend to be surprising and prompt curiosity and discussion.

## **Birthday Lines**

One of my favorites is the birthday line. It's as many people as you want. You take some tape and do two parallel lines on the floor about a foot wide. Everyone has to stand in a row inside the lines and make sure their feet aren't touching the tape lines. They can stand side by side in the line so that the task is not impossible. Once everyone's gathered, tell them that they now have to arrange each other in birthday order without stepping out of or on the lines. It's a lot of fun and seems difficult but it is possible. As people step out of the line the amount of space you have to move around increases so it gets easier. I've seen one big kid pick up a smaller one and move him to a different spot. Another one I like is silent affirmations where you tape a piece of paper to your back and people walk around writing nice things about each other on the sheets. Another one along those lines is when you have people line up in a circle with their backs facing inside. They then have to close their eyes. You pull about five or six people out depending on the size of the group and there's one person who has a long list of qualities to say out loud (i.e. someone who I think is funny/fashionable/ nice/smart...). Those five or six people who were pulled out are inside the circle and they get to go around and squeeze or touch someone they think fits

that description. You keep rotating until everyone has gotten the chance to squeeze. Usually a group does about five affirmations before switching to a new set of people. People bingo is a good way to get to know others. Same as regular bingo--create a game sheet with different things on it like "broken bone" or "lived in more than 5 places," etc. they have to go around and find people who match that and write their names on the piece of paper. Usually sparks conversation.

### **APE, MAN, WOMAN GAME**

Both "Ape, Man, Woman" and "Elves, Wizards, Giants" are funnier team variations of the scissors, paper, stone game. Have people pair off. Then, when the signal is given each person strikes a pose like an ape, man, or woman. Be sure to demonstrate what each looks like ahead of time (and you can decide that!). The ape beats the woman, man beats the ape, the woman beats the man. Eliminate the losers and pair the winners until you get a champion.

### **Elves, Wizards, Giants**

Another team version of the old game of ` Scissors-Paper-Stone, but has funnier actions and noises which each team has to act out. Each character (Elf, Wizard, Giant) has a specific action or noise.

**Elf** Squatting down and imitate pointed ears by holding two fingers up by your ears (similar to making bunny ears). Make "Eeeking" noises while doing this.

**Giant** Standing on tip toe, arms raised in frightening posture making growling / roaring sounds

**Wizard** Standing normally but with arms outstretched as if casting a spell. Make appropriate spell casting noises. As with Scissors-Paper-Stone each character/icon can win against one character or loose against the other. In this case if wanted teams can make the appropriate actions for winning or loosing. Winning team: Action/s:

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Giants squash Elves: Giants win.

Giants pretend they are squishing something small.

Each team finds a quiet corner and decides on a character to be as a team, after choosing their character each† team stands facing each other with hands behind their backs. On a given signal (e.g. the count of three) the whole team acts out their character with the points going to the team that chooses the winning character. If both teams pick the same character there is a draw.

### **People Dictionary**

Write five questions on the board. Questions might include the following:

What is your name?

Where were you born?

How many brothers or sisters do you have?

What are their names?

Do you have any pets?

Tell people to write those questions on a piece of paper and to add to that paper five more questions they could ask someone they don't know. Pair people, and have each person interview his or her partner and record the responses. Then have each person use the interview responses to write a "dictionary definition" of his or her partner to include in a Person Dictionary. You might model this activity by creating a sample dictionary definition about yourself. For example:

Reynolds, Kim. proper noun. 1. Born in Riverside, California. 2. No brothers or sisters. ...

Have people bring in small pictures of themselves to paste next to their entries in the Person Dictionary. Bind the definitions into a book, and display it at back-to-school night.

### **Shoe Pile**

This is a good way to have new people meet everybody. Everyone takes off one of their shoes and throw it into a big pile. Then each person picks up a different shoe from the pile and finds the person it belongs to. Works well for large groups.

### **Counting Game**

Have everyone in your group pair up and face each other. Each person holds up zero to ten fingers behind their back. On the count of three, have them pull their hands from behind their backs. The first person to yell out the correct sum of all the fingers wins. Do best two of three. Then the winners play each other until you have a champion.

Variation:(The Math Game)

Competitors hold just one hand behind their back, revealing the number of fingers at the signal. Whoever yells out the sum of the fingers wins the first round. For Round 2, multiply the fingers. Round 3 is the difference between the two numbers. Rotate through as many rounds as you want, but or the championship round (between the two survivors) have them square the total of the two sets of fingers. For example, Person A shows three fingers, person B shows four, so the winning answer is  $3+4 = 7 * 7=49$

### **Line Up Game**

Get in groups of five to ten people each. First group that gets itself into order according to the category you name, wins. For example first letter of middle name, shoe size, height, birth date, etc. Just be sure to pick subjects that people can line up easily. Communicating Challenge Try the "Line up game" this way.... Give everyone a number. They have to arrange themselves in numerical order communicating with each other without speaking or holding up fingers. They make up their own sub-language or sign-language and it often is pretty amusing. Round two. Have people arrange themselves in order of birth or in calendar months.

### **I Have Never**

Another good game for finding things out about others.... Have everyone sit in a circle except one person. The person in the middle says something that they have never done (ie. I have never gone swimming, 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.

### **M&M 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 first crush." (You can play this with Skittles or other coloured candies. Who am I?(Traditional) Prepare a card for each of your guests and write on it the name of a famous man or woman. On arrival, pin a card on the back of each guest who must then ask questions of each other in order to find out their identity. When they succeed, the card is pinned on the front of them.

### **Singing Contest**

Divide the crowd into 3 or 4 groups. Give a topic or theme (such as songs mentioning a colour or a girl's name). Then have each group, in order around the room, loudly sing the appropriate line from the song. No repeats are allowed. Last group left with a song is the winner.

### **Balloon Game**

Tie a balloon on a string (at least two feet long) to each person's ankle. The objective of the game is to be the last person with an un-popped balloon around one's ankle. Note: this game takes some prep work. Balloons must be blown up and string cut in advance. It is a fun game, though. Don't try in someone's living room if you want to be invited back!

### **Particle**

Everybody mingles, constantly moving until the leader shouts out "Particle...number!" All players must then try to get into groups of that number, any group/s that don't succeed are out. Variation: Players find others who have things in common, such as same shoe size.

### **Silly Scrumple**

One person is selected as the leader (who remains out of the game) all players then get into a circle and each gets given a piece of paper to write a silly thing to do on with out letting others see what they have written (e.g. Bark like a dog or sing a song). Each player then crumples their paper up so that the contents cannot be seen. On the leaders command players then start to pass the pieces of paper around the circle waiting for the command to stop. When this happens two people are chosen to carry out the instructions on the pieces of paper they have, without laughing. Those who laugh are out. Repeat until only two people left.

### **Mystery Person**

Prep one or people before the meeting but don t let anybody else know. Give each of these mystery person/s a different number that they have to remember. Now run a game that gets everybody mingling (such as Ape, Man, Girl). At the end have the mystery person/s remember who they met on the number you gave them. Announce to the group who the mystery person/s was and the person they met on the number you gave them. Give both a small prize if you wish.

### **Person Scavenger Hunt Bingo**

Instead of creating a Bingo board with numbers, create a Bingo board of things anybody could have done or might have in their possession. Give each player a copy of the board and get them to go around asking the other players if they match any of the details on the squares. If a player does they have to sign their name in that square/s (For example, one square can be, "Find a person with 3 brothers & sisters," another can be, "find someone who forgot to brush their teeth morning"). Give players a time limit. The winner is the first to getsa row or at the end has most names.

### **LOLLIPOP**

Pass out dum-dum lollipops to the group. For every letter that appears in the flavor, the participant has to share something about him/her with the group.

### **Sit Down if...**

Have a list of questions (with the next one getting wilder, and the wilder the better) beginning with the phrase, "Sit down if you (blank)". Find out who remains standing after each round.

### **Spinning Pairs**

Get into pairs and face each other. Place your palms on other's palms between you a little above shoulder height. Both partners close their eyes and pull their palms apart (approx. 12 inches) while keeping their palms at that height. Both then turn around on their respective spots 3 times at the same time. The goal is to reconnect palms after spinning while keeping your eyes closed.

### **Stringing Conversation Together**

Cut string or yarn into pieces of different lengths. Each piece should have a matching piece of the same length. There should be enough pieces so that each person will have one. Then give each person one piece of string, and challenge each person to find the other person who has a string of the same length. After people find their matches, they can take turns introducing themselves to one another. You can provide a list of questions to help people "break the ice," or people can come up with their own. You might extend the activity by having each person introduce his or her partner to the class.

### **Chain Gang**

Begin by asking people "Who can do something really well?" After a brief discussion about some of the people' talents, pass out paper and ask people to write down five things they do well. Then provide each person with five different-colored paper strips. Have each person write a different talent on separate paper strips, then create a mini paper chain with the strips by linking the five talents together. As people complete their mini chains, use extra strips of paper to link the mini chains together to create one long class chain. Have people stand and hold the growing chain as

you link the pieces together. Once the entire chain is constructed and linked, lead a discussion about what the chain demonstrates -- for example, all the people have talents; all the people have things they do well; together, the people have many talents; if they work together, classmates can accomplish anything; the class is stronger when people work together than when individual people work on their own. Hang the chain in the room as a constant reminder to people of the talents they possess and the benefits of teamwork.

### **Animal Groups**

On the first day of school, gather all the people from a grade level in a large common area. Give each person a slip of paper with the name of an animal on it. Then give people instructions for the activity: They must locate the other members of their animal group by imitating that animal's sound only. No talking is allowed. The people might hesitate initially, but that hesitation soon gives way to a cacophony of sound as the kids moo, snort, and giggle their way into groups. The end result is that people have found their way into their homerooms or advisory groups for the school year, and the initial barriers to good teamwork have already been broken.

### **Cooperative Musical Chairs**

This activity is a takeoff on the familiar musical chairs game. Set up a circle of chairs with one less chair than the number of people in the class. Play music as the people circle around the chairs. When the music stops, the people must sit in a seat. Unlike the traditional game, the person without a seat is not out. Instead, someone must make room for that person. Then remove another seat and start the music again. The kids end up on one another's laps and sharing chairs! You can play this game outside, and you can end it whenever you wish. Afterward, stress the teamwork and cooperation the game took, and how people needed to accept one another to be successful. Reinforce that idea by repeating this game throughout the year.

### **Classmate Scavenger Hunt**

Provide each person with two index cards. Ask each person to write a brief description of his or her physical characteristics on one index card and his or her name on the other. Physical characteristics usually do not include clothing, but if you teach the primary grades, you might allow people to include clothing in their descriptions. Put all the physical characteristic index cards in a shoe box, mix them up, and distribute one card to each person, making sure that no person gets his or her own card. Give people ten minutes to search for the person who fits the description on the card they hold. There is no talking during this activity, but people can walk around the room. At the end of the activity, tell people to write on the card the name of the person who best matches the description. Then have people share their results. How many people guessed correctly?

### **Hands-On Activity**

Have everyone begin this activity by listing at least 25 words that describe them and the things they like. No sentences allowed, just words! Then ask each person to use a dark pen to trace the pattern of his or her hand with the fingers spread apart. Provide another sheet of paper that the person can place on top of the tracing. Because the tracing was done with a dark pen, the outline should be visible on the sheet below. Direct people to use the outlines as guides and to write their words around it. Provide people a variety of different colored pencils or markers to use as they write. Then invite people to share their work with the class. They might cut out the hand outlines and mount them on construction paper so you can display the hands for open house. Challenge each parent to identify his or her child's hand.

### **Silhouette Collage**

Stock up on old magazines. Your school librarian might have a discard pile you can draw from. Invite people to search through the magazines for pictures, words, or anything else that might be used to describe them. Then use an overhead projector or another source of bright light to create a silhouette of each person's profile; have each person sit in front of the light source as you or another person traces the outline of the silhouette on a sheet of 11- by 17-inch paper taped to the

wall. Have people cut out their silhouettes, then fill them with a collage of pictures and words that express their identity. Then give each person an opportunity to share his or her silhouette with the group and talk about why he or she chose some of the elements in the collage. Post the silhouettes to create a sense of "our homeroom."

### **Pop Quiz**

Ahead of time, write a series of getting-to-know-you questions on slips of paper -- one question to a slip. You can repeat some of the questions. Then fold up the slips, and tuck each slip inside a different balloon. Blow up the balloons. Give each person a balloon, and let people take turns popping their balloons and answering the questions inside.

### **Fact or Fib?**

This is a good activity for determining your people's note-taking abilities. Tell people that you are going to share some information about yourself. They'll learn about some of your background, hobbies, and interests from the 60-second oral "biography" that you will present. Suggest that people take notes; as you speak, they should record what they think are the most important facts you share. When you finish your presentation, tell people that you are going to tell five things about yourself. Four of your statements should tell things that are true and that were part of your presentation; one of the five statements is a total fib. This activity is most fun if some of the true facts are some of the most surprising things about you and if the "fib" sounds like something that could very well be true. Tell people they may refer to their notes to tell which statement is the fib. Next, invite each person to create a biography and a list of five statements -- four facts and one fib -- about himself or herself. Then provide each person a chance to present the 60-second oral biography and to test the others' note-taking abilities by presenting his or her own "fact or fib quiz." You can have people do this part of the activity in small groups.

### **Circular Fact or Fib?**

Here's a variation on the previous activity: Organize people into two groups of equal size. One group forms a circle equally spaced around the perimeter of the classroom. There will be quite a bit of space between people. The other group of people forms a circle inside the first circle; each person faces one of the people in the first group. Give the facing pairs of people two minutes to share their 60-second oral "biographies." While each person is talking, the partner takes notes. After each pair completes the activity, the people on the inside circle move clockwise to face the next person in the outer circle. People in the outer circle remain stationary throughout the activity. When all people have had an opportunity to share their biographies with one another, ask people to take turns each sharing facts and fibs with the class. The other people refer to their notes or try to recall which fact is really a fib.

### **People Poems**

Have each child use the letters in his or her name to create an acrostic poem. For example, Bill could write

Big    Intelligent    Laughing    Loving

Tell people they must include words that tell something about themselves -- for example, something they like to do or a personality or physical trait. Invite people to share their poems with the class. This activity is a fun one that enables you to learn how your people view themselves. Allow older people to use a dictionary or thesaurus. You might also vary the number of words for each letter, according to the people's grade levels.

*Another Poetic Introduction.*

Ask people to use the form below to create poems that describe them.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Title (of poem) \_\_\_\_\_  
I will never \_\_\_\_\_,  
I will never \_\_\_\_\_,  
and I will never \_\_\_\_\_.

I will always \_\_\_\_\_.

This activity lends itself to being done at the beginning of the school year and again at the end of the year. You and your people will have fun comparing their responses and seeing how the people and the responses have changed.

### **COMIC STRIP CHAOS:**

Each participant takes a turn at picking a comic frame out of the large container. After the entire group has each chosen one, the participants begin to search for others with the same comic strip sequence. After the participants have found everyone in their group, they must arrange themselves so that the sequence of frames are in chronological order to form the comic strip correctly. Upon completion of sequence, the newly formed group sits down together. Great game to break large group into smaller groups.

### **DO YOU LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR**

The group stands in a circle with room in the center. (Best if played with groups of 20 or more.) One person begins in the circle and says to an individual in the group, "\_\_\_\_\_, do you love your neighbor?" The individual pointed out can either say, "Yes I love my neighbors \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, but I REALLY love people \_\_\_\_\_ (wearing green, from CO, etc.)" or "No, I do not love my neighbors \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_." If the individual uses the first phrase, all members of the group with that characteristic must find a new spot in the circle at least three spaces from they are standing. The person with no space (last person remaining) becomes the caller. If the individual uses the second phrase, his/her two "neighbors" must switch places with one another. The group members move in quickly to "lose" their spaces. The last of the two becomes the caller.

### **MAKE A DATE**

Give each participant a paper plate. Have them draw the face of a clock on their plate with a line next to each number (no digitals!). Then have participants walk around and find a "date" for each hour, writing their name by the hour. The catch is, no one can make a "date" with more than one person per hour. After everyone has made their dates, speed up time and allow 1-3 minutes for each hour. The facilitator then asks a question for discussion on each date. The pairs will have a chance to get to know one another.

### **SHOE FACTORY**

Have the group stand in a large circle shoulder to shoulder. Then have everyone remove their shoes and put them in the center. After the group has formed a pile with their shoes, the leader has everyone choose two different shoes other than their own. They should put them on their feet (halfway if they are too small). The group then needs to successfully match the shoes and put them in proper pairs by standing next to the individual wearing the other shoe. This will probably result in a tangled mess - and lots of giggles!

### **STINGER**

Have the group form a circle and close their eyes. Facilitator circles the group and selects a "stinger" by squeezing an individual's shoulder. The group then opens their eyes and spends time introducing themselves to others while shaking hands (and trying to spot the stinger). The stinger tries to eliminate everyone without getting caught. The stinger strikes by injecting poison with their index finger, while shaking hands. A person stung may not die until at least five seconds after they are stung. The more dramatic the death, the better! When someone thinks they have discovered who the stinger is, they may announce that they know. If they get a "second" from someone else in the group within 10 seconds, the two of them may make an accusation. If the person does not get a second, he/she must wait to challenge again, after another person dies. If another person does step forward to second the challenge, both point to who they think it is on a count to three. If they do not point to the same person, or they both point to the wrong person, they both are automatically dead. If they select the correct person, the stinger is dead and the game is over.

## **UNCLE JOE'S SUITCASE**

The group forms a circle. The first person states their name and the reason they picked this college, group, etc. You continue going around the group, repeating the names of the people preceding their name and why they chose to come to <institution>. You also can substitute the "why you came here" with other things. Another version of the game is to begin with, "I packed Uncle Fred's suitcase with....." and continue around like that. The real trick is the last person in the group who has to name all the people and why they came, what they like, etc.

## **Whistling Cracker Relay**

Form everyone into teams, and get a supply of soda crackers. Each member of each team must carry their cracker to the other end of the room, where there is a "judge." They shove the cracker in their mouth and eat it, and must whistle. Once the judge deems that their whistle is, in fact, a whistle, instead of a spray of cracker crumbs, they receive another cracker from the judge, and run back to their team, to deliver the cracker into the hands of the next person in line.

## **Screamers**

Get everyone in a circle. Important: everyone needs to be able to see the eyes of everyone else. Explain that you will be saying two sets of instructions repeatedly, "heads down" and "heads up." When you say "heads down," everyone looks down. When you say "heads up," everyone looks up, STRAIGHT INTO THE EYES of anyone else in the room. Two possible consequences:

if they are looking at someone who is looking at someone else, nothing happens;

if they are looking at someone who is looking right back at them, they are both to point in a very exaggerated manner at the other person and let out a SCREAM OR YELL. They are then "out" and take their places together outside of the circle to observe.

Once the "screamers" have left the circle, the circle closes in and you repeat step two, followed by step three, until you are down to two people. Yes, they have to do it one more time, even though the outcome is a foregone conclusion.

## **Airplane Blitz**

Bring a stack of copier paper and let the kids make lots and lots of paper airplanes. Then you need some way to clearly divide the room in half. (The taller the divider the better.) A couch works, but even better was a rolling chalk board. Put half the kids on each side of the divider. Put half the paper airplanes on each side of the divider. Explain that they can only throw ONE plane at a time and they must stop when the leader says "stop". Say "Go". They throw the airplanes over the divider as fast as they can. Planes are flying in both directions. Let them go about 3 minutes. Give them a ten second warning and then say "stop". Count the airplanes on each side of the divider. The team with the least number of planes wins. Repeat it a number of times, keeping track of the wins to get the champions.

A quicker variation: Throw a big bag of loose socks.

## **Battle Ships**

This is like the board Game 'Battle ships' where you have to try and sink all the opposing team's boats. First, you need a divider of sorts, about the height of a volleyball net or higher, so that each side cannot see the other (eg. a rope tied at each side of the hall and a large sheet draped over it or big boards put up in between).

Next, have each side find a spot where they are not allowed to move from. When the game starts, each side is given a ball and then proceeds to try and hit the other team with the 'bomb shells'(balls). If someone is hit with the ball, catch it or moves from their spot, then they sit to the side until the game is over. Note: each side needs people (runners) to fetch the ball once it has bounced and give it back to the Ships.