

ICE BREAKERS

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How to DO an Ice Breaker

Selection

Selection of an ice breaker is very important. The purpose of an ice breaker is to get everyone in the group talking. It is also an opener to get to the deeper things of the time together. Therefore, the icebreaker should not take more than 15 minutes total. In selecting an icebreaker, make sure that it can be answered succinctly in less than two minutes by an individual.

It is also necessary to be in touch with where the group is at when selecting the icebreaker. If the group has just started, then surface, trivia-type questions are the best. For example, "What kind of car did your family have when you were between the ages of 7 and 12?" As the group gets to know one another better, the questions can get deeper. A word of caution--Don't select an ice breaker that people won't want to answer because it is too deep. If that happens, then the ice never gets broken and people will not be as forthcoming throughout the remainder of the discussion.

It is helpful if the ice breaker is connected to the topic of the Bible discussion. Then, the ice breaker acts as a funnel for the rest of the conversation. This is not always possible, but when it is certainly take advantage of it. For example, if you were going to discuss stewardship, you might start off with an icebreaker like this--"If you had a million dollars, what would be the first three things you would spend money on?" An ice breaker which can relate to the rest of the night leads to better discussion later--opening up more illustrations and teaching points along the way.

Can you pick a bad ice breaker? Yes! It has happened that an ice breaker like "What is your favorite cat?" was asked the same week as a member had a cat die. Those are awkward moments. Attempt to have a backup icebreaker, just in case. Also, don't select an icebreaker which draws out the hurts, sins, or bad qualities of others. This does not provide a safe atmosphere. One more thing, don't ask one which is inappropriate or rude (i.e., anything about going to the bathroom). The last thing you want to do is alienate the people you are trying to get to talk.

Setting

Everyone should be in a circle. Don't let anyone hide. Encourage everyone to be able to see everyone else. Circles and sight lines bring equality and openness. These items are crucial for an icebreaker along with setting the tone for the remainder of the time together.

Facilitator

The "leader" of an icebreaker is called a "facilitator." That is because his or her role is not to lead everyone in what to say, but to facilitate everyone to share. When it is time to start, the facilitator of the ice breaker needs to begin to emerge or the MC needs to draw everyone's attention to the facilitator. The roar of fellowship needs to become softer and ultimately quiet.

Action

The facilitator needs to make a statement or two just to gather attention from every one. These can be a welcome and a lead in to the ice breaker question. Something like, "We are so

glad you are here. If you would all slide into a circle where everyone can see you, I have a question I would like everyone to answer. . .” Another hint, don’t say “ And now we are going to do an ice breaker. . .” This seems like foreign jargon to newcomers and is not necessary. Find another way to introduce the ice breaker without saying the words “ice breaker.”

Next the facilitator asks the ice breaker question clearly two or three times. It can be memorized, or written down, but the emphasis is *asking it clearly*. Most times there is doubt in the mind of the group on how to answer the ice breaker, hence the next step. The facilitator should then model the type of answer that is desired. Why is it necessary to answer the question? For at least two reasons. First of all, to clear up the haze of the group as to what the facilitator wants. Second, the facilitator is going to model the length and depth of answer that is desired. If the facilitator answers the question with a few sentences, then the precedent has been set for each person in the group to answer it with a few sentences. If the facilitator is a little bit vulnerable, then the rest of the group will sense that vulnerability is OK.

After modeling the type of answer the facilitator wants, he or she needs to direct the ice breaker to be answered by all. The simplest is just to start somewhere in the circle and begin going around. It is the facilitator’s responsibility to keep the icebreaker moving. Fifteen minutes is the maximum amount of time the icebreaker ought to take. Therefore, it must keep moving around the circle. There are four main ways to keep it moving:

1. *Eye contact*- Watching the person answering will help them know the facilitator is listening. If that eye contact is not made, the person may talk longer than they need to get the desired attention. To move it on, just looking to the next person gives a non-verbal clue you are ready for another response.
2. *Summarizing*- This boils down the answer into a phrase or short sentence to enable a cut-off and synopsis for a windy person.
3. *Reflecting*- Saying the answer back lets the person know the facilitator heard the response and allows the entire group to hear it again.
4. *Directing*- Asking the next person to answer gives permission to begin the reply. This is the easiest and most direct way to move an ice breaker. One must be careful not to be rude when directing the next person to respond.

It is important that everyone answers the ice breaker. Everyone needs to feel on equal footing. Also, the point of an ice breaker is to get everyone talking. If someone is not prepared to answer when it is their turn, give them the option to reply at the end. Make sure you come back to them. It is best if everyone answers, but don’t hurt feelings or offend others with it. The people are the most important thing!

What about the unexpected?

Sometimes an ice breaker evokes a very heavy answer (i.e, I’ve got cancer). What should the facilitator do? If its a major emergency crisis that cannot wait another minute, then stop and care for it by praying for that person. The emphasis is on the fact that it must be dealt with now. If it is not that serious, and most of the time it won’t be, then come back to the person later in the meeting to care for them. The most important thing in this situation is that the person’s need is remembered and cared for. Don’t forget about it! One has to be sensitive to the

Spirit on those occasions. Needs pop up. Remember people are the most important thing, not the agenda.

Now I'm ready. . .

You should feel trained in how to do an icebreaker. Don't forget to pass your knowledge on. Besides when you teach it to someone you remember the content all the more. The ice breaker is one of the easiest items in a small group meeting to delegate. You should do that! You need to reproduce yourself and equip others.

Before throwing the responsibility at someone, try asking the person to watch you closely one week as you facilitate the icebreaker. Then afterwards see if the person has any feedback or questions. After answering the issues brought up, give the person the icebreaker for the following week. The next week, observe and give the person feedback. Encourage them to do it several more weeks, then to train someone else! Keep the training and equipping going.

Typical Icebreakers

1. What was the happiest moment of your life?
2. Tell us about your first date?
3. What is the greatest regret of your life?
4. The hardest thing I have ever done...
5. The greatest compliment I ever received.
6. Let me tell you about my best earthly friend...
7. What room in your house do you like best?
8. What is the one thing you want to accomplish next week?
9. Where did you feel warmest and safest as a child?
10. If you had a time machine that would work only once, what point in the future or in history would you visit?
11. When was the last time you did something for the first time?
12. Which of the following restrictions could you best tolerate: leaving the country permanently, or never leaving the state in which you now live?
13. At a meal, your friends start belittling a common friend. What do you do?
14. If you could take a pill that would enable you to live until you reach 1000 years, would you do it? Why?
15. When you do something stupid, how much does it bother you to have other people notice it and laugh?
16. Would you like to know the exact date of your death?
17. If you could change two things about the way you were raised, what would they be? If you came from a divorced family, how did it affect you?
18. Who is your favorite relative? Why?
19. What is your favorite memory time spent, as a child, with your father? Your mother?
20. Who did God use to bring you to the point where you knew you needed Jesus?
21. If you could change places with a Bible character, who would you choose? Why?
22. What is your favorite book of the Bible? Why?
23. If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?
24. What is your favorite movie or TV show?
25. Who has had the greatest influence on your life since we last gathered?
26. What was the best thing that happened to you this past week?
27. Recall a time when you failed recently
28. Name someone you admire who had to overcome great obstacles to get where they are now.
29. What do you value most in a human relationship? In your relationship with Christ? Your parents?
30. How do you react when you aren't thanked for going out of your way for someone?
31. What is your favorite time of day?
32. Singles: The woman/man I want to marry. Couples: What caused me to marry my spouse.
33. My greatest disappointment...
34. The gift I will never forget (apart from my conversion)...
35. What was the most important event in your life this past week?
36. If you could chose to go anywhere in the world for 3 days, where would you go, and why?
37. If you could chose to meet anyone who ever lived in America, who would that be, and why

- would you like to meet him/her?
38. If you could choose to live anywhere in the world, where would you live, and why?
 39. What gift (spiritual, emotional, mental, etc.) do you believe you are bringing to this meeting?
(In other words, what do you think you are bringing that will contribute to the encouragement of others- or the building-up of the "church"?)
 40. Describe a significant experience in your life that changed your value system completely.
 41. What are two of your goals for the year ahead?
 42. Who are your parents, what did they do and what would you like to change about them?
 43. If I could choose my career over again I would ...
 44. What is your position in your family - first second etc. What would you have liked to swap about this position?
 45. If you became the leader of any country in the world, which would it be and why?
 46. Share the best and worst experience of your week
 47. If you could take a free 2 week trip to any place in the world where would it be and why?
 48. If you could talk to any one person now living, who would it be and why?
 49. Give every one a piece of paper and ask them to draw a picture of their jobs or whatever they do on a daily basis. Explain your sketches.
 50. Ask each person to say why they are glad to be a cell group tonight.
 51. Briefly describe some strong and some weak points in your relationship with your eldest child or your parents-in-law or your husband.
 52. Inform everyone that they have just been given \$1 000 000. Let each share how they would use their newly gained fortune.
 53. Do you have a nickname and if so what is it? What nicknames do you have for your husband and children?
 54. Is there an era in time that you would have liked to have lived in, if so, why?
 55. Has this small group been a help to you? Spend time talking about it and thanking each other.
 56. Tell the small group 3 things you appreciate about your family and 3 ways in which you find them difficult at times.
 57. What is the best thing that has ever happened in my family? ...my cell group? ...the world?
 58. One thing I would really like see happen at the moment in my family? ... my church? ... my cell group? ... the world?
 59. Who is the best friend you have at this point in your life?
 60. Have you had an answered prayer recently? - Share the story.
 61. What is your occupation? What do you enjoy about it?
 62. Who has been the greatest influence on your Christian life and why?
 63. What book, movie, video have you seen/read and why would you recommend it?
 64. What do you think delights God above everything else in your life?
 65. What is the most encouraging thing said to you this week?
 66. What encouraging action have you done to someone this week?
 67. What made you decide to attend this church.
 68. What made you decide to live in ...<insert your city>?
 69. What do you still want to accomplish with your life?
 70. What is your most embarrassing experience?
 71. For what are you thankful?

72. What is the most memorable event of your life and why?
73. Share the most meaningful scripture to you and why is it so meaningful?
74. How did you and your partner meet and what made to start going out together or what kind of person would you like to have as your partner?
75. How would your life be different if you knew Jesus was returning on x/x/xx (one month from today's date)?
76. Who is the most interesting person you have met?
77. Talk about your favorite holiday spot and why you enjoy it there?
78. Share about a spiritual experience you have had...
79. What annoys you about your spouse/friend?
80. Have you ever experienced healing in your body? Share it with us.
81. How do you relax?
82. What is your favorite type of music / song etc?
83. What has happened to you during this week which you would like to tell the rest of the group.
84. The last time I got really angry was
85. If you could not fail, what would you like to do?
86. If you had to live your life over what would you change?
87. What do you want written on your tombstone?
88. What do you want said at your funeral?
89. What don't you want said at your funeral?
90. If you were to go and live on the moon and could carry only one thing, what would it be?
91. What would you do if you were to see ...
 - a person being robbed
 - a person drowning
 - a house on fire
92. One thing which has stressed me out this week
93. One thing which makes me feel guilty
94. One thing which I do not understand about the opposite sex is
95. If you had this week to live over again what would you do differently?
96. Describe another small group that you were a member of outside of your church, and tell us why you thought the group worked (or didn't work). You're not limited to "religious" groups (most of us meet in small groups at work).
97. What is the most memorable Bible you have received (i.e., from Baptism, wedding, conversion, etc.)? Tell us about why it's meaningful to you.
98. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think about God?
99. What are the biggest questions that you have about your relationship with God?
100. Under what circumstances do you feel most lonely? Least lonely? Why?
101. In what areas of your life is it most difficult to trust God? Other people? Yourself?
102. Why do you get up in the morning?
(The purpose is to find out what the motivating forces are in this person's life. It is a simple question, but, it takes a good deal of thought to answer honestly.)
103. When was the last time you admitted you were wrong? Why is it so hard to do?
104. What have you learned recently from another believer?
105. What was the worst hair day you ever had?

106. What was the oddest experience you've ever had?
107. Tell about the strangest encounter you've ever had.
108. If calories were not an issue, what would you pick to have for a special dinner?
109. What is the worst car you have ever owned/driven?
110. If your spouse wrote the epitaph on your tombstone based only on the relationship with you for the past 24 hours what would he/she write?
111. What is the most radical thing you have ever done that is both legal and moral?
112. If your relationship with Jesus was a pair of shoes, what are you wearing on your feet?
113. If you will be given the chance to ask just one question to God. . .what would you want to know?
114. Which came first, the chicken or the egg and why?
115. If you had a time machine that would work only once, what point in the future or in history would you visit?
116. When was the last time you did something for the first time?
117. Who is your favorite relative and why?
118. Describe how you are feeling right now in terms of a weather report --partly cloudy, sunny, etc. Participants can explain why they chose that type of weather. (Leader sets the example for depth)
119. What is your ideal driveway? There is no cost of feasibility limitation - just whatever they can imagine as their perfect driveway. (After everyone has shared, tell them that this symbolizes the way they relate to other people. For example, if someone wanted a long, winding driveway going up a steep hill, this "symbolizes" keeping people at a distance".)
120. What is usually the first thing that comes to mind when you think about God?
121. What are the biggest questions that you have about your relationship with God?
122. Under what circumstances do you feel most lonely? Least lonely? Why?
123. In what areas of your life is it most difficult to trust God? Other people? Yourself?
124. Why do you get up in the morning?
125. 'People might be surprised to learn that I.....'
126. What color was the kitchen floor between 7-12 (or during a certain period of your life)?
127. If you were a car, what sort would you be and why?
128. If you could visit anywhere in the world, where would you visit?
129. Would you rather be Princess Di or Mother Teresa?
130. If you could swap roles with someone for a day, who would you choose?
131. If you could be a float in a parade, what would you be?
132. Which actor or actress would best play you?
133. Share a dream that has not come true. . .yet.
134. What is your favorite hobby/sport and how did you get started?
135. What is the silliest name you have ever heard?
136. What are you currently trusting God for that only He can do?
137. Describe your week using a car engine analogy (i.e., overheated, cruising, idling, etc.)
138. What is the best compliment you have ever received?
139. Who had the most influence on your decision to receive Christ?
140. What Smurf do you think they should have had on the Smurf cartoons? (e.g., Rambo Smurf, New Age Smurf)
141. What animal are you most like?

142. If you were Gumby and could jump into any book. . .what book would you jump into and why?
143. If you had one wish, what would it be?
144. Who is your role-model?
145. Who do you look up to, or idealize?
146. What one thing do you look for in a boy/girl friend?
147. Are looks really that important in someone you date?
148. I've always wanted to _____.
149. To me Jesus means _____.
150. I'm most aware of God's presence when _____.
151. Name three things that you brought with you that tell us about yourself.
152. My biggest pet peeve is _____.
153. My biggest fear is _____, because _____.
154. Tell about a time when you felt very loved.
155. What's your favorite thing about school and why?
156. In one word what are your friends like? Why?
157. In one word, what is your family like? Why?
158. What is the biggest problem facing people your age?
159. One thing the group doesn't know about me is _____.
160. My idea of the perfect pet is. . .
161. If you could change one thing about your life, what would it be and why?
162. What makes me happiest is _____ .
163. Who is your favorite performer?
164. On the way to the meeting/gathering, I was feeling . . .
165. One real strength I have is . . .
166. One area of my life which I'm proud of myself is. . .
167. When I think of teenagers, I think of . . .
168. A talent or skill I have is
169. I feel loved when . . .
170. An adult who had an impact on me as a teen was. . .
171. If I had a million dollars, I would. . .
172. My dream is _____.
173. What is your favorite Bible verse and why?
174. Are you outgoing or shy, and do you wish you could change that?
175. When I get angry I _____.
176. _____ makes me angry. Why?
177. I think a friend should be . . . (loyal, caring, etc.)
178. One thing I wish members of the opposite sex should know is . . .
179. What is you favorite commercial?
180. My favorite Disney character is. . .
181. What is the worst rating a movie could have and you would still watch it?
182. If you could jump into any book. . .what would it be and why?
183. Tell us three words which relate to these three things--1. family, 2. work, and 3. church.
184. Describe your relationship with 3 other members of the group and how it has changed since you first met.

185. What is the most important thing that has happened in your life since we last gathered together?
186. What was your first nickname?
187. As a child, how did you react to thunderstorms?
188. What club did you belong to or want to belong to as a child?
189. What is or was your favorite ride at an amusement park?
190. How did someone bless or encourage you this week?
191. Describe the best time you have ever spent with friends.
192. What one piece of advice has changed your life the most? Who shared it with you?
193. What do you like best about winter?
194. Name one important lesson you learned from a failure.
195. When you are feeling frazzled, how (besides prayer) do you recharge?
196. Use a color to describe your week and tell us why you chose that color.
197. Tell us one affirming thing about the person to your right.
198. If you could ask Noah a question, what would you ask?
199. In what situation do you sense God's presence this week?
200. What was your favorite toy as a child?
201. What animal best describes your personality?
202. What is the longest phone conversation you have ever had and with whom were you speaking?
203. How much did you pay for the shoes you are wearing now?
204. What ability do you possess that you like the most?
205. What person would you love to see accept Christ as Savior and Lord this week?
206. What was the first gift you gave your mom or dad on mother's/father's day?
207. What is your worst haircut/style story?
208. What is/was the biggest crossroads decision you faced in the last year?
209. If the small group has a pizza party, what toppings would you want on your pizza?
210. What is the first thing you do in the morning?
211. Who was your favorite childhood friend? Why?
212. If you could ask God one question right now, with a guaranteed answer, what would you ask?
213. If you were in the circus, who would you be?
214. What is your favorite junk food?
215. What do you want to be remembered for when you die?
216. If you could spend the rest of your life doing exactly what you wanted, what would you do?
217. If you were shipwrecked on a deserted island, what one tool would you want to have with you?
218. If you were told you must join a military service, which one would it be?
219. If you were on a church staff, what position would you want?
220. What are your favorite clothes? (From head to toe!)
221. If you had only one way to communicate, would you choose the computer, sign language, or singing?
222. If you could have anything you want for your birthday dinner, what would it be? (No price or calorie restrictions)

223. If you could spend the day with a celebrity, who would it be?
224. If money was no object, what kind of a party would you throw for your friends?
225. You have just been selected captain of your team. What sport would it be?
226. If you could spend one day this week any way you wanted, what would you do?
227. Who was your first friend and how long did you remain friends?
228. Describe an opportunity which you had to be a servant. What effect did it have on you?
229. Briefly tell us about a person in your life who was hard to forgive.
230. A skill I would like to acquire is _____. Why?
231. Share an opportunity you had this week to become “stressed out” and how you dealt with it?
232. If someone were to ask you a question that’s guaranteed to get you talking, what would the question be?
233. What was the first trip you remember talking with your family and what do you remember about it?
234. When you walk into Wal-Mart, K-Mart, etc. what department do you usually head for first?
235. What is one thing you would really like to see happen in our small group?
236. When you were sick as a child, what was the best thing your parents did to make you feel better?
237. When did you have your first “crush”?
238. What was your favorite subject in high school?
239. Did you ever have a favorite outfit (clothes) that others thought was ugly?
240. What is the most meaningful thing you have done for someone else?
241. What was the largest (size) gift someone has given you?
242. As a child, who was your favorite babysitter?
243. If you were given a large amount of money, what would be the first thing you would do with it?
244. Name a vehicle which best describes yourself. Explain why you chose this vehicle.
245. If you could use a symbol to describe yourself what would it be?
246. What things are too personal to share with others in your small group?
247. Would you point out a sin in a friend’s life even if it meant losing the friendship?
248. What topic, if any, is too serious to be joked about?
249. What would you change about the way you were raised?
250. What are your compulsive habits? How do you try to break them?
251. Is there something you have dreamed of doing for a long time? Why haven’t you done it?
252. Would you move to a distant country for someone you love even if it means there is very little chance of seeing your family and friends again?
253. What was one of the happiest days of your life?
254. What is your favorite time of the day?
255. If you had to move and only take three things, what would they be?
256. What is one of your lifelong goals?
257. What are three of your favorite things to do?
258. Where do you like to get warmed when you are chilled?
259. What’s the story behind the longest time you’ve gone without sleep?
260. Describe the circumstances around your first kiss?

261. Who is the most famous person you've known or met? How did it happen?
262. When I go into a restaurant, what I really like most is . . .
263. When I dated, I was considered _____ because _____.
264. If you could do one miracle (other than make the whole world Christian) what would you do? Why?
265. What do you miss most about childhood?
266. If given a choice, how would you choose to die? How do you not want to die?
267. What is your biggest fear of death?
268. If you could go to college (again), what would you study?
269. Who is your number one advisor in life? Why?
270. What's the worst storm or disaster you've been in? What was it like?
271. Describe the most boring day/event/period of time you can remember?
272. What day of your life would you most like to relive? Why?
273. What's the smallest space you've lived in? What was it like?
274. What would you have been voted "most likely to _____" in high school?
275. Just for the fun/thrill of it, before I die I'd like to _____.
276. My number two career choice would be _____.
277. As a time-traveler, I would most like to visit _____ because _____.
278. People might be surprised to find out that I _____.
279. I am most like my mom in that I _____.
280. I am most like my dad in that I _____.
281. I wish that before I got married, someone had told me _____.
282. I am a bundle of nerves/all thumbs when it comes to _____.
283. I will probably never _____, but it would still be fun if I could.
284. What are a couple of things you remember about your grandparents?
285. What does your name mean? Why were you named that?
286. What is a favorite quote or motto?
287. If you were to describe yourself in terms of a flavor, what would your flavor be?
288. What kind of tree best typified your life so far (strong oak, wispy willow, fruitful apple, etc.)? Why?
289. If you could eliminate one kind of animal from the earth, which animal would you choose? Why?
290. If you could raise one person from the dead, who would you raise and why?
291. If you suddenly went blind, what would you miss most about sight? Why?
292. What has been one of the greatest adventures you have ever been on?
293. What is the nicest thing anybody ever said about you?
294. Who was one of the most interesting persons you or your family ever entertained?
295. Share what you would choose if you had three wishes and why those 3?
 - Happiness: a life full of surprises
 - Close family: warm and secure
 - Friend: one abiding friendship
 - Travel: all expenses paid
 - Recognition: success and fame
 - Wealth: a vast fortune
 - Job: secure and fulfilling

Health: long life/no sickness

Contribution: my life to count

296. What one thing would you like your obituary to say about you? Why?
297. What is your favorite city? Why?
298. Where do you go or what do you do when life gets too heavy for you? Why?
299. Which do you value most--sight or speech? Why?
300. Using a fruit or vegetable as a metaphor, how would you describe your life this week (dried fig, ripe cantaloup, smashed banana)?
301. When you were growing up, who was the neighborhood bully? What made that person so frightening?
302. What is your fondest memory of a picnic? Why was it so special?
303. What is the most daring thing you have ever done? What made it so daring?
304. What is the best news you have heard this week? The worst news?
305. What do you like best about children? Why?
306. If your house were on fire, what three items (not people) would you try to save?
307. What was your first job? What do you remember most about it?
308. Who was the best boss you ever had? What made him or her so good?
309. When you were a child, what did your parents want you to be when you grew up? What did you want to be?
310. Who was one of your heroes when you were growing up? How did you try to imitate him or her?
311. It's very difficult for me to discipline myself with regards to _____.
312. What is your greatest fear? Why?
313. Who is your "hero" or role-model today?
314. What have you learned this week?

Icebreaker Projects

1. Find four people that you have something the same with. Like children born on the same day, drive the same car, from the same town, parents or spouse have the same first name, etc. The characteristics should be phrased in the positive and they should be unique to you and the other person, i.e. not the same characteristic with the four people.
2. This introductory icebreaker is called : "**What's in a Name**"
In lieu of regular name/ID cards, have participants write an adjective that starts with the first letter of their names (ex. Artistic, instead of Arnold) on 2" x 5" cards. Would help if this adjective describes them in some way. Ask them to stand one by one, and to say, "I'm _____(using the adjective written on their name cards). During the entire course/training, call them by these adjectives.
Follow-up to what's in a name : During the second day, you may play Zip Zap Zoom. Ask participants to gather around a circle. Stand in the middle. Point around randomly while saying "zip zap zoom". If you stop at the word zip, the person you're pointing at must name/"describe" the person to his right; if you stop at the word zap, he must name the person to his left. If you stop at the word zoom, he must name you. Anyone who gives an incorrect name/adjective will be the next It.
3. This is an activity that you can do while sitting in a circle to get everyone laughing. You as the leader tell the group that they must identify the pattern in the group. The replies are one up/one down, two up, or two down. (it is the position of their arms). So as the facilitator if my hands are in my lap I say two down. The person to your right then goes they say one of the choices. You are the only one who knows the pattern so you tell them if they are right or not. Correct or not you go on to the next person. Some people will "guess" the right position and as they do some will catch on and the laughs will begin. Have fun!!
4. An "**encouragement letter.**" Everyone writes their name at the top of a piece of paper and then they pass it around to every one in the room to write encouraging things about the person whose name is at the top.
5. Have all members of the group ask themselves, if they had all the talent in the world, money, wisdom, time what job (occupation) would you like to do. Then have all members write it on a small piece of paper and hand into one person, this person reads them all off, while everyone is writing them down. Then each person writes the members name beside the occupation they think each person chose. Go around the room and see how many you got right.
6. On a project I was on once, we had everybody write down three true things about themselves and one lie. Everybody then first decided which slip of paper went with which person, and which of his statements was the lie. This might get kind of long so maybe leave out the first part; i.e. each person holds up their piece of paper and people just guess which statement is the lie. It's not fair if somebody picks a lie very close to the

truth (somebody said that his grandfather was dentist to the tsar; this was his lie, his great-uncle was dentist to the tsar).

7. Select a group of tiny items that cause you to think of **things of the faith**... e.g. packet of yeast; some seeds; piece of bread; pkg of salt, etc. Tie a string to each one, place loosely in a large paper bag with the strings hanging out. Go around the group and have each person pick a string. After each one has their "prize", you start at the first person (they've had longest to think) and ask them to briefly state a spiritually significant thought that the item brings to mind. You will be astounded at the wonderful answers you get from people who never talk... and answers you never thought of (that's really amazing!!!)I usually leave one or two strings empty. The person who draws the blank gets to share anything they want.... perhaps, as one person in our group did, what the empty string signifies.
8. Cut out a series of pictures from an old catalogue. Perhaps children, a belt, drapes, etc., place them face down on a plate or in a box and pass it around. Have each person quote a scripture or tell the Scriptural story that the picture brings to mind... "drapes - 'and the veil of the temple was rent in two'". This might be a bit tough for a newbie, so allow them to "pass" if they need to.
9. **I bet you don't know this.** Each person in the group writes down on a blank piece of paper something that he/she thinks that nobody in the group would know about him/herself. The pieces of paper are folded, mixed well, and numbered consecutively. Then a designated person starts to read them, saying the number first. Each member of the group begins to compile a list of people that they feel best match the number of each clue. After the last clue is read, the person with the most correct matches wins.
10. **Capture the Celebrity**
Duration : 30 minutes for a group of 12 people
Assuming there is 6 people - James, Ian, Dennis, Enid, Josephine and Helen: A slip of paper is passed to everyone and everyone writes a celebrity on that slip of paper (without disclosing their name).
 - Assume that James wrote Mel Gibson's hair
 - Ian wrote Twila Paris
 - Dennis wrote Reagan
 - Josephine wrote Elijah
 - Enid wrote Myself
 - Helen wrote Dumbo

The slips of paper are then folded and given to someone who will mix up the slips of paper randomly, unfold it and announce what has been written on the 6 slips of paper, i.e. he reads out

 - Mel Gibson's hair, Twila Paris, Myself, Dumbo, Elijah, Reagan

and he repeats it again but backwards now, i.e.

 - Reagan, Elijah, Dumbo, Myself, Twila Paris, Mel Gibson's hair

The aim of the game is to start guessing who wrote what. Say starting with James, he points at Enid and says "Your celebrity is Dumbo", in this case he is wrong and the next person gets a chance to guess. However, if James points to Enid and guessed right "Your celebrity is Myself", Enid is now captured by James and she becomes James help and they can consult together to capture Helen, Ian, Dennis, Josephine. So Enid has to walk over to where James is sitting and they can whisper to exchange ideas. Whoever guesses right can have another go at guessing.

The game becomes very interesting when a large group can be captured by a small group. For example, if James has already captured Enid and Helen, but when it is Ian's turn to guess, he guessed the identity of James correctly i.e. "James, you are Mel Gibson's hair", James together with all the captives he has captured (i.e. Helen and Enid) now becomes Ian's captives and they now move to where Ian is sitting and consults with Ian to capture Josephine and Dennis. Note that as more and more are being captured, the number of uncaptured celebrities become smaller. The game ends when all the celebrities have been guessed out and the winner is the one which has captured everyone in the group. A problem can arise if two or more celebrities have been forgotten by everyone. Say for example the names of two celebrities have been forgotten, in this case, the game will eventually lead to two opposing camps without knowing what celebrity names are still available. In this case the game ends with two winners. In this game, there are only winners and no losers. It also promotes cooperation and lots of laughter especially if there are weird celebrity names.

11. Get a newspaper (one with enough pages for each person) and have the each person take one page of the newspaper and use it to describe his/her week without speaking. The limitations are 30 seconds of acting time (leaves a little time for interpretation) and each person uses only one page.
12. **"What is your ideal driveway"**. Ask people to describe there perfect driveway. There is no cost of feasibility limitation - just whatever they can imagine as there perfect driveway. After everyone has shared, tell them that this symbolizes the way they relate to other people. For example, if someone wanted a long, winding driveway going up a steep hill, this "symbolizes" keeping people at a distance".
13. **Penny Game** Give everyone 10 pennies. Each person must name one thing about himself/herself that is different from everyone else. (For example, an adventurous group member might say, "I have climbed Pikes Peak.") The speaker puts a penny in the middle. If another player has also climbed Pikes Peak, he/she can put in a penny as well. The first person to get rid of all his/her pennies wins.
14. **Creative Announcements**
How did it begin : Our youth pastor was getting a bit bogged down with repeating announcements to get the cell leaders to remember. As a result, his wife came up with a very novel way of making us remember and disseminate the announcements by including

it in an icebreaker. We had ten people but only 5 announcements to make. So we first paired up and we played Scissors, Paper, Stone to determine who had to do the creative announcements (the leader does not tell us the reason for playing Scissors Paper Stone). The losers from the five pairs will then get a slip of paper with an announcement and that person has to creatively present the announcement to all of us.

For example, we had one lady who got this announcement "Pray for your sheep". So she first asked a question, "How does a sheep sound" and everyone went "Baaa, Meeaaa". Then the next thing she did was to ask everyone "Let's do it all together once again" and everyone went "BAAAAA, MEEEEAAAA" and then she said "that's right folks, pray for your sheep".

The announcements need not necessarily be administrative but can also be verses from the Bible. I found this very lively as we had some other people doing charades voluntarily as well and I found that I remember the announcements much more clearly as a graphic picture was presented to me.

15. **Why do you get up in the morning?** The purpose is to find out what the motivating forces are in this person's life. It is a simple question, but, it takes a good deal of thought to answer honestly.
16. **Cell Church Objectives**
We divided the group into 3 groups of 3. The leader handed each group a piece of paper with a theme written on it. (e.g. cell group themes like Edification, Evangelism and Multiplication can be used). Each group is then required to perform a skit to let the other two groups guess the theme. Can be quite comical and also acts as a good reminder to the purpose of the cell group.
17. The "Un-Game"-- It is like a game of icebreakers... You can use a whole cell time just playing the game. This would be good for brand new groups or groups with many new members that need to get to know each other.
18. **Telephone.** This is where you (leader) whispers a ditty to the first person, they then write what they heard down and then he whispers it to #2 and #2 to #3 to . . . etc. When all is done you ask the sports to read back what it is they wrote/heard...from the last person to the 1st person. (Dramatizes the "mess" you get in if you don't document an instruction/process.
19. Ask every to take out a piece of paper and write down the directions for making a paper airplane... then ask them to write down the directions to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich....then ask them to write down the directions to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich while making a paper airplane. Audience doesn't have to perform this (write it) and they probably won't, because just the mental image of what you have asked is enough to convince folks to KISS (Keep It Simple s...)
20. **Jumble Sale**

Number of Kids: As many as you've got!

Needed: Music, table, pile of objects - as many objects as there are players, Suitable objects are: hat, books, cushions, shoes, boots, combs, brushes, scarves, pencils, Tennis balls, footballs, Racquets, and bats.

Time Limit: 5 mins

Age Group: Not too young, and not too old. Could be suitable for younger teenagers.

How to Play: The table of jumble should be on the opposite side of the room to the players. Play the music, then stop the tape unexpectedly. When this happens the entire group must dash for the table and grab an object. The first time this happens there will be something for everyone. Now play again, but remove one object. Whoever ends up without an object in the next round is out of the game - temporarily. Continue the play until one player is left, triumphantly holding the one remaining object. ©1998 by Michael Elliott

21. **GET OUT OF THIS!**

Number of Kids: Any

Needed: Nothing

Time Limit: As long as you want

Age Group: Any, teenagers will have as much fun!

How to Play: Either play with the entire group - it doesn't really matter how large the group is - or split the group into two teams for a team race version. Either way, the players should stand shoulder to shoulder in a circle facing inwards - or two circles for the team version. Everyone must shut their eyes and put both hands forward into the center of the circle and grab two other hands at random. They then open their eyes, and try to untangle themselves without releasing their grasp. For the team version, the two teams race to see which can get untangled first. ©1998 by Michael Elliott

22. **WHO AM I?**

Number of Kids: Any

Needed: Nothing

Time Limit: None

Age Group: Any

How to Play: One player must leave the room; the rest of the group decides who he is going to be on his return. The player comes back in and asks the group members in turn questions about his identity, e.g. 'Am I a musician?' 'Am I a woman?' etc. He has twenty questions and they may only be answered with a 'YES' or 'NO!' ©1998 by Michael Elliott

23. Board Games - always good when a cell has just formed.

24. Play a word association game.

25. Ask everyone to put an object / item into the middle of the floor that best describes their life right now.

Introductory Icebreakers

1. Quaker questions

Where did you live between the ages of 7 and 12, and how many brothers and sisters did you have?

What kind of car did your family have?

Who was the person you felt closest to?

When did God become more than a word to you?

Others good:

What color was the kitchen floor during this period?

What was your favorite item of clothing during this period?

2. Cinderella Game

Shoes one from each person. Thrown in middle of the room. Each person grabs one shoe from the pile. You have to ask the person who has your shoe--name, job, place of birth, ethnic origin. The person whose shoe you have you ask-- if there was one thing you could do for God and could not possibly fail, what would it be? Then exchange the shoes.

3. What's in a Name

In lieu of regular name/ID cards, have participants write an adjective that starts with the first letter of their names (ex. Artistic, instead of Arnold) on 2" x 5" cards. Would help if this adjective describes them in some way. Ask them to stand one by one, and to say, "I'm _____ (using the adjective written on their name cards). During the entire course/training, call them by these adjectives.

Follow-up to what's in a name : During the second day, you may play Zip Zap Zoom. Ask participants to gather around a circle. Stand in the middle. Point around randomly while saying "zip zap zoom". If you stop at the word zip, the person you're pointing at must name/"describe" the person to his right; if you stop at the word zap, he must name the person to his left. If you stop at the word zoom, he must name you. Anyone who gives an incorrect name/adjective will be the next It.

Icebreaker Ideas

1. Spin the bottle. Any person can spin first. But before spinning a question is asked. Whomever the bottle points to have to answer, and on and on. Of course there should be "right to pass", if the pointee is not comfortable to answer the question. Funner when questions are fun and the kind that requires thought.
2. Pass a nerf football, stuffed animal, or any small soft object around the room to keep the discussion moving.

Icebreaker Resources

- ***303 Ice Breakers***. Edited by Randall G. Neighbour by TOUCH Outreach Ministries ©1999. This is the best book I've seen. It has 303 icebreakers broken down into categories and gives a great introduction of how to do them. It can be ordered at www.touchusa.org or 1-800-735-5865.

- ***Ice-breakers, Heart-Warmers*** by Steve Sheely from Serendipity. Order by calling 1-800-525-9563.

- ***Good Things Come in Small Groups*** by IVP under section on "Community" has many icebreakers that are grouped according to stage that the group is in.

- ***Reaching College Students Through Cells*** (a book by TOUCH Outreach Ministries) has a couple of pages which list great icebreakers. It can be ordered at www.touchusa.org or 1-800-735-5865.

- ***Encyclopedia of Icebreakers*** by Sue Forbess-Greene, published by Applied Skills Press, 8517 Production Avenue, San Diego, CA 92121, in 1983. Pfeiffer & Company, Phone: 800-274-4434, FAX: 800-569-0443. (They have another icebreaker book in their catalog, these are from a business standpoint, not a church standpoint.)

- <http://groke.beckman.uiuc.edu/Vineyard/Lifeline/lifeline.html>
(You can find some ice breakers at the above site and some cell group questions)

- ***201 Great Questions*** by Jerry D. Jones, published by NavPress in 1988.

- ***CellChurch Magazine*** publishes a "top ten" list of icebreakers each quarter in the "ToolKit" section of the magazine. It is a publication of TOUCH Outreach Ministries and can be ordered at www.touchusa.org or 1-800-735-5865.

- ***The Un-Game***. It is a game oriented around asking others icebreaker type questions. No winners or losers, you just find out a ton about everyone involved. You can find it in most Christian bookstores.

- ***Ice Breaker Game***. It's a box of cards, each card with an icebreaker question. You choose cards and answer the question. Some cards allow you to ask your own question. It's produced by ACTS; P.O. Box 1254 1099 Manila, Philippines. Tel: 582698

- ***The Serendipity Bible***. The margins have thousands of questions, icebreaker and for further study throughout the Old and New Testaments.

A WORD ABOUT ICE BREAKERS

This was taken from a *Cell Church Magazine* article by Ralph Neighbour and retrieved from <http://www.champaign.vineyard.org/northstar/memos/icebreakers.html>

From time to time, we get calls asking us if we have a good source for Ice Breakers. Let me give you my current thinking about using them.

Like you, I have been evolving from a traditional church lifestyle to a pure Cell Church lifestyle. As a result, my earlier writings included the use of Ice Breakers for all Cell Group meetings. While I still use them in cells, their purpose changes as the group matures through these stages:

The group is launched -- use the Quaker Questions

There are no ties between the people. They are strangers. There's no bonding. The Ice Breaker is critical to the structure of the gathering. I recommend that ALL groups meeting for the first time use the "QUAKER QUESTIONS," or some variation of it. They are presented in several of my books, including *The Shepherd's Guidebook*. They are an excellent way of getting folks acquainted with each other, and revealing common bonds that already exist because of similarities in their lifestyles. The Quaker Questions are . . .

Where did you live between the ages of 7 and 12, and how many brothers and sisters did you have?

What kind of car did your family have?

Who was the person you felt closest to?

When did God become more than a word to you?

The group is forming -- use "contrived" ice breakers

By "contrived," I mean the selection of topics that are non-threatening. These are items that will continue to let the forming group discover each other. All the Ice Breakers I have included in *The Shepherd's Guidebook* are designed for these beginning weeks. It's important to use non-threatening topics. Don't try to use things that would make people feel the "lid" is being pried off their private lives. They will not come back for more!

The group is facing its "conflict stage"

The type of Ice Breaker to be used at this stage should focus on how conflicts may be solved. An example would be, "If you were driving alone and someone cut you off, what would you probably do?"

The group has bonded together

It's at this stage that the importing of "cute" Ice Breakers becomes embarrassing to the group. There are only so many times you can pass out paper and have people draw something, or take clay and mold something, or talk about what they would do if they were going to live on the moon and could only take one item with them....

Therefore, I have found in many different cultures that the best thing to do when the group has bonded is to eliminate ALL outside, "cute" Ice Breakers. The value of Cell Group life focuses on this important truth: "In this group, the agenda is . . . US!" **Week after week, the group's Ice Breaker can remain the same: "What important event took place in your life since we last gathered?"** With every passing week, the drama of people's lives becomes the basis for the time of initial sharing.