

THE NEW YORK DISTRICT OF CIRCLE K INTERNATIONAL PRESENTS

# The Icebreaker Guide



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## Legend



1-10 People



11-20 People



21-30 People



31-40 People



41+ People

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# Icebreaker 101

*Icebreaker [ice-break-er] (n.): a thing that serves to relieve inhibitions or tension between people, or start a conversation; in order to prevent any awkwardness in a social situation.*

You know how when you attend a club meeting and you roll your eyes when the president says, “Okay, it’s icebreaker time”? We are here to change that for everyone! These icebreakers are here to help your members break out of their shells, not be afraid to get a little silly, and make new friends.



An icebreaker is an essential part of making a meeting successful. If the icebreaker stinks, no one is going to participate and have fun. If the icebreaker is amazing, funny, and engaging, people are going to go back to their dorms and tell their roommates that they should come with them next time to see for themselves. So, check out these icebreaker ideas and websites for your clubs!

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# Back to School

This section is dedicated to those first few meetings of the school year. This is for that awkward stage in the beginning when everyone is trying their best not to be completely awkward, but they are pretending to remember other people's names. The following icebreakers are perfect for General Interesting Meetings (G.I.M.) and a handful of upcoming meetings. These are just to get everyone used to each other at the start!

## Catch the Ball -

In a circle, pass a ball around asking various questions such as: What's your favorite Tv show? What's your favorite service project? If you have a large group, split them up into multiple groups.

## Four Corners -

Give everyone a paper and pen/pencil. Fold your paper in four-ways to create your "four corners." In each corner ask the group 4 questions, some examples are: what's your favorite animal?, who inspires you? and what are your hobbies? Give your group at least 5 minutes to write down their thoughts down and then allow time for sharing.

## Human Knot -

Members should stand shoulder to shoulder in a circle. Each person should put his/her right hand into the middle of the circle and join hands with someone across the circle (and not directly to his/her right or left). Each person then places their left hand into the circle and joins hands with a different person, and not the person directly to their left or right. For larger groups, split into smaller groups and then turn it into a race or competition.

## Creative Name Tags -

Give everyone 10 minutes to make his or her own nametag. They can list hobbies, draw a picture, or write a self-profile.

## Two-Truths and a Lie -

Have each participant write three unique statements about him/herself – two of which are true, and one, which is false. Each participant reads his/her statements, and the other members try to guess which one is false. For larger groups, split into multiple groups.

## Name Aerobics -

Have all participants stand in a circle. Have them think of the first letter of the name they would like to be called, and think of an adjective that begins with the same letter and describes them (e.g. Jolly John, Crazy Chris). Then have them think of how many beats or syllables are in the adjective and their name (e.g. Crazy Chris would be three beats: Cra-zy Chris). Ask each participant to take a moment and think of series of movements so that there is one distinct and repeatable movement for each beat in his/her adjective and name. Have one person in the group start with his/her adjective and name, and the movements that go along. The entire group then repeats with the same movements. The second group member follows with his/her adjective name, and then the group repeats. Follow this pattern until everyone in the group has done theirs and the group has followed.

## Webs -

A ball of string or yarn is needed. The group is to sit in one large circle, preferably on the floor. The facilitator holds a large ball of string and tells the group that they are now going to discuss a particular topic such as why they chose to become a member of the learning community, their greatest personal experiences, etc. The first person to begin tosses the ball of twine to another member of the group seated across the circle. That person then shares his/her experience holds onto a piece of the string and tosses the string to another participant. This process continues until each member of the team has his/her time to share. By tossing the string around the group, participants weave a web, which connects all the members of the team in the same manner. The group facilitator then asks two or three members to “drop” their string. The web begins to sag and appears to be very weak and vulnerable. The facilitator can then discuss how important each participant is to the team and the effect that low levels of involvement and commitment has on the entire team. If time allows, the team can unravel the string and talk about another topic or issue while rewinding the twine. Group members can also cut a piece of the string from the web to keep as a reminder of the exercise and the thoughts the group shared.

## Name Backwards Introduction -

Ask the each person to say their name backwards when they introduce themselves. If you wish, part or all of the backward game is used as a nickname throughout the activity. The funny part is that there is usually someone whose name is the same backwards, i.e. Anna.

## Birthday Line -

Explain to the group that this is a nonverbal exercise. The group is to perform a single straight line according to birthdays. No lip reading or spelling in the dirt is allowed. When the line is completed, each person will shout out his or her birthday, beginning in January. For larger groups, split into smaller groups and turn it into a race or competition.

## Beach Ball -

Get a beach ball and write questions all over the ball. Then, get the group together in a circle. Throw the ball to someone and the first question they see they must answer. Then that person passes the ball and the game continues. You can add in that people need to say the name of the person they are throwing it to in order to learn names better. For larger groups, split into smaller groups.

## All My Neighbors -

The group stands in a circle. One person in the center says “I like all my neighbors who... (some characteristic, such as “ wears glasses, watches Orange is the New Black, etc.)” Everyone with that characteristic has to run and switch place with someone else, while the person in the center also has to run and claim a spot in the circle. Last person to switch place has to be in the circle and call out the next prompt.

## Common Interest -

The group starts in a circle. The person (who may or may not participate in the game) calls out something that would split the group into two or more categories, without saying where these groups should go. The circle then has to find other people who fit in the same category by talking to each other. You can choose to ask individual people about their category after they’re sorted before getting back into a circle.

## Rock Paper Scissors Tournament



Review the rules of Rock Paper Scissors, then have participants pair up with the nearest person and battle. They only get one chance. The winner finds another winner from a different pair and then they battle. The loser cheers on the winner. The game goes until one person is left standing. Or have people divide into groups, battle among their groups, and then send the semi-winners on to compete with champions of other groups.

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# Genral Body Meetings

These icebreakers are perfect for when your members are finally comfortable in their own skin in the club. They have made one or two friends and have no problem being a little silly in front of other members.

## String Necklaces -

Tie a string or yarn “necklace” around everyone’s neck; the object of the game is to get as many strings as possible around your own neck by getting others to say “no” to questions you ask. When someone says “no” to you, she or he forfeits their necklace.

## Hum That Tune -

Each person in the group is given a small piece of paper with the name of a nursery rhyme or popular song written on the paper. Example, “Row, row, row your boat,” “Trap Queen”, etc. All the people who are given the song must hum that tune and find everyone else in the group singing that same tune.

## Progressive Story -

For this exercise, a group of people must know one another and feel comfortable. Everyone must be able to hear the other members of the group, but people don’t have to see one another. So, the group doesn’t have to be sitting in a circle. A facilitator begins the story by setting the initial scene and mood. i.e.:

“on my way to class the other day . . .”

“A good friend called last night and . . .”

“I had them most amazing weekend! I . . .”

In no special order, members of the group then take over the story. They add another element to the plot. If someone stumbles or messes up the story, they are out.

## Big Wind Blows/ Winds are blowing if...



In a circle, there will be one person in the middle, the person in the middle has to say Big Wind Blows/ Winds are blowing if... and something that is true about themselves. If one or more people agree with their statement, they will all run across to find an empty spot. The person that does not find a spot and will say Big Wind Blows/ Winds are blowing if... and a statement true about them and repeat until most or everyone has gone.

## Lost on a deserted island -

You are in a sticky situation, you and your group are all part of a shipwreck and are stranded in a deserted island. Each person is allowed to bring one item with them and explain why they are bringing that item. After everyone has stated their object, divide everyone into small groups and ask everyone to work together to improve their chances of survival by combining the objects everyone has chosen. If necessary you can add more objects but make sure to use all the objects that everyone chose the first time.

## Embarrassing Moments -

Divide the large group into smaller groups of 10-15 and arrange for each group to sit in a circle. Each participant is asked to take 3-5 minutes to think of an embarrassing moment that has occurred in his or her lifetime. After several minutes of contemplation, each participant shares his/her experiences with other members of the group.

## Famous Pairs -

In this exercise, group members will be asked to identify the names of famous pairs or persons. The leader tapes on the back of group members a nametag with the name of a famous pair or persons written on it (Fred and Wilma Flintstone, Hillary and Bill Clinton, peanut butter and jelly). The group member is not to see what is taped on his/her back. The leader then tells group members that their task is to find out who they are. Members are to mill around the room and ask questions that can be answered with only “yes” or “no.” If the member receives a “yes” answer, he or she can continue to ask questions until a “no” reply is received. At that point, the member must move on to another participant. Questions may include, “Am I alive?,” “Am I a movie star?,” etc.

## Roots and Leaves -

Provide group members with paper and markers and ask them all to draw their own personal tree. It must include ROOTS: things about you that are not easily visible (where you are from, values, important life events, achievements, things you struggle with, long term goals, secret dreams, etc.) and LEAVES: things about you that are readily visible (hobbies, demographic information, important people in your life, distinguishable personal traits, favorite music, things you do well, etc.) Have members share and describe their trees to the group.

## Silent I.D. -

Give each person a piece of paper with instructions to write words or draw pictures that describe themselves without talking. Then they are to pin their paper on their chest, walk around, and look at each other. Pictures are collected and shuffled and participants try to identify to whom each picture belongs.

## End the Sentence -

Write the start of a question on the board (i.e. My Favorite job was ..., My Hobby is...) and go around the room with each person finishing the sentence. When the group is finished, post another question and start again.

**For more ideas for Icebreakers check out these links:**

<http://www.icebreakers.ws/medium-group>

[http://lc.wayne.edu/pdf/icebreakers\\_teambuilders.pdf](http://lc.wayne.edu/pdf/icebreakers_teambuilders.pdf)

<http://icebreakerideas.com/quick-icebreakers/>

# Dos and Don'ts



## Do

- Use icebreakers to create a more relaxed environment.
- Choose the right game for the right group.
- Make sure that you have the right amount of people for the game.
- Make the instructions for the icebreaker as simple as possible.
- Keep your eye on the participants. Make sure that they are having fun.
- Be ready to improvise if necessary.
- Have a back-up plan. If the icebreaker isn't working, you will need it.
- Split people into groups, especially large groups.
- Try to incorporate learning names into an icebreaker if this is a first meeting.

## Don't

- Introduce an icebreaker game that will make others uncomfortable.
- Underestimate the time it will take to complete the icebreaker.
- Forget to bring all of the materials that you need.
- Limit icebreakers to the beginning of a meeting. Use them to revitalize the members at any time during the meeting.
- Force people to participate.
- Forget to keep track of which icebreakers work and which ones don't.
- Choose complicated icebreakers. Keep it simple.
- Make people share anything too personal.



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# Final Remarks

No one likes joining a club they cannot be themselves in. Make your members feel comfortable and as if they belong in your club. These icebreakers are designed to help ease their transition as a member, especially if the club is filled with past members. It can be very intimidating joining a club that is full of old members and cliques.

Try your best to separate any cliques during these icebreakers. Give your old members the opportunity to engage with the potential and new members. There is nothing cuter than seeing a type of “Big/Little” relationship develop during an interaction. Fellowship is a very important tenet in Circle K International. Remind people as to why it is one of the three tenets in our organization.

Hopefully, this packet will help you run smooth and effective meetings throughout the service year. If you have any questions, comments, and/or concerns, do not hesitate to contact any members of the Social Initiatives Committee. We are here to help you and we want your clubs to have the best meetings on campus!

We wish you the best of luck this year and cannot wait to see your clubs grow!

Yours in service, leadership, and especially fellowship,

*The Social Initiatives Committee*

## Contact Information

SOCIAL INITIATIVES COMMITTEE CHAIR:

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