



Midsize Ice Breakers II –October 08



Icebreakers. Again. We don't have time for icebreakers! I've told Steve this again and again! Our parents of teens community group runs between 40 to 60 for attendance right now, and there are so many things that need to be accomplished on a given Sunday morning! Icebreakers seem kind of frivolous, something to use to fill the time when there is nothing else "planned," or so we think!

As I was trying to figure out how I was going to catch your interest regarding ice breakers, a leadership meeting was called for our community. As we were discussing the "health" of our community, it was brought up that we all need to do a better job of drawing *everyone* into conversation during the fellowship period at the beginning of community time, especially the newcomers. It is human nature for us to be drawn to those we know, catching up on the events of the past week, thus "leaving out" those we do not know well. People seek out community groups primarily for the purpose of belonging, for friendship. Rick Warren stated in *The Purpose Driven Church* that "People are not looking for a friendly church as much as they are looking for a friend." It became very clear to me that in a medium sized group setting of 40+ adults, icebreakers are not frivolous, not time fillers, but are a **necessary tool** to help create a better feeling of family, to help people feel comfortable in a group setting, and to help us to focus on others.

When your group is new, if you have several new members, or even if it has been a while, choose icebreakers that will introduce the history of each member (brothers and sisters, the kind of car the family had while growing up, etc), and questions to put everyone at ease ("If you were a car, what car would you be?"). As people get to know each other better, they are better able to encourage each other in the ups and downs of life, and encourage one another in their walk with God. The atmosphere in the room warms, and without knowing it, you will be on your way to more frequent experiences in sharing. Proverbs 27:17 "*Iron sharpens iron, and one man sharpens another.*"

Here are a few suggestions to get you started:

Hot Potato Pass:

Group Goal: People will learn more about each other by answering questions they draw from a "hot potato" sack.

Supplies: "Hot Questions" strips (see below), small brown paper sack for every 10 people, and a source of music.

Before the meeting, make up the questions onto strips and place at least 10 questions into each bag. Blow up the sack like a balloon and twist the top so the sack is easy to pass around. You'll need one sack of questions for every 10 people. Ask people to set their chairs in a circle. Give one person the "Hot Potato" (the sack). When you start the music, have the people in the group quickly pass the "Hot Potato" around the circle. When the music stops, whoever is holding the bag will say his or her name and will draw out a question to answer. If someone is stuck holding the "hot potato" a second time, allow that person to toss the sack to someone else in the circle. Repeat the process until everyone answers at least one question.

Questions:

- *What type of job or activity takes up most of your day?*
- *What was the first job you ever got paid for?*
- *What do you like most about living in this community?*

- *What was your favorite childhood activity?*
- *What do you like to do when you have free time?*
- *What book are you currently reading?*
- *Which part of the newspaper do you read first? Why?*
- *Would you rather write a letter, make a telephone call, or send an e-mail message?*
- *What is the best gift you received as a child?*
- *What is your favorite day of the year? Why?*

Mystery Person:

Group Goal: People will go on a cooperative scavenger hunt to learn more about each other.

Supplies: Six sheets of newsprint, tape, and red and blue markers or crayons.

Before the meeting, write one of the following phrases on each sheet of newsprint; then hang the sheets of newsprint in an easily accessible place:

- Favorite meal is breakfast.
- Has eaten raw fish.
- Works from home.
- Was born in September.
- Plays a musical instrument.
- Drives more than 30 minutes to work.

Have adults form two groups. Hand one group red markers and designate them the Reds. Hand the other group blue markers and name them the Blues. Say: *Let's have a fun race while we get to know each other better. The object of this game is to get as many people's names on the sheets of newsprint as you can before three minutes is up. You'll have to ask each other questions to find out who fits under what categories. When you find someone who fits in a category, write his or her name on the corresponding sheet of newsprint. At the end of three minutes, we will count up which team has collected the most names. Try to get everyone's name in at least one category.*

At the end of three minutes, call time. Count the number of names written in each color. Then ask if anyone's name should be in a category where it's not already. Write in any missing names; then keep the sheets in place for a couple of weeks as a reminder of people's names and the fun you had collecting them.

Submitted By: Shelli Doolin – Shelli is part of the leadership team with the GPS Community (Parents of Teens), Hope Church - Mason, Ohio.