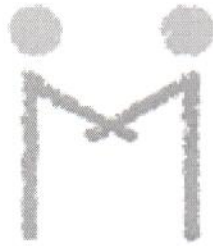


# GETTING TO KNOW YOU



Classroom Activities for  
Starting Off the School Year  
from Morningside Center

# **Activities for Grades 6 to 12**

## **• Shout Out Those Names!**

### **Students will**

- learn each other's names
- affirm their names with a "shout-out"
- have fun

### **Materials Needed**

- a soft ball, bean bag, or Hugg-A-Planet

Ask the students to form a circle. Toss a soft ball or bean bag to someone in the group. Ask that person to say his or her name and then ask the whole group to shout it out in chorus.

Have the student with the ball toss it to someone else. Again the student receiving the ball says his or her name, and then the whole group shouts it out in unison.

Continue the process until everyone has had a chance to say his or her name and get a shout-out. No one gets the ball twice. To help the student with the ball see who hasn't had a turn, ask students who haven't gotten the ball yet to raise their hands.

Discuss: How was this activity for you? Did it help you learn other students' names? Why is it important that we learn each other's names?

## **• Link Names and Gestures**

### **Students will**

- learn each other's names
- have fun

Here's another name game. Have the students form a circle. Explain that each person is going to say his or her name while making a gesture. Everyone in the circle will repeat the person's name in chorus while imitating the gesture. Model the activity by going first to say your name while making a gesture.

## • Find Someone Who

### Students will

- learn new things about their classmates
- talk with students they don't usually talk to
- have fun

### Materials Needed

- Copies of Activity Sheet #3 for all students

Tell students that they are going to play a game called "Find Someone Who." It's an icebreaker that will help them learn things they might not know about each other.

Distribute copies of Activity Sheet #3 to all students. Explain that they are to walk around the room and find people who have the characteristics described on the sheet. When they find someone, they should write the person's name in the blank provided, and ask them for more information. For example, if they find someone who plays a musical instrument, they should find out what instrument. They need to find a different person for each item on the sheet. They will see that the sheet is laid out in a grid as in Bingo. They can try for Bingo by going diagonally, vertically, or horizontally. Or they can try to get a person for every item on the sheet.

Begin the game. Continue until at least several students have completed the sheet or come close. Ask students to return to their seats. Choose a student who completed all or most of the items on the grid. Ask that student to go item by item and say whom s/he found and what s/he learned about the person. For example, "Sarah plays a musical instrument; she plays the flute." After each item, you might ask who else shares the characteristic. For example, "Who else in the class plays a musical instrument? What do you play?" If interest remains high, ask another student to share whom s/he found.

Discuss the activity: What did you notice about yourself and others during this game? Did you learn anything new about someone? If you were making up items for the activity sheet, what are some you'd like to include?

## • A Little Respect...Goes a Long Way

### Students will

- explore the meaning of “respect” and “disrespect” by creating word webs

### Materials needed

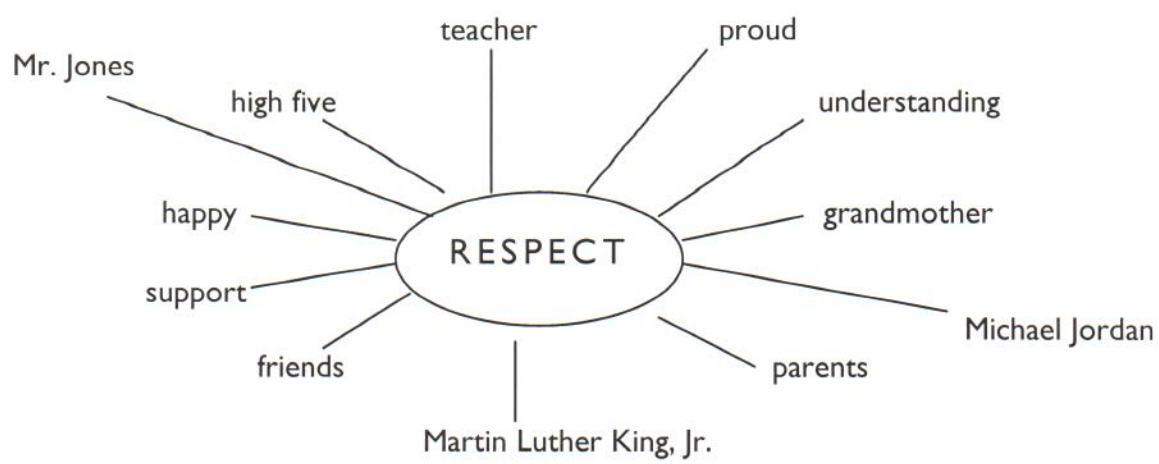
- chart paper, markers, and masking tape

Middle and high school students throughout the country have identified disrespect, teasing, and bullying as serious problems in their schools. Obviously, students and teachers can’t do their best work in an atmosphere of disrespect. Morningside Center’s research-based programs “increase the respect” when they are carried out consistently in classrooms and schools. We give students and adults tools for building a school community in which people support and respect each other.

In this activity we explore the meaning of respect. We all want to be treated with respect, but what does respect mean exactly? What does “respect” look like and feel like? Does it look different with different people and in different situations? When is it easy to treat others with respect? When is it difficult? What can guide us as we try to live our lives so that other people respect us and we respect other people? Those are some of the questions we address in this activity and the next. We’ll begin by creating webs for “respect” and “disrespect.”

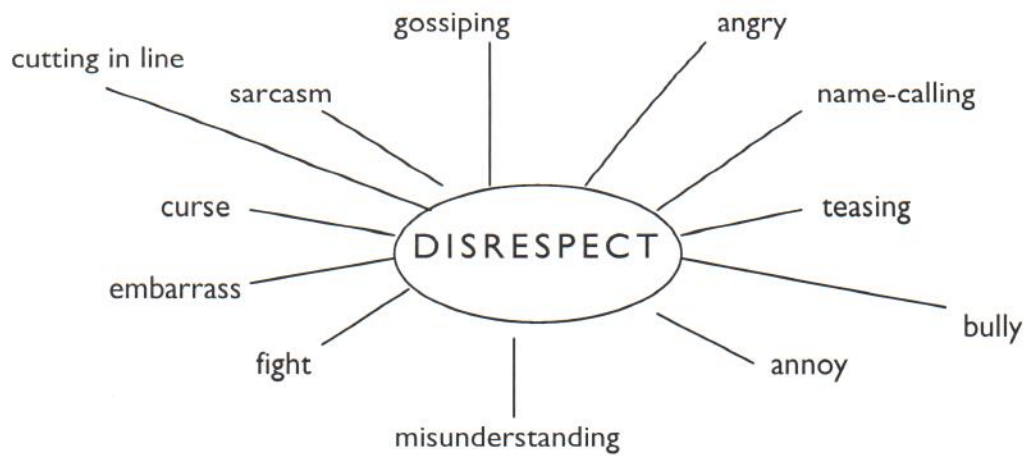
Tape a piece of chart paper to the wall and write the word “Respect” in the middle of it. Ask students to share their free associations with the word “respect” and chart their responses. Continue for a few minutes while interest remains high. When you have a good number of words that students associate with respect, draw lines from “respect” to the words, creating a web. Ask the students if they want to make any comments or observations about the web.

A sample web might look like this:





Repeat the activity for the word "Disrespect." A sample web might look like this.



Discuss: When is it easy to treat another person with respect? When is it difficult? Be sure to save these webs since they will be needed for the next activity.

## • Defining “respect” and “disrespect”

### Students will

- create working definitions of “respect” and “disrespect”

### Materials needed

- “respect” and “disrespect” webs created in the previous activity
- chart paper, markers, and masking tape

Show the students the webs they created in the activity above. Explain that the webs may help them with today’s challenge: to come up with working definitions of respect and disrespect. Ask the students what the word “respect” means to them. How they would define it? Chart the first definition offered and then edit it as students contribute other ideas. Feel free to play devil’s advocate; ask questions to deepen their understanding. Do the same with “disrespect.” Your aim is to elicit definitions from the students that they own, not to come up with a dictionary definition. See the students’ definitions as “works in progress” that you may continue to edit as the students clarify their thinking.

Here are some of the key aspects of a definition of “respect” that you may want to keep in mind as the students offer their definitions: Respect is way of treating yourself, another person, or a thing. We can talk about self-respect, respect for others, and respect for things. In treating someone or something with respect, we acknowledge their value. Because we value them, we do all that we can to avoid hurting, humiliating, or damaging them. We treat the person or thing with courtesy, care, dignity. Value, caring, courtesy, and dignity are helpful words in describing the meaning of respect.

“Disrespect” is treating others in a way that violates their dignity. Examples are mean-spirited teasing, bullying, and insults. We show disrespect for ourselves when we do things that we know are harmful to our bodies and our future.

Make “respect” and “disrespect” themes in your classroom throughout the year. Continue to develop and deepen these definitions and discuss how they apply to situations you and your students confront in their reading and in their lives.

## NOTE TO THE TEACHER:

This discussion of the meanings of respect and disrespect may well lead your students to ask, Do all people deserve to be treated with respect at all times? What if the other person has “dissed” me and made me angry? What if they’re from another country or believe in a different religion or have a way of life I don’t agree with? What if they’re our “enemy”?

Welcome such questions. They are an indication that students are beginning to wrestle with the tough issues related to respect and disrespect. Encourage students to air their views and disagree with each other (respectfully, of course!).

Of course, as teachers we want to give our students the strong message that every human being has value and deserves to be treated with dignity. But it’s not always easy to live our lives based on always treating others with respect. We need to acknowledge the real challenges students (not to mention adults) face in living by this principle and support them as they grapple with difficult real-life questions it raises.

## • **Make Community Agreements**

### Students will

- think about agreements that will make the classroom a safe and productive place for everybody
- contribute their ideas to creating rules, or “community agreements,” for their classroom

### Materials needed

- chart paper, markers, and masking tape

Students are more likely to follow classroom rules and procedures if they’ve played a part in making them.



Give students a few minutes to speak with the student next to them about some ideas for classroom agreements: what will make the classroom a safe place where they have can do their best work? Give students a chance to share ideas with the whole class. Write them down as the students say them.

Elicit three or four key rules or practices that must be followed every day. For example,

- One person speaks at a time. Listen to the speaker.
- Respect each other's feelings. No put-downs.
- Respect each other's bodies. No hitting or fighting.

Write the community agreements on a piece of chart paper. Ask for two volunteers to decorate the chart to make it beautiful, leaving room for an additional agreement or two if the need arises. Post the chart in a prominent place in the classroom and refer to it as needed (at least once a day in the first few weeks of school).

## • **Think Differently**

**Students will**

- share their opinions
- observe that people, even friends, can have different opinions
- practice listening
- practice supporting their opinions

**Materials Needed**

- Three signs: "Strongly Agree," "Strongly Disagree," "Not Sure"
- Chart paper for noting guidelines for speaking and listening
- Masking tape

Here's an activity you can use throughout the year in any subject area to find out where your students stand and generate lively discussion.

**Birthday Bar Graph** - Using twelve unique colors, cut some construction paper up into strips. Organize these strips into twelve stacks, with each color representing one of the twelve months. Have the students get a strip of paper in the color that represents their birth month. The students should then write their names on one end of this strip of paper and their birthdays on the opposite end. Have the students with birthdays in January arrange their birthdays in chronological order and attach the strips of paper to a birthday bulletin board. Do this for each month. Make sure that you put a label above each colored bar. Once the class is finished putting up their papers you'll have a great class display that will help you and the class to remember these very special dates.

**Chrysanthemum Math** - Read Chrysanthemum by Kevin Henkes aloud to the class. Discuss the fact that the main character has thirteen letters in her name, half as many letters as there are in the alphabet. Have students figure out how many letters are in their first names. Then move on and have the class try to determine how many more letters Chrysanthemum has in her name than in theirs. Get the class to find the student with the shortest name in the classroom. Move on to a graphing activity to show how many students have four, five, six, etc. letters in their first name. For a final challenge, see if the students can figure out how many letters are in all of the students first names together. The graph can help the students to figure out this total.

**Numbers About Me** - Give the students a quiz that's all about you. All of the questions' answers should be numbers. For example, you might ask what year you were born, how many years you've been teaching, how old you are, how many pets you own, or what your height is. The students have to try and guess the correct numbers for each of those questions. You could also have the students answer their own "Numbers About Me" quiz and use those sheets in another icebreaker activity..

**The Math Curse** - Read the book The Math Curse by Jon Scieszka aloud to the class. This is a book about a boy who sees numbers wherever he goes. The character realizes that the world is one giant math problem. After your read the book, get the students to explore their new classroom and find things that can be turned into math problems. Have them think about things in their life that relate to math or that could be turned into a math problem. Have the students write down these discovered math problems and present them to the class.

**Missing Math** - Another good book to read aloud on the first day of school would be Missing Math: A Number Mystery by Loreen Leedy. This is a great book to read to younger students who want to know why they need math and how they use it every day. Encourage a class discussion after the book or you could even get the students involved in a creative writing activity that talks about the ways that math is most important to them.

**My Math Window** - Have the students create their own math windows. Give the students construction paper that has been divided into 9 squares. Have each student write their name on the center square. At the top of each of the remaining boxes, have the students put down numbers that mean something to them (birthday, address, telephone number, number of siblings, jersey number, etc.) and then draw an illustration below those numbers to show what they represent. After everyone is finished, have the class present their math windows to the class. Display them around the room.

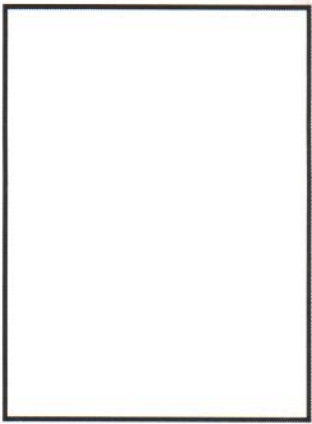
**What's That Number** - Write different numbers on index cards. Make sure you have enough for each student. Have all of the students face the same direction and tape these numbered index cards to their backs. It will be the students' jobs to figure out what number they have on their back by asking questions of their classmates. The students must introduce themselves and then ask their classmates yes and no questions about their numbers. For example, they might ask if the number is even, if it is greater or lesser than a specific number, or if it has two digits. They can only ask the same person three questions. Once they reach that three-question limit the students must move on to another classmate if they still haven't figured out the answer.

**The Counting Game** - Get your students into groups of three to five. Have them stand in a circle with their hands behind their back. When the signal sounds, each student should bring their hands to the front, holding up anywhere between zero and ten fingers. The group must then figure out the sum of all of the fingers being held up in their group. The first group to yell out the answer wins the round. Do this several times until you have the two top groups identified. Have those two groups face off until you can find the champion team.

**Student Number Lines** - Have the students get into groups of five to ten (the larger the group, the harder the activity will be). The students must order themselves according to the specific criteria you set before the start of the game. That criterion might be height, shoe size, birthday, hair length, or age. This is a great data processing activity that will also help your students get to know one another a little better.

**Pyramid Math:** Have everyone in the class find a partner. Each student should hold up some of the fingers of one hand when given a signal by the teacher. For the first round, the first student in each group that adds those two numbers correctly wins. One round consists of three adding problems, and the winner must correctly answer two out of the three problems the fastest. The winners face off for another adding round. The following rounds will be multiplying and subtracting. For the final round between the two top competitors, have the students add the two numbers and then square the answer (ex:  $4+2=6$ ;  $6 \times 6=36$ ). Tailor the game to your students' grade level and ability.





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people in it (except the one group that you may have had to designate as a different number)

You count down, out loud, from 10 and if someone has not managed to find a group they, plus the group that is short, must now become the 'judges' and stand in the middle of the room, assessing how the other groups are working together. They now have votes that they can give the other teams.

You can assess the number of rounds to go with judging based on the number of teams that you have. In each round, you want the judges to have to give teams, A, B, and C grades with either those who receive no votes, or those who receive C votes eliminated to join the judging pool.

Each round can also add an additional instruction. Possibilities include:

- Slide
- Rotate
- Boogie Down
- Get Low
- Back it up

Conclude when there is a definitive winner.

- **People Tigers and Traps Tag**

Set up PPT as usual. Explain that this time, the twist will be that whenever a team wins, they are going to try and tag the losing team as quickly as possible. If they are able to tag someone on the other team, they have recruited that person over to their team. Designate the 'safe' area for each team that they need to reach before being tagged.

- **Yesman Advertising**

Divide groups of 8-10 into two teams of 4-5 each. Have the teams get together and decide which team will be the advertising company and which will be the client team. The client team must then decide a product that they want the advertising company to work with and the advertising campaign they want to run requesting either a "Slogan", "Jingle" or "Promotion". For instance, they might say they want a *slogan* to sell *potatoes*. One person on the advertising team, without consulting the others, would then jump out and deliver the slogan. For instance someone might say, "Potatoes. They are from the ground, so you know they're good!". No matter what this person says, the rest of the team must say, "Brilliant!", "That's a great idea!" or some other encouraging words. The rest of the team will then justify to the client team why this idea is so brilliant. For



instance, someone on the advertising company team might say, "Wow, what a perfect slogan. It is obvious nonsense, which will make others believe that it is so silly, it must be true! Brilliant!" The teams take turns being the advertising company and the client.

## **Partner Series**

- **Finger Fencing**

In a partnership, each person makes an L with her/his right thumb and index finger. Next, partners point the index fingers at each other, palms down. Then, partners connect to each other by putting the inside of their "Ls" (the part of your hand between the thumb and finger) together. Keeping your index finger straight, you must now try to use your "rapier" (aka your index finger) to touch your partner. Each touch scores you one point.

- **Make 7-Make 11**

Turn to your partner and put your hands behind your back. The caller will say, "Ready, Set, '15!'" (or any number between 1 and 20). The partners must then, at the same time put any number of fingers in front of them to try and make that exact number. After a couple rounds, you may challenge them to develop a full proof strategy. Some strategies work better than others, talk about why!

- **Fast Fingers**

In your Link/WEB Binder under "Other Resources".

- **Lean on Me**

Have the partners face each other and put their hands together. Have them take one step back until they are leaning against each other. Challenge them by saying that the objective is to make your partner take a step while maintaining contact with their hands.

- **Gotcha**

In your Link/WEB Binder under "Other Resources".

## **Tag Series**

Each person must say move to a new chair and say “Just visiting” 3 times, after which, when they sit down the fourth time, they will say “I’m here to stay”. When someone else sits with them who is also “Here to stay”, then they are ready to pair share. Possible topics include:

- Who Are You? – One person asks that question over and over while their partner gives a short one or two word response. When the questioner hears something interesting, then the partner can say “More”.
  - P-P-P: Passion, Purpose and Play
  - Thoughts on “The Big Picture”
  - Where have you been?
  - Who are you hanging out with?
  - What are you up to?
- **Wallets** – Have the group get into groups of 4. Explain that sometimes we carry important things about ourselves in our wallets or purses. Other people don’t have things in their wallets/purses, but rather have something special on them, like a necklace, ring or even a tattoo or piercing that has some significance. Give each person in the group one to two minutes to share this item and its significance with the group.
- **Switch Change Rotate** – Start by having everyone get into a group of 4 standing in a single file line. If you have a group that does not divide easily by four, create one group that will be designated as a different number of people. Explain that the group will need to work together to accomplish a set of commands. Introduce these three first.
  - Front to Back – Person in the front moves to the back
  - Switch – The person in front and the person in back change places
  - Middle Change – the people in the middle change places.

Challenge the group to do more than one at a time and explain that they will need to evaluate how they are doing giving themselves either an A, B, or C grade. Give them a few commands and then have them grade their performance thus far.

Next introduce the following commands: Walk and Stop. (These should be self explanatory!)

Have the group practice with you giving a series of commands. Next introduce the next command:

- Eject!- The person in the front has to leave their current group and move to the back of a new group. Remember that each group can only have four

- **Partner Tag**

In your Link/WEB Binder under "Other Resources".

- **Hug Tag**

Have each person get a partner and puts their arm around their partner, except the one person in the group who will be designated the "tagger". That person is trying to tag someone else, thus making them the "tagger". Anyone who is not in the process of hugging someone is available to be tagged. However, you can only "hug" for a maximum of 3 seconds. You can have the couples count out their seconds together with "One, you are awesome, Two you are awesome, Three, you are awesome".

- **Elbow Tag**

Have everyone get a partner. Have the partners hook elbows, facing the same direction. One pair will not hook elbows, instead, one of the pair will be the "tagger" and one will be the "runner". When you say, "Go!", the tagger tries to tag the runner. All other partnerships stay standing with their elbows locked. The runner is only safe if he/she hooks on to someone's free elbow. Once the runner has hooked onto one side of a partnership, the other side is "cast free" and then becomes the runner. The tagger is now trying to tag this person.

- **Dragon Tail Tag**

Get everyone in teams of 4. (you can play with teams of 3 or 5 as well). Explain that the person in front might be the tagger and the person in back might be tagged. Designate one (or more) team(s) to be 'it'. This team is going to try and get their front person positioned to tag another teams back person. If they successfully tag the other team, then that team becomes the new 'it'.



### Icebreaker 2.23 Treasure Hunt

**Number of People:**

10 to 20

**Material:**

Scavenger List, miscellaneous items, a paper bag for each participant

**Time:**

20 to 30 minutes

**Purpose:**

Get to know each other through discussion on the treasure hunt

**Directions:**

1. Instruct the participants to find specific items from others in the groups. They should have a sheet of paper which lists the items and then a space after each to describe why that is significant and the person's name from whom they got it. The participants need to be sure to write the person's name so each item can be returned.
2. Time the activity and call everyone together after 10 to 15 minutes. The activity can stop earlier if someone gets all of their scavenger hunt items. As the person who got the most items or all the items on the list begins to return them, a discussion can be held with the other participants showing the items they secured which represent the same areas.
3. This discussion can serve to help the group learn about each other and discuss what is important to them.
4. You can use items from wallets, purses, bookbags, self, or other locations.

### Scavenger List

Find one item to represent the following. It might be helpful to have a bag.

1. Something sentimental
2. Something special that probably no one else has
3. Something worn on the feet
4. Something that makes a sound
5. Piece of jewelry
6. Something metal
7. Something that represents happiness
8. Something blue
9. Something hard
10. Something that represents another person
11. Something you can read
12. Something that's shiny
13. Something pointed
14. Something that smells good
15. Something 5 years old or older
16. Something soft
17. Something that can tear
18. Something with numbers
19. Something pretty
20. Something transparent.
21. A photo of someone
22. A coin
23. A metal object
24. Something soft
25. Something slick
26. An item of clothing
27. An item of jewelry

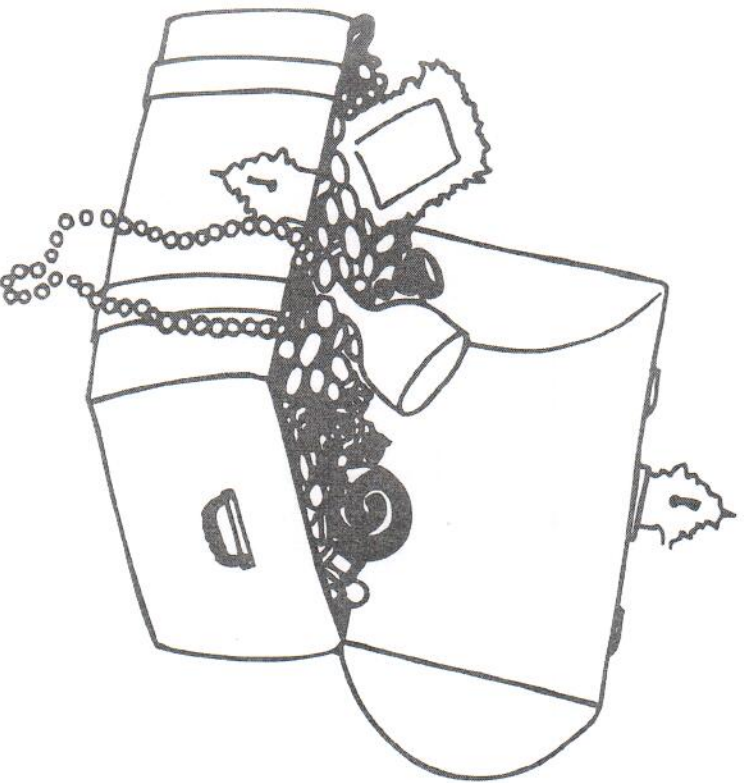
### *More Energizers and Icebreakers*

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28. Something that holds clothes up or together
29. Something to do with hair
30. Something special to someone

#### **Alternatives:**

- Something made of leather
- Something you can smear, sniff, or put on
- Something for illness
- Something that holds something up
- Something that represents love
- Something someone gave you
- Something black





### Energizer 3.7 Boat Ride

**Number of People:**

Unlimited

**Materials:**

Boat Ride Story

**Time:**

5 to 7 minutes

**Skills:**

Listening, following directions

**Directions:**

Place the movements that are associated with the words (listed below) on newsprint or a board so the participants can easily see them. Review the movements at least once prior to reading the storm report. Once the group is familiar with the movements and terms, read the report and the entire group should follow along, acting out the movements as they learn the words read in the story.

sunny = hands around smiling face

flying fish = fly in air with your arms

boat = jumping porpoises = jump up

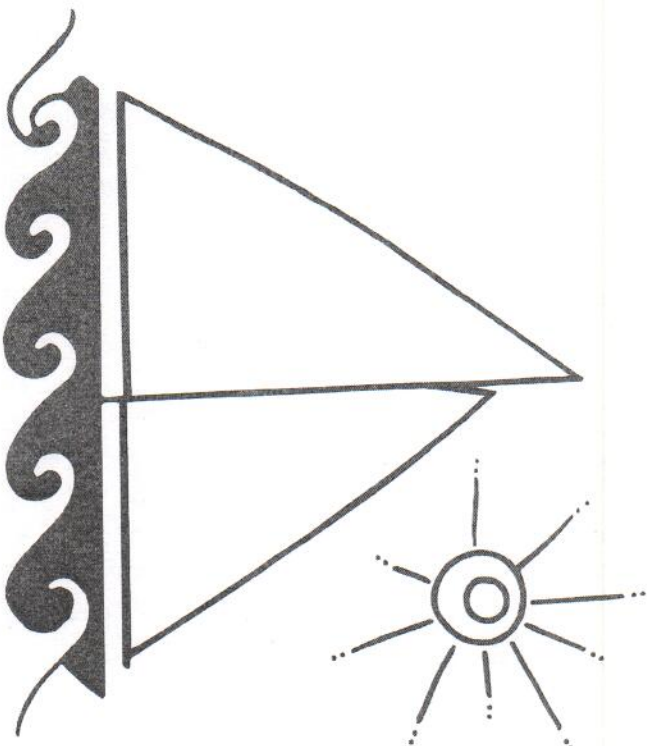
waves = whole group wave

whale = two people join together and swim

breezes = whistle

eye to eye = make circle with fingers around eyes

fish = mouth shaped like fish



#### Boat Ride Story

It was a sunny day when we went for our boat ride. The waves were low at the beginning of the morning so the boat didn't rock much. The breezes were cool and we started catching fish. As our sunny day progressed, the waves got higher... and higher, but the fish kept coming. We saw flying fish and jumping porpoises. The flying fish moved carelessly through the cool breezes. Soon the waves got higher than the side of the boat and we saw a huge whale. The whale looked eye to eye at us and we changed direction. The flying fish followed, the jumping porpoises followed, the breezes blew hard, and our sunny day took the boat to the dock in a hurry!

## **Pass the Clap**

Focus: Having fun, visual communication

Stand in a circle. One person has the “clap” in their hands and turns to face a person next to them. About when they make eye contact or just when they are facing each other, they clap simultaneously. Then, that next person has the clap and turns to pass it on. After it has been passed around once and everyone has the hang of it, begin to time him or her. Encourage people to move around, jump into a different part of the circle, and reverse it.

## **Whose Shoes?**

Focus: Introductions

Have everyone sit or stand in a circle. Ask them to take their shoes off and immediately toss them into the middle of the circle. Begin by having one volunteer pick a pair of shoes; describe the owner (without knowing who it is). Ask for things such as age, hobbies, or attitude. When he is done describing the owner, he must guess whom the shoes belong to. Then, the real owner comes forward and continues the activity.

## **Action Intros**

Focus: Learning Names

Make a standing circle. Have one person start by saying an action and their name. The action should start with the same letter as their name, like energetic Eric or jumping Jill. When they say their action and name, they can also act out their action. So, jumping Jill would jump up and down. Have the entire group go around and repeat everyone’s actions and names each time a new person introduces him or herself.

## **Concentric Circles**

Focus: Get to Know One Another

Divide everyone into two groups. Have one group make a circle facing outward. The second group then makes a circle around the first group and faces inward. Everyone should be facing someone from the other circle. Each person can talk to the person across from them for a minute or two before you yell, “SWITCH”, and have one circle move to the left or right a few steps. If participants seem shy, give them a topic to talk about each rotation, such as movies, DECA, college, food, etc.



## **Two Truths and a Lie**

Focus: Getting to Know One Another

Go around the group and have everyone say two true statements about themselves and one false. The rest of the group has to guess which one is false. If participants find it hard to think on the spot, give them index cards and let them write it down. Then, toss the cards into the middle of the circle so you have to guess who the person is and what is false. You may be surprised. You can learn some crazy things about each other!

## **Human Knot**

Focus: Teamwork

Everyone stands in a circle and puts their right hand into the middle.

They clasp hands with someone across the circle.

Then, everyone puts their left hand into the middle of the circle and clasps the hand of a \*different\* person. The group is now in a "knot". The object is for the group to untangle itself without releasing anyone's hand.

## **Have You Ever**

Focus: Get Moving, Get To Know One Another

This is not a game for the first night! In two facing lines, tape small pieces of paper to mark spots for people to stand on. If you have 20 people, make 19 spots. Leave enough room between the lines for plenty of movement. The person without a spot stands in the middle and asks a question. "Have you ever eaten a kiwi?" Anyone who can say, "Yes", must then leave their space and find a new one. They can't stay in the same spot or move to a spot immediately to their left or right. Whoever is left without a spot now asks the next question. As a moderator of the game, don't be afraid to "accidentally" not find a spot and be in the middle. In doing so, you can change the tone of the game to more serious questions or more humorous questions, depending on the group dynamic.

## **60 Second Speeches**

Focus: Getting to Know One Another, Speaking Skills

Have different topics pre-written on pieces of paper about all sorts of different things (candy, state advisors, television, summer, DECA blazers, parents). One by one, participants will pick a topic from you and must give a 60 second speech however they would like. The only rule is that they must not stop talking or hesitate for the entire minute. You'll be amazed at what some people end up talking about in just one minute!

## **Refresher Activities 2010**

- **Greetings** - Have the group meet and greet as many people as possible in 30 seconds. After 30 seconds, explain that they just did a great job of greeting everyone in a very normal human way. Now, however, you want them to imagine that they come from some alien planet where they have their own unique greeting. For the next 30 seconds, meet as many people as you can and greet them in their unique alien manner. Finally, let them know that as Link and WEB Leaders, we are somewhere in between normal and completely alien. Spend this final 30 seconds greeting as many people as they can like an awesome Link or WEB Leader would.
- **Count Down** – Begin with the entire group in a circle standing shoulder to shoulder. Explain that everyone will close their eyes and begin counting down from 10 to 1 at whatever pace they want. When they have reached 1, they will open their eyes, walk forward and introduce themselves to the first person they collide with. After the introduction, they will take a 90 degree right turn and continue until they reach the outside of the circle again. The intention here is to have people moving at different speeds and at different times. You may repeat this activity a few times until your circle has been thoroughly mixed up.  
Countdown from A-Z  
List your family members
- **Tonya Tag** – Remind (or teach) the group of the infamous Tonya Harding and Nancy Kerrigan incident from the 1994 Winter Olympics. Explain that Tonya had henchmen (1 for every 30 players) who carried out her dastardly plan. The henchmen will receive clubs (pool noodles, towels, blow up crayons, etc.). The rest of the group will become “Nancy’s”, skating through life. The henchmen goal is to eliminate as many Nancy’s as possible by hitting them on the back of the knee, thus rendering them “injured”. When a Nancy has been struck, she throws her hands in the air, spins in a circle and cries out “Why me?” over and over, until she is rescued. Nancy’s can be rescued with the help of two other healthy Nancy’s who grab hands around the injured Nancy, encircle and run around her, chanting “Triple Salchow, Triple Salchow, Triple Salchow” (pronounced “sow cow”) This heals the Nancy and play continues. During the healing process the Nancy’s are not eligible to be tagged by the Tonya’s.
- **Just Visiting** – Have the group set up chairs in random places around the room with each pair of chairs facing each other. Explain that when you say “Go!”, everyone will need to find a new chair, sit and wait for someone to sit across from them. When someone sits down, the two will shake hands and say “Just visiting”.



## ICEBREAKERS

### BLOBS AND LINES

**HOW TO PLAY:** In this icebreaker, students are prompted to either line up in some particular order (by birthday, for example) or gather in “blobs” based on something they have in common (similar shoes, for example). What’s great about this game is that it **helps students quickly discover things they have in common**. This game keeps students moving and talking, and it builds a sense of belonging and community in your classroom. Here are some sample prompts you can use for this game:

- Line up in alphabetical order by your first names.
- Line up in alphabetical order by your last names.
- Gather with people who have the same eye color as you.
- Gather with people who get to school in the same way as you (car, bus, walk).
- Line up in order of your birthdays, from January 1 through December 31.
- Line up in order of how many languages you speak.
- Gather into 3 blobs: Those who have LOTS of chores at home, those who have A FEW chores at home, and those who have NO chores at home.
- Gather with people who have the same favorite season as you.

### CONCENTRIC CIRCLES

**HOW TO PLAY:** This icebreaker has students arrange themselves in an inside circle and an outside circle, the inside facing out, forming pairs. Pairs discuss their answers to a getting-to-know-you question, then rotate for the next question, forming a new partnership. This game gives students the chance to have **lots of one-on-one conversations** with many of their classmates and helps them quickly feel more at home in your class. The possibilities for questions in this kind of configuration are endless; be sure to use more open-ended questions that can get students talking, rather than those that simply ask for a yes or no answer. Here are some sample questions:

- Do you play any sports? If so, which ones?
- Do you consider yourself shy or outgoing? Why?
- What was the last movie you saw? Did you like it?
- Describe your perfect dinner.
- What would you do with a million dollars?
- What is one thing you’re good at?

### THIS OR THAT

**HOW TO PLAY:** This icebreaker has students informally debate on light topics such as “Which animal makes a better pet...dog or cat?” Students have to choose a position, then physically move to the side of the room that most closely represents their opinion—one side means dogs, the other side means cats—and then talk about why they chose that spot. This game builds student confidence with talking in front of their peers, it **helps students quickly find kindred spirits**, and it’s also just a lot of fun.

Sample questions for This or That:

- Would you rather live in the country or the city?
- Should all students be required to learn a second language?
- Would you rather be indoors or outdoors?
- Which is better: Playing sports or watching sports?
- Would you rather travel every single day or never leave home?