29 NON-AWKWARD ICE BREAKERS

(That Might Still Be Really Awkward...)



1. CANDY INTRODUCTIONS

- Required Items: A bag of different colored candy (M&Ms, Skittles, Gum Drops)
- Directions: Pass the bag of candy around and have each student take several pieces
 of candy. Tell them to not eat it yet. Assign each color an attribute (red is favorite movie,
 blue is coolest place you've ever been, etc). Go around in a circle and have each
 person introduce themselves using their colors of candy. Then you get to eat the candy,
 of course!

2. TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE

- Required Items: Voices and minds
- Directions: It will probably work best if you sit in a circle. Start with one person (core or leader) who lists three facts about themselves ("I love Batman...I can roller skate backward...I've climbed a mountain")—these can be as weird or mundane as you like, so long as two of them are true and one of them is false. The rest of the group then guesses which of the facts is a lie (if you were wondering, I can't roller skate backward). It's a fun way to learn about people and it might spark conversation between shared interests or experiences.

3. FIND SOMEONE WHO (PEOPLE BINGO)

- Required Items: Sheets of paper with the boxes on them, pens
- Directions: Create bingo sheets that have descriptions in each box (ex: "Someone whose middle initial is the same as their first initial") and the goal is for the group members to find people to fill in the boxes, creating a bingo (in the traditional sense; five across, diagonal, down, etc.). The first person to get a bingo can get a prize of some sort (a bag of M&Ms, for example) or you could have first, second, third place, or no prizes at all. To make the game harder, and probably more fun, think of really weird things to put in the boxes ("Someone who is afraid of clowns"), but still make sure the items are accessible to a wide group of people.

4. REMEMBER EVERYTHING

- **Required Items**: People with memories
- **Directions**: Have everyone pair up and tell their partner three facts about themselves. The group leader then selects one, two or three people (depending on group size and time) to recite the three facts about their partner. Then everyone scrambles and selects a new partner. The pairs exchange facts about themselves. The group leader then selects one, two or three people (depending on group size) to recite all *six* facts, the first three they learned and the three they were just told by their second partner. Everyone scrambles again, finds a new partner, and exchanges three facts. The group leader then asks if anyone thinks they can recite all *nine* facts (from partners one, two and three). If the person (or people) get all nine facts right, give them a prize! (Seriously—that's hard.)

5. NAME EVERYBODY

- Required Items: People with names, adjectives
- Directions: Have your group sit in a circle. Start with a core member or group leader, who will describe themselves using a word that starts with the same letter as their first name (ex: Jazzy Julia). The person next to them must recite the first person's name and adjective and then create their own (ex: Jazzy Julia, Angelic Angela). The third person must recite the first person's two words, the second person's and create their own (ex: Jazzy Julia, Angelic Angela, Lethargic Leonard) and so on around the circle. The last person in the circle must recite all of the names and adjectives. It can get hard and goofy and crazy, which makes it pretty fun!

6. SIT DOWN IF

- Required Items: Chairs
- **Directions:** The game starts with everyone standing. Then one person (or maybe you can do a popcorn style with people in the group) will call something out, such as "Sit down if you've eaten chocolate today." Everyone to whom this applies sits down. People do not get to stand back up; once you're seated, you're seated for the remainder of the game. You keep saying a thing until one person remains. They win!

7. ART CLASS

- Required Items: Paper, pens/marker/crayons/pencils
- **Directions**: Everybody gets a partner, some paper and something to write with, and sets about drawing their partner, who has struck a pose. After seeing what your partner looks like posing, you close your eyes and begin drawing your masterpiece. Everyone can take home their lovely portrait and I'm sure you'll get some laughs out of it too.

8. STRING NECKLACES

- Required Items: String/yarn of various colors
- **Directions**: Everyone gets a string necklace, which you can cut and knot accordingly (you want them to be big enough to take on and off over someone's head). The goal is to get as many string necklaces as possible. The way to get a necklace is to make people answer "no" to a question you ask. For example, if you asked me, "Are you afraid of clowns?" I would have to answer, "No" and you would get to wear my necklace. (Tried to avoid questions that will have obvious "no" answers, such as "Have you ever been to the moon?" Chances are, no one in your Group has been to the moon).

9. FIND YOUR TWIN

- Required Items: Paper with list of attributes and two columns
- Directions: Write a list of traits on one side of the page, and then put two columns on
 the page beside these traits. The headings above one column should read "yours," and
 above the other, "autograph of twin." For example, some of the traits may be color of
 eyes, favorite movie, favorite city, favorite NFL team, school colors. Direct the
 participants to complete the "yours" column first, then to find their twin (i.e. someone
 who has the most in common with them).

10. PICK A SIDE

- Required Items: A list of dichotomies
- **Directions**: Students will choose a side in a series of "or" questions/dichotomies. Read the dichotomy and have students move to one side of the room based on their answers. You can then have a few students explain why they made their choices. It's important to make sure these are fun (preferably non-political and non-controversial dichotomies).
- **Examples:** Fish or chicken, Morning person or night person, Books or movies, James Bond or Batman, etc. Depending on the amount of people and the time you have to spend, you can do more or less. You could also break people up into small groups and give them the list of questions instead of the whole group, to encourage more intimate getting-to-know-you time.

11. WOULD YOU RATHER?

- Required Items: A list of "would you rather" questions
- Directions: Indicate to the group that they are to move to one side of the room or the other based upon their answer to the "would you rather" question. It's very similar to "Pick a Side." Read a "would you rather" question ("would you rather be an eagle or a dolphin?") and have students move to one side of the room of the other and then give a few students a chance to explain their choice. It's best to make these questions fun, goofy and interesting so that students engage and can have a laugh (remember to avoid political and controversial questions). You could also break people up into small groups and give them the list of questions, to encourage more intimate getting-to-know-you time.

12. SALT AND PEPPER

- Materials Needed: Name tags or pieces of paper and tape, writing utensils
- **Directions:** Prior to starting the activity, the leaders (or core members) should take the paper/name tags and think of obvious things that go together in pairs (ex: salt and pepper). Make as many of these as there are group members, but they should all be different items. As people walk in, give them name tags/tape papers on their backs, but make sure they do not see what it is. The participants must walk around the room, asking only yes or no questions to find out what is written on their back and who their matching partner is. Once they successfully find their partner, they must sit down with them and do an interview, finding out 3-5 interesting facts about them. You can have a list of pre-written questions for them to use, to avoid awkward silences.
- Possible pairs: Salt and Pepper, Ketchup and Mustard, Mickey Mouse and Minnie Mouse, Romeo and Juliet, Black and White, Coffee and Tea, Bread and Butter, Milk and Cookies, Batman and Robin, Mario and Luigi, Lewis and Clark, Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson, Snoopy and Charlie Brown, Scooby and Shaggy etc.

13. PIPE CLEANERS

- Materials Needed: Pipe cleaners
- **Directions**: Have everyone take a pipe cleaner and use it to form something that represents who they are. (Something that they are good at, they like to do, something about their family, etc.) It can be an actual representation or symbolic one. When they are done, have them pair up with someone (preferably someone they don't know) and try to guess each other's shape. After a little while, pull everyone together and have people share with the group.

14. OREO CHALLENGE (Maren Legg)

- Materials Needed: Oreos
- Directions: Each contestant puts an Oreo on their forehead. By only using their face muscles and movements they have to try to get the Oreo into their mouth and eat it fully. First person to eat their Oreo wins!

15. TOILET PAPER TALK (Maren Legg)

- Materials Needed: A roll of toilet paper
- Directions: Have each person tear off the amount they would normally use when using
 the restroom. Be honest and tear off how much you actually use. Then, go around in a
 circle, having each person give a fact or something about themselves per each square
 of toilet paper ripped off.

16. BALLOON POPPING QUESTIONS (Maren Legg)

- Materials Needed: Balloons and slips of paper
- Directions: Blow up balloons (number depends on group size) and put little slips of paper inside that have questions on them. When a person pops a balloon, they have to answer the question inside. These questions can be anything related to the LG or just funny questions. For example. "Would you rather eat a bag of worms or take Godzilla for a walk? and Why?"

17. MAKEYA LAUGH (Maren Legg/Chris King)

- Materials Needed: People who are funny, laughter
- **Directions:** Separate the group into two teams. Have one team line up against a wall. One at a time, a person from the other time will walk by. The team against the wall must try to make each person from the other team laugh as they walk by. If they are successful at making the person laugh, they then gain that person onto their team. First team to get more players wins! (Very similar to Red Rover)

18. NOSE TO ELBOW (Maren Legg)

- Materials Needed: People
- **Directions:** This game is madness! Each person in the group should find one partner (groups of two). Then separate all sets of partners into two circles so that the partners are not directly in front of the other. This should look like one circle within another circle. When you say start, have the inner circle move clockwise and the outer circle move counterclockwise. Once you say start, participants should keep moving, while keeping an eye on where their partner is, until you call out "nose to elbow" or "fist to fist" (some sort of body part to body part—be appropriate). Once this is shouted, participants have to find their partner, complete the task, and sit on the floor. Last duo to do this is out. Repeat until there is only one pair is left. They win!

19. PIN THE BEARD ON THE SANTA (Maren Legg)

- Materials Needed: blindfolds, picture of Santa (drawn or otherwise), beards to pin
- **Directions:** Use this around Christmas time. Blindfold two contestants at a time. Spin them twelve times for the twelve days of Christmas. Have a drawn Santa or a picture of Santa on the board or wall in front of them. Then have them pin the beard on. Whoever does so best wins! Repeat for however many people you may have in the group.

20. "I'M A FALCON, IF YOU'RE A FALCON" (Maren Legg)

- Materials Needed: Ideas, school spirit
- **Directions:** Basically there is one giant circle with one person that starts in the middle. They shout out "I'm a Falcon, If You're a Falcon IF...." followed by a statement about who they are, something they're wearing, whatever really! Whoever it applies to in the circle has to run and fill in a spot that is now empty. Last person, who cannot to get to a spot, is now in the middle. Repeat! (example: "I'm a Falcon, if you're a Falcon if ... you're wearing ORANGE!" (... Maren runs))

21. CONCENTRATION

- Material Needed: None
- Directions: Arrange participants into two equal lines facing each other. One group turns around while the other gets 30 seconds to change 10 things (you can decrease number depending on time) about themselves (switch jewelry, change hair style, untie shoelaces, switch watch to other arm, trade clothing, etc.). All of these must be things in sight. The first group turns back around and must identify the 10 changes. After they identify the changes, or time is up, they swap so the other team gets to make changes while the first team guesses.

22. MOVE IT, LAVERNE!

- Material Needed: Chairs or place markers
- **Directions:** Organize participants into a circle either standing or sitting. Make sure there is one less place marker or chair in the circle than there are people. The facilitator should start in the middle and give participants 30 seconds to learn the first, middle and last names of the people on both their left and right. The person in the middle then approaches anyone in the circle and says either "right" or "left" and then begins counting to 5. The person approached must then recite the person's full name on their right or left before the person gets to five. If they say an incorrect name or can't do it before the person counts to five, they become the person in the middle and can approach someone. At any time someone can yell, "switch!" (perhaps only have leaders and core able to do this so they can switch the game up) and everyone must get up and change places, giving the person in the middle an opportunity to take someone else's chair.

23. ROCKS, PAPER, SCISSORS ENTOURAGE (Maren Legg)

- Materials Needed: People who can play "rock, paper, scissors" and can also yell loudly
- **Directions:** This feels like an h2o staple, so I had to include it. The game is pretty simple. Students will play "rock, paper, scissors" (not 2 out of 3, to save time) and when they lose, they must then cheer for the person who beat them. Every time a person wins, all of the people who had been cheering their opponent must now cheer them instead. It will accumulate with two people against each other, both with massive groups cheering them on. If you want, you can give the winner a prize of some sort (like a bag of M&Ms).

24. MINGLE GAME

- Material Needed: Pre-determined questions for the number of rounds you have. For
 this game you're supposed to have a "mingle song" that people sing and dance to (that
 you made up) but that sounded both embarrassing AND awkward, so I recommend just
 having an actual song (something appropriate) that you play to indicate the end of a
 round.
- **Directions:** Explain that while the mingle song (your predetermined song) is being played, participants must move about the room. After participants have mingled to the satisfaction of the facilitator, the facilitator will yell out a number, and the participants must then stop mingling and get into groups of that number. (For example: After participants have mingled, the facilitator will yell out, "3." Participants would then make groups of 3 as quickly as possible.)

After giving participants about 15 seconds to make groups, the facilitator then yells out 2-4 questions for everyone to ask their group members. The questions should be get-to-know you questions decided by the facilitator (I recommend a mix of goofy and serious. For example: "Which fantasy world would you want to live in and why: Middle Earth, Narnia, Neverland, or Oz?" and "When you were young, what did you want to be when you grew up and why?" and "What's your major? Why did you choose it?")

After giving participants adequate time to ask and answer the questions, the facilitator then starts playing the mingle song and everyone should start moving around again. The group size and questions should change throughout the game. For example, in the second round, participants may need to get into groups of 5 and they have to answer 2 questions instead of 3.

• **Note:** After a round or two, the facilitator should say that participants can't be in a group with more than 1 or 2 people (depending on the size of the group) they have already been in a group with.

25. WHO DONE IT?

- Materials Needed: Index cards/pieces of paper, pens
- **Directions:** To set up the game, pass out an index card and a pen for each participant. Ask each person to write down something interesting they have done. (Examples: "I went skydiving once." "I starred in a class play." "I lived in seven different states." "I ate bugs before.") Try to instruct people to write a fact that most people don't already know the sillier (or more unbelievable) the better. Collect all the cards, shuffle them and then pass them back out. Each person takes turns reading aloud their card and then the reader must guess whose fact he or she read. After he or she guesses, the guessed person simply says "yes" or "no." If the person guesses correctly, the guessed person can briefly explain what they wrote (if desired). The guessing continues until all cards are exhausted. Everyone reveals who wrote which card at the end.

26. CHARADES

- Materials Needed: Slips of paper with the person, scene, occurrence, etc. on them
- **Directions:** Listen, charades is a bomb game that never gets lame, no matter how old you are. Create a series of people, events, movies, whatever, for people to act out during the game. Have these written out beforehand on slips of paper. To prevent lameness, make the items relevant and appropriate, as well as good for college age students. A person picks a slip and must act out what is written on the slip. Other participants then guess. Whoever is right is the next person to act out something on a sheet. You can also break people into teams to make it a friendly competition.

27. TELEPHONE CHARADES

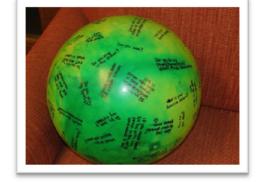
- **Materials Needed:** Slips of paper with people, events, scenes, movies, etc. written on them
- Directions: Think of this as Charades 2.0 and I seriously just got really excited reading about this game and I really want to play it now. Anyway... Have your group line up facing one direction, so their backs are to the person behind them, preventing them from seeing anything happening behind them. The first person receives the clue and the second person in line turns around to face them and watch the clue acted out. Give them 10-15 seconds, depending. The second person then taps the third person on the shoulder and acts out the clue, as best as they can remember. Repeat until the last person, the person in the front of line, watches the clue and then guesses what is supposed to be acted out. You can also break people into teams, depending on group size, and have them act out the same clue. Whoever is closest to the original thing written on the paper wins.

28. I DANCE LIKE THIS

- Materials Needed: People
- **Directions:** You start by saying "My name is ______, and I dance like this." At that point, you proceed to do some sort of dance move. You then move around in a circle, each person saying their name and doing their dance move. But it's trickier than you think... You also have to do the dance moves of everyone else who's gone before you, and can't repeat someone else's move. This could be an embarrassing one, so do your best to make it lighthearted and silly. Maybe play some catchy tunes in the background. We're not expecting New York Ballet level dancing; we're expecting the dorky moves you do when you dance alone in your bedroom and sing into a hair brush (people (other than me) still do that, right?).

29. QUESTION BALL TOSS (see next page for questions)

- Required Items: A blow up beach ball or another type of ball, permanent marker
- Directions: Write questions on the beach ball in permanent marker—good and strange and clever getto-know-you questions. Have the group circle up and throw the ball around. When you catch the ball, whatever question the thumb of your right (or left, you pick when you design the game) hand is closest to is the question you have to answer. The person holding the ball should read the question aloud, answer it and then toss the ball to the next person.



QUESTION BALL TOSS QUESTIONS

Is there a story behind your name? If not, what name would you choose for yourself if you could?

If you were stranded on a desert island and were only allowed to bring useless things, what three things would you bring?

Have you changed your major? If so how many times and what major(s)? If not, what would you choose to do if skills/experience/time/money wasn't an object?

How did you spend your summer vacations 7 years ago?

If you could watch two celebrities fight, who would they be?

If you could make one law that was instantly passed, what would it be?

If you could be have any animal to ride, what would it be (real or fictional)?

What is your favorite song or band?

If you could go back in time, where would you go?

If your sibling or other close family could choose a superpower for you, what would it be?

What country outside of North America would you like to travel to?

What is the most awkward social situation you have been in or seen someone else in?

How much would you pay to buy the moon, and what would you do once you got it?

If you could order that any one movie be destroyed off the face of the earth, what would it be?

Have you ever vandalized something before? If not, what would you vandalize if you knew you wouldn't get in trouble for it?

What is your favorite thing from the 90's?

What is the first thing you remember doing on the internet, or what were some of the first games you played?

Can you remember where you were when a modern historical event occurred?

What is your favorite daytime TV or trashy TV show?

If you could be best friends with a fictional character, who would it be, and what would you do?