

# Leading Small Groups That Thrive

## Supplemental Resource: Ice Breakers

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### 1. Get-to-Know You Bingo

Get-to-Know You Bingo helps participants to get information on each other in a fun, competitive way. Before your meeting, you will need to create a bingo card containing a grid of squares with a statement or question in each square that will apply to some members of your group and is in line with the objectives of your class, workshop, or event. You could ask for this in your group introduction email.

After each player gets a bingo card, they mingle around introducing themselves and finding other participants who can sign their cards indicating that a statement applies to him/her. To avoid having people only talk to one or two people and filling up their card, limit the signatures they can give to 1 or 2 per card. When everyone has reached bingo or is super close, you can share something you've learned about each other, yourself and the experience of this ice breaker activity.

### 2. Highs and Lows

With everyone sitting around in a group, ask everyone to share his/her highs and lows (best things and worst things) of the day. This is quite simple, but especially effective when groups are trying to connect and learn about one another.

### 3. Hot Seat

Choose one person / one couple per gathering and ask 3 questions.

- What is one success you've had in the last month?
- What is one lesson you've learned in the last couple of months?
- What is one thing you really want to do in the next month?

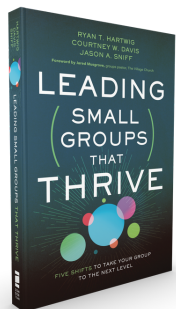
Of course, you can ask a number of other questions of the person / couple that are more in depth, but be careful, those same questions might come your way when it's your turn to be in the "hot seat."

### 4. Positive Bombardment

This activity is typically used after groups have been together for one session or more. Very simply, everybody sits in a circle and compliments or praises one person after another until every person has received an encouraging word. (you could direct this more by saying, give an encouragement about the person to your right or left.)

Variation #1: have one person sit in the middle and then ask group members to say something encouraging about the group member in the middle.

Variation #2: put one piece of paper for each group member out on a table and ask everyone to write a note of encouragement/what they like about that person on the paper. When done, everybody can take home a paper full of compliments and put it on their wall or whatever.



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### 5. Quote Discussion

This fast-paced icebreaker activity allows participants to get acquainted with each other in a meaningful way. Prepare about a quarter more quotes than the number of participants on individual slips of paper. Put the pile in the center of the room. After, each participant picks up one quote, each person picks a partner and begins to discuss what the quote says to them, if it is meaningful, and how. Then after a minute or so (very short) the facilitator gives a signal and participants switch partners, and may switch quotes as well if they'd like. This can continue for 4-5 rounds for around 15 minutes. Ice breaking at speed is not only fun, but effective.

### 6. Progressive Story

One person begins a story, and the members of the group add phrases, one by one, until a story is complete. You are guaranteed to get a crazy story and one that will take many weird detours on the way through. A fun activity to get people engaged in conversation and to have a few laughs.

### 7. Toilet Paper Tear-Off

Pass a roll of toilet paper around and ask group members to tear some off. Don't tell how much to tear off, just tell them to tear off some. You will inevitably get some who take a bunch and others who take one or two sheets.

Then, go around the room and have each person share a fact or story or something else for each piece of paper he/she took. You can also do this with M&M's and color-code your questions. This is a good activity to get to know more about group members. See what it means (if anything) that some people took a lot and others took only a small bit.

### 8. Get In Line Games

The basic premise of this type of activity is to have all the group members of a group get in a line of some specified order—birthday, alphabetically by name, etc. Blinding or muting the group, or adding other variables to the mix can increase difficulty. This is an effective way to order a group, get them ready to be broken down into smaller groups for prayer or for study (in a not-so-boring manner).

### 9. Two Truths and a Lie

Ask everybody to write two truthful statements and one false statement to share with the group. Then, after reading them, the group has to figure out which statement is false. This is a good time to find out about people and to see some creativity.

### 10. Pair Up!

This activity is primarily used as an icebreaker, and can be used in both large and small groups in order to put people into partners for other activities, introduce people, or just get people talking and energy flowing. For this activity, you need to have identified pairs of persons or characters that go together (such as Tom & Jerry, or Wilma & Fred Flintstone), preferably along some sort of a theme (cartoons, sports, political figures, etc.), enough that each person in the group will be one of the characters. Then, write each of the characters on a notecard. With the group, then, tape one of the cards on each person's back, and then instruct them to find their "partners" by asking questions of other persons, who are able to see who they are. Once they identify pairs, the pairs should stand together. At this point, many different avenues can be taken, such as: have the couples talk and then introduce the other person, have the pair do another activity, have the pair talk about what they have in common, etc.