

Opening Activities/Icebreakers for High School Lessons

Below are some suggested opening activities/icebreakers that can be used to begin a *Circles of Care* lesson, if desired.

Line up

No Special Materials Needed

Ask the youth group to line up. Works best with 8-10 in a line. If you've got a bigger group, split them up and *challenge each line to complete the task in silence and first*. Ask the group to form a new line in order of...

- Height, from smallest to tallest
- Birthdays, from January through to December
- Shoe size, from smallest to largest
- Alphabetical first names (A-Z)
- Alphabetical mothers first names
- Alphabetical grandmother's first names
- Anything else you think up

Masks

This is best used in an established group where the young people are comfortable and at ease with each other. 'Masks' is also a good discussion starter on self-image and self-worth.

Materials Needed

- Crayons or paints
- Markers
- Scissors, white cardstock

Give each young person a piece of white card. Ask them to draw and cut out a life-sized shape of a face. They can also cut out eyes and a mouth if they wish. Each young person is then asked to decorate their card face. There are different ways to direct this activity:

- One side of the mask can represent either (1) what they think people see/know/believe about them **or** (2) what society expects them to be on the outside.
- The other side can represent (1) what they feel about themselves – things going on the inside, what people do not necessarily know or see **or** (2) what being a disciple/follower of Jesus calls them to be.

Flags

Flags is a get-to-know-you activity, helping young people express what's important to them or more about themselves.

Materials Needed

- Large sheets of paper
- Crayons, markers and paints

Provide large sheets of paper, crayons, markers and paints. Ask each young person to draw a flag which contains some symbols or pictures describing who they are, what's important to them or what they enjoy. Again, there are a variety of ways to direct this activity.

Each flag is divided into 4 or 6 segments. Each segment can contain a picture i.e. favorite emotion, favorite food, a hobby, a skill, where you were born, your family, your faith. Give everyone 20 minutes to draw their flags. Ask some of the group to share their flags and explain the meaning of what they drew.

People Bingo

Great for new groups.

Materials Needed

- Prepare a 5x4 grid on pieces of cardstock with one statement from list in each box (See explanation of this activity for the list of suggested statements)
- Pens or pencils

Make a 5" by 4" grid on a piece of cardstock and duplicate for everyone in your group. Supply pens or pencils. Each box contains one of the statements below. Encourage the group to mix, talk to everyone to try and complete their card. If one of the items listed on the bingo card relates to the person they are talking with, have them sign their name in that box.

End the activity after 10 minutes and review some of the interesting facts the group has discovered about each other. You can add your own statements appropriate for your group.

- Has brown eyes
- Has made the longest journey
- Has eaten the weirdest food
- Plays tennis
- Is wearing blue
- Speaks a foreign language
- Knows what a muntjak is (a small deer)
- Plays a musical instrument
- Has 2 or more pets
- Has been to the most foreign countries
- Hates broccoli
- Has 2 or more siblings
- Name begins with an 'S'
- Loves Chinese food
- Loves to ski
- Knows what a quark is (a tiny theoretical particle that makes up protons and neutrons in the atomic nucleus.)
- Loves soccer
- Likes to get up early
- Someone who's favorite TV show is CSI
- Someone over 6ft tall

Sign Language of the Body

This activity is an appropriate accompaniment to the "Sexting" lesson plan.

Materials Needed

- Paper or newsprint for each group
- Crayons or markers
- Masking tape to post group lists

Break the teens into groups of four or five. Have them brainstorm different kinds of non-vulgar forms of body language (nods, smiles, sign language, high fives, hugs, pats on the back, kisses, hand holding, handshakes, "thumbs up", winking, opening a door for someone, etc.). Whichever group can come up with the most within one minute gets a prize. You can use this as a way to back up your teaching that says there are many ways to speak the truth with our bodies that are not sexual. Encourage the teens to be consistent and truthful with the way they speak the language of the body, even when it is not sexual.