GETTING TO KNOW YOU
Fact or fiction?

Ask everyone to write on a piece of paper THREE things about themselves which may not be known to the others in the group. Two are true and one is not. Taking turns they read out the three ‘facts’ about themselves and the rest of the group votes which are true and false. There are always surprises. This simple activity is always fun, and helps the group and leaders get to know more about each other.

Interview

Divide the young people into pairs. Ask them to take three minutes to interview each other. Each interviewer has to find 3 interesting facts about their partner. Bring everyone back together and ask everyone to present the 3 facts about their partner to the rest of the group. Watch the time on this one, keep it moving along.

My name is?

Go around the group and ask each young person to state his/her name and attach an adjective that not only describes a dominant characteristic, but also starts with the same letter of his name e.g. generous Grahame, dynamic Dave. Write them down and refer to them by this for the rest of the evening.

Conversations

Each person is given a sheet of paper with a series of instructions to follow. This is a good mixing game and conversation starter as each person must speak to everyone else. For example:

- Count the number of brown eyed boys in the room.
- Find out who has made the longest journey.
- Who has the most unusual hobby?
- Find the weirdest thing anyone has eaten.
- Who has had the most embarrassing experience?
- Who knows what 'Hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliophobia' is a fear of? Nearest guess wins. If that's too easy you can try Arachibutyrophobia, Alektorophobia, Ephebiphobia or Anglophobia.

○ Answers
  - Hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliophobia - Fear of long words
  - Arachibutyrophobia - Fear of peanut butter sticking to the roof of the mouth.
  - Alektorophobia - Fear of chickens.
The question web

You need to have a spool of string or wool for this game. Ask the young people to stand in a circle. Hold on to the end of the string and throw the ball/spool to one of the young people to catch. They then choose a question from 1-20 to answer. A list of 20 sample questions is given below. Adapt for your group.

Holding the string they then throw it to another member of the group. Eventually this creates a web as well as learning some interesting things about each other! At the end of the game you could comment that we all played a part in creating this unique web and if one person was gone it would look different.

In the same way it's important that we all take part to make the group what it is, unique and special.

1. If you had a time machine that would work only once, what point in the future or in history would you visit?
2. If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?
3. If your house was burning down, what three objects would you try to save?
4. If you could talk to any one person now living, who would it be and why?
5. If you HAD to give up one of your senses (hearing, seeing, feeling, smelling, tasting) which would it be and why?
6. If you were an animal, what would you be and why?
7. Do you have a pet? If not, what sort of pet would you like?
8. Name a gift you will never forget?
9. Name one thing you really like about yourself.
10. What's your favorite thing to do in the summer?
11. Who's your favorite cartoon character, and why?
12. Does your name have a special meaning and or were you named after someone special?
13. What is the hardest thing you have ever done?
14. If you are at a friend's or relative's house for dinner and you find a dead insect in your salad, what would you do?
15. What was the best thing that happened to you this past week?
16. If you had this week over again what would you do differently?
17. What's the weirdest thing you've ever eaten?
18. What book, movie or video have you seen/read recently you would recommend? Why?
**Desert Island**

Announce, 'You've been exiled to a deserted island for a year. In addition to the essentials, you may take one piece of music, one book and one luxury item you can carry with you i.e. not a boat to leave the island! What would you take and why?'

Allow a few minutes for the young people to draw up their list of three items, before sharing their choices with the rest of the group. As with most icebreakers and relationship building activities, it's good for the group leaders to join in too!

**If**

Ask the group to sit in a circle. Write 20 'IF' questions on cards and place them (question down) in the middle of the circle. The first person takes a card, reads it out and gives their answer, comment or explanation. The card is returned to the bottom of the pile before the next person takes their card.

This is a simple icebreaker to get young people talking and listening to others in the group. Keep it moving and don't play for too long. Write your own additional 'IF' questions to add to the list.

1. If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?
2. If I gave you $10,000, what would you spend it on?
3. If you could watch your favorite movie now, what would it be?
4. If you could talk to anyone in the world, who would it be?
5. If you could wish one thing to come true this year, what would it be?
6. If you could live in any period of history, when would it be?
7. If you could change anything about yourself, what would you change?
8. If you could be someone else, who would you be?
9. If you could have any question answered, what would it be?
10. If you could watch your favorite TV show now, what would it be?
11. If you could have any kind of pet, what would you have?
12. If you could do your dream job 10 years from now, what would it be?
13. If you had to be allergic to something, what would it be?
14. If money and time was no object, what would you be doing right now?
15. If you had one day to live over again, what day would you pick?
16. If you could eat your favorite food now, what would it be?
17. If you could learn any skill, what would it be?
18. If you were sent to live on a space station for three months and only allowed to bring three personal items with you, what would they be?
19. If you could buy a car right now, what would you buy?

**Name that person**

Divide into two teams. Give each person a blank card. Ask them to write five little known facts about themselves on their card. Include all leaders in this game too. For example, I have a pet iguana, I was born in Iceland, my favorite food is spinach, my grandmother is called Doris and my favorite color is vermillion.

Collect the cards into two team piles. Draw one card from the opposing team pile. Each team tries to name the person in as few clues as possible. Five points if they get it on the first clue, then 4, 3, 2, 1, 0. The team with the most points wins. (Note: if you select the most obscure facts first, it will increase the level of competition and general head scratching!)

**Would you rather..?**

Questions may range from silly trivia to more serious content. On the way you might find out some interesting things about your young people! Place a line of tape down the center of the room. Ask the group to straddle the tape.

When asked 'Would you rather?' they have to jump to the left or right as indicated by the leader. Don't forget to encourage your adult helpers to join in too! I've included 20 starter questions, just add your own and let the fun begin.

Would you rather..?

- Visit the doctor or the dentist?
- Eat broccoli or carrots?
- Watch TV or listen to music?
- Own a lizard or a snake?
- Have a beach vacation or a mountain vacation?
- Be an apple or a banana?
- Be invisible or be able to read minds?
- Be hairy all over or completely bald?
- Be the most popular or the smartest person you know?
- Make headlines for saving somebody's life or winning a Nobel Prize?
- Go without television or fast food for the rest of your life?
- Have permanent diarrhea or permanent constipation?
- Be handsome/beautiful and dumb or be ugly and really smart?
- Always be cold or always be hot?
- Not hear or not see?
- Eliminate hunger and disease or be able to bring lasting world peace?
- Be stranded on a deserted island alone or with someone you don't like?
• See the future or change the past?
• Be three inches taller or three inches shorter?
• Wrestle a lion or fight a shark?

**Masks**

You will need crayons or paints, markers, scissors and white card for this activity. 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. One side represents what they think people see/know/believe about them i.e. on the outside. The other side represents what they feel about themselves i.e. things going on the inside, what people do not necessarily know or see.

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.

**Flags**

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

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. 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. Make a 5 by 4 grid on a piece of card 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 muntjac is (it's 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 quark is a tiny theoretical particle that makes up protons and neutrons in the atomic nucleus. So there!)
• Loves soccer
• Likes to get up early
• Someone who’s favorite TV show is CSI
• Someone over 6ft tall
TEAM BUILDING
**Around the world**

The leader begins by saying the name of any country, city, river, ocean or mountain that can be found in an atlas. The young person next to him must then say another name that begins with the last letter of the word just given. Each person has a definite time limit (e.g. three seconds) and no names can be repeated. For example - First person: London, Second Person: Niagara Falls, Third Person: Switzerland

**Supermarket**

The first player says: "I went to the supermarket to buy an Apple (or any other object you can buy in a supermarket that begins with an A). The next player repeats the sentence, including the "A" word and adds a "B" word.

Each successive player recites the sentence with all the alphabet items, adding one of his own. For example; 'I went to the supermarket and bought an Apple, Banana, CD, dog food, envelopes, frozen fish'. It’s not too hard to reach the end of the alphabet, usually with a little help! Watch out for ‘Q’ and ‘X’

**Tall stories**

The leader starts a story with a sentence that ends in SUDDENLY. The next person then has to add to the story with his own sentence that ends in SUDDENLY. Continue the story until everyone has contributed. The story becomes crazier as each young person adds their sentence. Record it and play it back. For example; 'Yesterday I went to the zoo and was passing the elephant cage when SUDDENLY.....'

**Once upon a time**

Ask each young person to think of either the name of a person, a place or a thing. Invite them to share this with the rest of the group. Select one of your group to begin a story. However, within 10 seconds they must mention the person, place or thing they have thought of. After 10 seconds (use a stopwatch or kitchen timer) the story is continued by the next person who must also mention their person, place or thing within the 10 seconds.

Continue until everyone has made a contribution. The stories can get really weird, but that's part of the fun! Record the story for playback at the next parents meeting!
**Word link**

This is a word association game. Ask the group to sit in a circle. The first person starts with any word they wish i.e. red. The next person repeats the first word and adds another word which links to the first i.e. tomato. The next person repeats the previous word and add another word link i.e. soup, and so on. To keep this moving, only allow five seconds for each word link.

**Object stories**

Collect together a number of objects and place in a canvas bag. The objects can include everyday items i.e. a pencil, key-ring, mobile phone, but also include some more unusual ones i.e. a fossil, holiday photograph, wig!

Pass the bag around the group and invite each young person to dip their hand into the bag (without looking) and pull out one of the objects.

The leader begins a story which includes his object. After 20 seconds, the next person takes up the story and adds another 20 seconds, incorporating the object they are holding. And so on, until everyone has made a contribution to your epic literary tale.

**Add words**

Simple, completely ridiculous and a lot of fun. The first person says a word, for example 'The'. The second person says the first word and ADDS a second word of their choice, and so on. At the end you might have a complete sentence!

For example, 'The aardvark spiralled into the puddle of custard clutching his skateboard while whistling his favorite Bjork melody.' The fun thing is putting twists in the sentence so that the others have a hard time coming up with a word that fits. ADD WORDS can be played a few times without being boring.

**Vocabulary**

You begin by thinking of a word and then give the first letter. The next player thinks of a word beginning with this letter and gives the second letter. The third player thinks of a word that begins with the first two letters and adds a third. The object of the game is to avoid completing a word. When a player has completed three words or failed to add a letter they
can rest their brain for the remainder of the game! You might need a dictionary handy to adjudicate on some words.

**One minute please!**

The aim of the game is to talk for one minute on a given subject. You announce the topic and a member of the group is randomly selected to speak for one minute. Use a pack of cards to randomly select i.e. person who draws the lowest number. Choose subjects to stimulate the imagination and which may be amusing. Put a stopwatch on each person to see how long they last before drying up! Subjects might include, my earliest memories, my favorite computer game, why beans are good for you, 10 things you can do with potatoes, Alligator wrestling.

**Newspaper puzzle**

Divide into teams of five or six people and give each group a copy of the SAME newspaper. Ask them to spread the newspaper out in front of each team. Describe a particular advertisement, article, fact or picture from the paper and the group has to find it, rip it out and bring it to you. The first team to bring it gets a point. Continue calling out items and the winning team is the one with the most points. Watch the paper fly.

**Line up**

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 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 parent/guardian first names.
- Alphabetical grandparent’s first names!
- Anything else you think up.

**Who am I?**

Prepare a self-adhesive label or post-it note for each young person in your group. Write on it the name of a well-known or famous person. This can be an historical character or current sportsman, musician, TV personality, celebrity etc. Have a good mix of men and
women. Keeping the names hidden, stick the post-it notes on the foreheads of everyone in
the group. They must then ask questions of the others to find out their identity.

Each person takes a turn to ask questions and figure out who they are. For example, Am I
alive? Am I female? Am I in a band? Only yes or no questions can be asked. If the answer is
no, their turn is over. If the answer is yes, they can ask another question and keep going
until they get a no, or guess who they are. Keep playing until everyone has guessed, or if
time is short, stop after the first few correct answers.

**Pass the orange**

Ask the young people to form a circle. Give the first young person a large orange and explain
they need to pass this around the circle. No problem. BUT, it has to be passed around the
circle using only chin and neck. If the orange is dropped, it must be returned to the previous
player in the circle and the game restarts. A camera is a must for this game!

**Chocolate chomp**

Another old party game, but still lots of fun. Ask everyone to sit in a circle on the floor. In the
middle of the circle place a large bar of chocolate on a plate, a knife, a fork and three items
of clothing – gloves, scarf and a cap. (Don't forget to remove the wrapper from the
chocolate!) Each person in the circle takes a turn at rolling a dice.

On throwing a six they run to the middle of the circle, put on the items of clothing and try to
eat as much chocolate as possible. However, they can only cut it with the knife and pick it up
with the fork. As soon as someone else throws a six, they run to the middle, put on the
gloves, hat and cap, and take over. Continue until all the chocolate is eaten.

**Pass the lifesaver**

Invite the group to line up in teams of six. Give each person a toothpick, which they must
hold in their mouth. The person at the front of the line has a lifesaver candy on his toothpick
and he must (without using his hands) pass the the candy down the line. If anyone drops
their sweet, the team must start again from the front of the line with a new lifesaver.

**Knots**

Divide your group into teams of 6-8. Each team forms a small circle. Ask them to extend
their right hand across the circle and hold the left hand of the other team member opposite
them. Then extend their left hand across the circle and hold the right hand of another group member. The task is to unravel the spider's web of interlocking arms without letting go of anyone's hands. Give them a three minute time limit to complete the task. Pressure!

**Backward clumps**

Divide into pairs. Ask each pair to sit on the floor with their partner, backs together, feet out in front and arms linked. Their task is to stand up together. Once everyone has done this, two pairs join together and the group of four try to repeat the task. After they succeed, add another two and try again. Keep adding people until your whole group is trying to stand together. A sight to behold!

**Song scramble**

Before the meeting write out the first lines from several well-known songs, but write down only one line on each piece of card. Make sure that only enough songs are used to cover the number of people present. The cards are then scattered on the floor. Once the game begins each person grabs a card and tries to find the holders of the other cards which will complete the verse or section of the song. The winning group is the first one to correctly assemble and sing their song. Record the songs to playback later. Here are a couple of examples:

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Is this the real life? Is this just fantasy?
Caught in a landslide. No escape from reality.
Open your eyes. Look up to the skies and see.
I'm just a poor boy, I need no sympathy.
Because I'm easy come, easy go, a little high, little low.
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I have climbed the highest mountain; I have run through the fields
Only to be with you. Only to be with you
I have run. I have crawled. I have scaled these city walls
These city walls. Only to be with you
But I still haven't found what I'm looking for.
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Bohemian Rhapsody, Queen
I Still Haven’t Found What I’m Looking For, U2

**Charade relay**

A simple party game but great fun. Make a list of 20 popular TV programs. Divide your group into smaller teams who base themselves around the ground floor of your house! You stand somewhere in the middle. The game begins by each team sending one person to you. Show
them the first TV program on your list. They return to their team and silently act it out in front of the group. As soon as someone guesses it, that person runs to you for the next clue and repeats the process. The winning group is the one which has acted out and guessed 20 programs.

**Movie star scramble**

Divide the group into pairs, each with a paper and pen. Ask them to visit the cards you have previously prepared and placed around the room. Their goal is to unscramble the names of 20 famous movie stars i.e. SHRIN FOR ROAD (work it out yourself!) Points are awarded for each correct answer. Alternatively there is ANIMAL SCRAMBLE, TV SCRAMBLE and so on.

**Body spell**

Divide the young people into teams of five. They will need to play this game with bare feet. The groups can play against each other or the clock (five second time limit). Using a felt tip marker write three letters on each team member. Either two hands (palms) and one foot (sole) or one hand and two feet.

1. TDO
2. HYI
3. EHR
4. BFT
5. OCS

As you call out a series of 4, 5, 6 or 7 letter words the group has to spell the word using combinations of hands and feet. Select 20 words from the list below. The finished words must be clearly visible to the leader.

4 Letter words: rest, fist, dice, trot, crib, boot, rich, host.
5 letter words: shoot, first, drift, shirt, roost, shred, hired
6 letter words: forest, theory, bitter, bother, frosty, boiled, strict
7 letter words: thirsty, ostrich, october, boosted, shifted, hoisted.
8 letter word: stitched

**Twenty questions**

20 questions is an old party game which encourages deductive reasoning and creativity. One player is selected to think of an item. The rest of the group tries to guess the item by asking
a question which can only be answered with a simple "Yes" or "No." Truthful answers only please, as anything else will ruin the game.

**Wink murder**

Ask the group to sit in a circle. Choose a number of playing cards to match the number of young people in your group. Be certain your selection contains an ace. Each young person then draws a card. They must not comment or show it to anyone else. The player who chooses the ace is the murderer and he kills his victims by winking at them!

The game begins quietly with players sitting looking at each other. When someone catches the eye of the killer and is winked at, they are killed, and can die in any manner they choose. Some prefer to die quietly with a whimper, some opt for the blood curdling scream technique, while others might fall off their seat and lie prone on the floor. The object is to identify the murderer while trying not to be killed in the process. An incorrect guess results in instant death!

**The human chair**

Invite everyone to stand in a circle shoulder to shoulder. Each person then turns to the right to face the back of the person in front of them. Ask them to place their hands on the shoulder of the person in front. On the count of three they slowly begin to sit down on the lap of the person behind. As long as everyone is helping the person in front of him or her to sit, then everyone should be supporting the weight of everyone else. Of course, should someone slip, the game becomes 'human dominoes.' It might take a couple of attempts to complete the challenge.