



Bonner Curriculum

Games, Games, Games Galore

**For use in general or during workshops
(handout for Facilitation 202)**

Overview:

This is a resource handbook of games suitable for use as icebreakers and other interactive learning activities during trainings, meetings, and workshops. Many of the games can be modified for various purposes or topics. Many are great for introductions, getting people focused, or facilitating the sharing of ideas and information. For each game, you'll find the title, short description of what size group the activity is best for, and fuller description of how to do the activity.

1. Guess Who?

[This icebreaker is good for small groups of less than 20]

At the beginning of the training, have all the members write three important facts about themselves on one side of a blank sheet of paper, and their name in pencil on the back. Have them turn in the sheets. Then have a trainer number each sheet, make a list of what number corresponds to what name, and erase the names from the sheets. Post the sheets around the main training room or some other room that members will spend a lot of time in during the next day. Tell the members they have until after lunch (or some other convenient time) to read all the sheets and try to figure out who is described on each sheet. Give all members a sheet of paper that lists all the numbers so they can record their guesses. Whoever gets the most right wins a prize.

2. Human Sculptures

[This icebreaker is best with groups of about 10-20; if there are more than 20 members, split them into two subgroups]

In this non-competitive activity, members serve as the human "clay" to be formed by the member serving as sculptor. The sculptors should be asked to provide an interpretation or depiction of some category of events or other focus topics, to be chosen by the trainers. For example, you might ask for interpretations in "human clay" of any of the following:

- An important event in the life of a member
- An anticipated AmeriCorps experience
- An important "public" event
- A movie scene
- An event from a book
- A scene or line from a song

The trainer or another staff member may want to serve as the sculptor first, to demonstrate the process and reduce member inhibitions. Then ask for volunteers. The sculptor should move members around without speaking, until the human sculpture is complete, then explain it to the group while they maintain their poses.

If public events or anticipated service events are used, it is easy to have two sculptors simultaneously interpret the event and then compare their sculptures. The human sculptures can also be done with several individuals or the whole group serving as a team of sculptors, in which case talking is permitted.

Be sure the room is big and open enough for the groups to move around. You may want to provide some furniture or other items such as chairs, tables, or books to be incorporated into the sculptures. Allow time for 3-4 human sculptures.

3. **We Are Alike**

[This icebreaker is good for large groups]

Have everyone stand in the center of the room. Explain that this exercise will show that we all belong to many groups. Tell the members that you will start by saying, "We are alike -- we all _____" and you will list a characteristic. All the people who share that characteristic are to stay in the center of the room, and those who don't share that characteristic should go to the edges of the room. Then you will call a member's name and it will be that person's turn to list a characteristic s/he has. The member you select will state a characteristic, people will move, and then that member will call another member's name to take over. Do this for approximately 10 minutes. Characteristics should include family, personal background, interests, and values. Some suggestions: ...have volunteered for a community-based organization, ...were born in this city, ...have Italian ancestry, ...have successfully cooked a quiche, ...have eaten beef tongue, ...have more than five brothers and sisters. Encourage creativity.

4. **People Scavenger Hunt Find Someone Who...**

[This icebreaker is especially good for groups of 20+]

Develop a list of statements that are likely to be true for at least several of the members in your group. Then give members 10 minutes to find someone, other than themselves, for whom that statement is true and have that person initial the sheet. Whoever completes all the statements first wins a prize. There is an example in the handout section.

Your statements can be general -- for example, find someone who:

- _____ Has an abuela
- _____ Lives in a co-op building
- _____ Read today's newspaper
- _____ Has a daughter under two years old
- _____ Owns a Michael Jackson album (not a CD)
- _____ Has eaten grits

Your statements can be program focused -- for example, find someone who:

- _____ Expects to work for a nonprofit organization
- _____ Will be the only program member at the host site
- _____ Hopes to join AmeriCorps
- _____ Will be assigned to a town of less than 10,000 people

5. Art Charades

[This icebreaker can be done with any group above 10]

Develop lists of popular movie titles, song titles, proverbs, service terms, or any other categories of phrases that seem interesting. Divide the members into at least two groups; add more groups if needed to keep group size to about 5-8 people. The purpose of the game is for each team to try to guess the title or proverb first. The method used is similar to charades, except instead of using pantomime, a representative of each group must use drawings to represent the words in the title or proverb. This icebreaker needs a large room, so groups can work with some privacy. Each team gets newsprint and a set of markers of several different colors.

A representative from the team goes to the facilitator in the center of the room. The facilitator announces to the entire group the category of the phrase (movie title, proverb, etc.), and then tells the representatives the phrase to be used. The representative goes back to the group and draws sketches on newsprint depicting the entire phrase or title or each word separately. (For example, for the song *Blue Moon*, the representative might draw a moon in blue marker. For the movie *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, the representative might draw a picture of a plate of bacon and eggs and a picture of jewelry store window.) The representative may not speak, and the drawing must not include any words or letters that appear in the title or proverb. The team that identifies the phrase first receives one point. Each team then sends a different representative to the center of the room for the next phrase. The game continues until one team gets a pre-determined number of points or a specified amount of time (10-15 minutes) has passed. The team with the largest number of points wins.

6. Name and... Game

[This icebreaker can be done with any group up to 15 people]

Everyone sits in a circle. Each person introduces him/herself one after another, saying their name and then one word that describes a reason they have become involved in community service. (You can have the topic for the training - name a children's book that is important to you, what you would be doing if you were not here, what you liked about the orientation...). The second person repeats the first person's name and the word/adjective and adds his/her own. The third person repeats the previous two, adding his/her own. And so on. The last person has the hardest job because they must remember all of the names and words/adjectives. After you go around the circle, you can go around the circle again and ask each person to explain why he/she chose their word/adjective.

24. Shake All Hands:

[This is good for groups over 25 people.]

Explain the game. At the count of three, everyone in the room has to try to shake everyone else's hand within a strict limit of one minute. Start the game. A variation is to have everyone sit in a circle and each person says their name fast right after each other. Keep the time to see how long it takes the group to go around the circle. Challenge the group to beat their time. Both of these games gets energy up, and obliges each participant to acknowledge everyone else.

25. Mime the Lie:

[This is good for any size group.]

Have participants stand in a circle. One by one everyone goes into the middle of the circle and mimics an action, such as pouring a drink of water. The person who was standing next to them asks them what they are doing. They lie, and say for example, "I am running a race." The person who asked now goes into the circle and mimes whatever the previous person said that they were doing. When asked what they are doing, they lie and the game continues.

26. Hold Your Breath:

[This is good for any size group.]

Have participants sit in a circle. Everyone looks at the person directly across from him/her. At the same moment, everyone holds their breath and sees who can hold it longer, without taking their eyes off their partner's face. By the time everyone runs out of breath, people are laughing at the absurdity of the situation. This activity is good for diffusing tension.

27. Word Tag:

[This is good for groups under 25.]

Word tag is an improvisation game. Ask the group to form partners. Each duo must find another duo to form a group of four. Tell them they must become one person, they can do this by linking hands, pressing their heads together, or other means of showing they are one person. As one person, the object is to complete a sentence, one word at a time. The facilitator gives the topic of the sentence, making the topic relevant to the workshop content. For example, if you were about to prepare the group for an Into the Streets service project, you might choose the topic for one group as "painting." The group of four must create a coherent sentence, one person and one word at a time. The hardest part is saying only word at a time and trying to make sense as a single person.

28. Word Toss:

[This is good for small groups of five in each circle.]

Ask each group of five people to form a circle. You give them an imaginary ball to throw back and forth to each other. Practice with throwing and catching the imaginary ball first. When this is mastered, ask the groups to know throw words, like they were doing with a ball, at each other. They must throw a word to a group member, the group member then

catches and repeats the word thrown to them as the catch the word. Then they throw a word to another group member and the process repeats. The facilitator gives a topic for the words (e.g. words pertaining to a service project or things I like to do on the weekend).

29. Boop:

[This is good for smaller groups, if you have a large group break them into smaller groups. Break the group into teams of 3-4 people.]

Have the small groups join hands to form a circle. Give each group an inflated balloon. Make sure the groups have space in between them so they can safely move around. The object is to keep your balloon up in the air and off the ground. The groups must keep their hands jointed throughout the game- if they break their hands they are out of the game. Give the groups about 3 minutes to practice keeping the balloon up in the air. Now it's time to play the game. As the facilitator, you call out certain body parts the group must use to keep the balloon in the air. For example, start off by calling "hands", then move onto "elbows" or "knees." You can then use combinations, "head-elbow." What this means is that a head shot must follow an elbow shot, or the group is out of the game. Have fun with making up your own body combinations. This is an excellent game to do after a meal. You keep doing this until one group is left. A fun way to end the game is to say "fire in the hole." This means all the groups must use their body to pop the balloon.

30. Hot Seat:

[This is good for small groups.]

Have one person sit in a chair in front of the room. The other participants ask the person one question at a time. No discussion is allowed. No yes or no questions are allowed. You can find questions in a book called *If*, information on the book is found in the resource section of the workshop. Some example questions are, "If you could have dinner with anyone living or deceased, who would it be?" "What do you want to be doing 5 years from now?"

31. Show and Tell:

[This is good for any size group, in a large group you might want to do 5 at a time spread throughout the workshop.]

Before the training ask each participant to bring an item from home and to be prepared to speak about the object in front of the group. OR, you can ask them to take something out of their pockets, bags, etc. and explain the object to the group. They must share the significance and any other tidbits about the object to the group.

32. Koosh Ball Introductions:

[This is good for any size group.]

Explain to the group that when a fellow participant throws them the koosh ball they must say their name and answer a question. You can tailor the question to the workshop topic

(e.g. for a workshop on Children’s Literacy, a question could be “say your name and tell us your favorite children’s book”).

33. Snapshot of ME!/Personal Homepage/Coat of Arms:

[This can be used with any size group. If you have a large group you may want to post the homepages or service shields around the training rooms so people can look at them during breaks.]

You can create a template or have people use their creativity and create their format. Give people topics they must answer. You can have art supplies out and the participants can create their homepage or service shield as they are registering or during another down time of the training. You can suggest they place their shield/homepage on a file folder so it is protected and can travel easy without being damaged.

We attached an example of a Snapshot of Me!, Personal Homepage, and a Coat of Arms in the handout section. Some possible topics you may want to include are:

- Draw a banner on your service shield for our group motto (this is something that is left blank until the group is together- then they ask each other what they want to stand for as a team- what phrase/quite best describes this?)
- What I need from this team to be personally effective is...
- My biggest challenge for the year is...
- One thing I am going to commit to this year is...

34. Goal Squares:

[This is good for any size group.]

Give each person a piece of paper. Instruct them to fold the paper in half, then in half again, and once more. They should have eight squares on their paper. Ask the group to think back at a time in their life when they said to themselves, “I wish I could do that.” Tell them it is time to start doing something about it. On one side of the paper they are to write one thing they want to learn, try, create, (e.g. climb a mountain, eat sushi) in each square. They should have eight items written down, one in each of the 8 squares. After they are finished, instruct the team to then flip their paper over and for each square on the other side that has something they want to do, have them think about why they want to do that. What is the motivation? What is the draw? Tell them to write one word describing that charge, the reason they want to do what they wrote. For example, I want to run a marathon is in one of my 8 squares, on the back of that same square I write the word “adventure” because that best describes why I want to run the marathon. Using flip chart paper or a blackboard, ask people to shout out those words they wrote that describe why they want to accomplish a certain task. Write about 10-15 words down. They do not need to tell you the action at this pint, just the descriptive word. Discuss with the group any similarities and differences in the words. Typically, the words we write down are things that are missing in our lives and we find concrete ways to bring that feeling to our lives. The problems we run into are that we do not follow-up with the dreams and desires and often get bogged down with daily tasks that we forget to take care of our desires. Challenge the group to choose at least two of the 8 items to accomplish within the next six months.

35. Grandparent's Lessons:

[This is best used for groups under 15 people.]

If you have a larger group you may choose to have a few people do their lesson throughout the training or break the group into smaller groups. Ask each person to say their name, the campus they are from, major, and one lesson they learned from a grandparent or someone from their grandparents generation.

36. I Like Someone Who:

[This activity is best for groups over 25 people.]

Have participants sit down in chairs that form a circle, while you begin the activity by standing in the middle. As facilitator, begin by introducing an "I like someone who..." statement that draws connections among participants based on preferences, interests, or experiences. Some examples include: "I like someone who is a night person," "I like someone who likes sushi," "I like someone who makes pottery," "I like someone who has listened to the Dead Kennedy's." Direct all participants who can relate to the statement to move from their spaces and find a new seat in the circle. Those who can not relate simply stay where they are seated. The only rule is that participants cannot take a new position that is directly left or right of their current place. As participants are scrambling for new seats, you will also be searching for a seat, thus leaving one person without a seat. This participant becomes the person who comes to the middle and provides another "I like someone who..." statement.

37. Fun Game:

[This can be used in any size group.]

Ask the participants to take out a piece of paper and pen. Tell them you will ask a series of questions and they should write down their first instinct for the answers.

First write the number 1-11 down the left side of your paper.

Besides numbers 1 and 2 write down any two numbers.

By numbers 3 and 7 write down the names of people of the opposite or same gender depending on your sexual orientation.

Next to 4, 5, and 6 write down any person you know names.

Write down four song titles in lines 8, 9, 10, and 11.

Now make a wish.

Next read what each line means:

You must tell the number of people you placed in space 2 about this game in order for it to come true.

Your lucky number is in space number 1.

The person in space 3 is the one you love.

The person in space 7 is the one you want, but can never work it out with.

You care most about the person in space 4.

The person in space 5 knows you very well.

The person you name in space 6 is your lucky star.
The song in space 8 marches with the person in space 3.
The song in space 9 matches the person in space 7.
The song in space 10 tells about your state of mind.
The song in space 11 is how you currently feel about life.

38. Name Tags:

[This is good for groups under 25.]

Give each person a half piece of hard paper (called tag board, you can also use file folders cut in half). The paper must be thick enough to create a nametag, like a name tent, each person will place in front of them. Have each person write their first name or the name they go by on the front of the nametag. On the back, the side that will face them when placed on a table, they must DRAW symbols of significant things in their life (e.g. I like nature, so I might draw some trees). They can use symbols only, no words, no letters. They then share what their symbol means with the person next to them. The partner picks out ONE symbol the other person described and will use this symbol to describe the person to the larger group. Each person says their partner's name as they describe the symbol. Ask the group, would these things be visible to someone meeting you for the first time? How can we avoid judging a book by its cover or from being judged?

39. Check-In:

[This can be used with any group size.]

In order to constantly check-in with the group and their energy levels, you can use a few creative ways in place of asking how they feel. One option is to have the group go around the room and have them relate how they feel right now to a type of weather (I'm feeling happy so I would say "sunny"). You can use colors, candy (I feel like talking so I would say, "like a twizzler because they make your mouth happy.").

23. Go Fish:

[This is best used with a smaller group.]

Select a group of tiny items that make you think of the topic you are training in. We will use "service" as the example. Gather items like seeds, an AmeriCorps sticker, a picture of child, etc. Tie a string to each item and place the strings with the objects hidden in a paper bag, leaving the strings hanging on the outside of the bag. Have each person grab a string and object. After everyone has their object tell them they must describe a service experience that comes to mind when they look at their object./ YOU can leave some strings empty and allow the person to describe any experience.

24. Motivation:

[This can be used throughout the training.]

Ask a person in the room, "why did you get out of bed this morning?" or "why do you get out of bed when you are home?" This gets them to think about what really motivates them

to be social agents of change. It is a simple question, but it takes a great deal of honesty and thought.

25. Goalball Fight:

[If your group is large, you will want it break the group into smaller groups when processing the activity.]

Each person writes one goal for the year or for the training on a piece of paper. Then everyone crumbles up their paper into a ball, forms a large circle and starts throwing the goalballs at each other. After about 30 seconds each person grabs one of the goalballs. Then break the groups into smaller groups and have them shares out loud what someone said their goals are. This is a fun way to hear what the participants want to learn from the training. Tell the group, a goal written is a goal half attained or Ideas won't keep, something must be done about them (a quote from Alfred North Whitehead).

26. Bag of Goodies:

[This is good activity for a retreat setting.]

Fill paper bags with random items- paper lips, tape, balloons, glasses, toilet paper, stickers, etc. Give each group of people a bag of goodies and tell them they have 20 minutes to plan a skit using ALL the items in the bag. You can give the skits themes or leave it wide open. The skits very amusing and bring the groups together.

27. Board Games:

Board Games (Trivia Pursuit, Pictionary, Scattagories, Taboo, Twister) are fun ways to revive the group after meals. You can break the groups into teams and play against each other, or you can simply ask a few trivia questions before each segment of the workshop. You do not have to play by the rules written down in the game, make up your own to fit the needs, and time constraints, of the group.

28. Knock Your Socks Off:

[This is good for group larger than 10 people.]

Instruct people to take their shoes off and get on all fours (if people do not have socks they can observe, or if they have a skirt on they can observe). At the word "go" the participants try to pull off other people's socks with trying to keep their own on. People must stay on all fours- no running or hopping to get away. The player is eliminated once they lose BOTH socks. The one left with both or one sock is the winner.

29. Mystery Partners:

[This is good for groups under 25 people.]

Give each person an index card and instruct him/her to write down three hobbies/interests (without showing anyone else). Then ask them to draw a picture of themselves (stick figures are fine) doing one of the three things listed. Collect and shuffle the cards, then give a card to each participant., Instruct the group to interview people in the room looking for their partner. Once they find the partner tell them to continue to share what is on the card. After about 10 minutes of mingling time, ask the group to introduce their partner to the whole group.

30. Famous People:

As participants enter the room, tape or pin a name of a famous person (rock stars, movie stars, politicians, leaders) on their backs. Tell them they can not look at their own back. For about 10-15 minutes have people mingle around the room asking items yes/no questions about their identity. People can also treat the other participants as if he/she truly were the famous person that is on their back. After people mingle, ask the group to come back and guess who they are.

31. Family Bonding:

[This is good for groups over 20 people.]

The facilitator must prepare index cards of famous families (Flintstones, Simpsons, Brady Bunch, Cosby), having one family member name per index card. Give an index card to the participants as they come into the room. Once everyone has a card they are to find their family. Once they find their family they are to sing a song for the entire group, say famous lines, or do an action that is affiliated with that family group.

32. M&Ms:

[This is good for any size group.]

This is a great introduction game for people who are meeting for the first time. Everyone sits in a circle. Pass a bag of M&Ms around and invite people to help themselves. If people have dietary restrictions, you may choose to pass marbles or playing cards. Once the bag is passed, participants tell their name and for each M&M in his/her hand, one thing about themselves. Give some categories if they are having difficulties, for example where did your grandfather live as a boy, what would you want to eat every day, what is your favorite book, etc. A variation is to have set questions for the colors of the M&Ms: Everyone with a red M&M answers what was the last book you read, etc.

33. Clues for Suckers:

[This is good for groups under 15 people.]

Each participant writes three things about him/herself on an index card. The items should be things other sin the room do not know. The facilitator collects the cards and reads the clues aloud to the group. Whoever guesses the clue described gets a sucker (a lollipop).

34. Music Choice:

[This is a great activity for large groups.]

The facilitator puts up signs of various music categories: rock, punk, folk, country, opera, showtunes, oldies, new age, reggae, classical, gospel, heavy metal, jazz, alternative, hip hop, etc. Everyone stands under the sign with their favorite music category. After they are under a sign, the group must come up with one song to hum or sing for 30 seconds. Allow the groups 5 minutes to plan and practice.

35. Fortune Cookie:

[This is good for groups under 15 people.]

In the handout section of this workshop, you will find a list of questions. Cut those sheets into strips, so that each statement is its own strip of paper. Put the strips of paper into a paper bag or bowl. Pass the bag/bowl around. Explain to each participant that they should reach in and pull out a fortune. Then the participant must answer the question on the fortune. You are allowed one chance to return the fortune for a new one. Once you answer your question, keep your fortune, and pass the bag/bowl to the next person. You can add different fortunes to make them more relevant to your group. The book IF, found in the resource section, is a great resource for more questions.

36. Photo Scavenger Hunt:

[This is a great activity for a retreat setting in a city.]

There is an example of a photo scavenger hunt in DC in the handout section. Basically you need to break the groups into teams of no more than five people. Give each group a Polaroid camera or a disposable camera. Create a list of sites, trivia questions, funny poses, and other creative actions that they must document using their camera. This takes at least 4 hours. You can then give each group some money to get their camera developed at one of the one-hour photo places. You should arrange a location they can bring their camera to ahead of time and alert the photo shop they will be coming with a deadline of when their pictures can be ready. If there is no one hour developer and you are not using a Polaroid camera, you can do this activity in the beginning of a retreat. Then, get the film developed, and on the last day allow the groups to create a photo album using construction paper to show-off the pictures and, of course, to determine the winner.