Icebreakers come in many shapes and sizes with many different purposes and outcomes. As you select an icebreaker, think to yourself, "What do I want to accomplish as a result of this activity?" and "What do I want the group to get out of this activity?" Below you will find a collection of icebreakers and team builders. They are separated into categories to assist you in your selection of the perfect activity for your group.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

1. "The Name Game" – Begin this activity by selecting one group member to state his/her full name to the group. The person to the right (of the first person) then states the first person’s name and his/her own. Continue around the circle with each new person stating all of the previous names and followed by their own. To finish this game, the first person repeats all the names.

This activity has a number of variations. To spice things up, try using gestures or movements, a fruit that starts with the same letter as your first name, or an adjective that rhymes with your first name to accompany your name. Have the group repeat the movement, fruit, or adjective along with your name.

2. "Wheel of Greetings" - This activity works best when you have at least ten people in your group. Begin this activity by having your group count off by twos. Have the "ones" and the "twos" form two circles, one within the other one. Instruct the inner circle to face the outer circle so that they are facing someone in the opposite circle. Have the members introduce themselves and talk with the person across from them until signaled. At the signal, the outer circle rotates to the left and the members repeat the same process. This is continued until everyone in one circle has met every one in the other circle.

3. "Move Your Butt!" - Also known as "Train Wreck", "The Wind Blows For...", or "Have you ever...", this icebreaker is a fun and active activity that helps everyone participating learn the "little things" that we all share in common. To begin this activity, have everyone grab a chair and form a circle. (If you lack chairs, having everyone form a circle, take off one shoe and place it in front of them is a good substitute). Have everyone facing towards each other with a good amount of running room in the middle of the circle. Remove one chair (or shoe) so that someone is left without a place to stand. That person then moves to the center of the circle.

The middle person starts this activity by saying "Move your butt if you _______." The blank is filled with something that is true about the person standing in the middle (i.e. "Move your butt if you like the Red Sox" or "Move your butt if you think that George Bush is funny looking!"). It’s best to start off with easy things. However, working your way up to the crazy things that make each of us who we are makes the game that much more interesting. Anyone in the circle who possesses that particular characteristic, interest, hobby, etc. that is said by the person in the middle has to run to a new chair (or shoe). (Very important - they can’t jump to the chair next to them. They must find a new chair somewhere else in the circle.)

Ultimately, there will be one person left in the circle who then has to repeat the process all over again. (i.e. "Move your butt if you can imitate a monkey!") This is a fun icebreaker and can get quite competitive as people are diving for chairs to keep from being left in the middle!

4. "Mingle, Mingle" – Begin this activity by instructing the group to walk around the room and mix, and mingle with each other. While “mingling”, instruct the group to be chanting "mingle, mingle". The facilitator then shouts out a number (i.e. "3"). As quickly as they can, the group must separate themselves into groups consistent with the number shouted by the facilitator (in this case 3). Any group members, who are not in a group, are out of the game. (Modified from the Stonehill College Orientation Leader Manual, 1997)
5. "Instant Replay" - This is a good name game. This activity tends to be a little goofy, but it is a good way for people to learn the names of the people in their group. Have the group form a circle and leave a little space in the middle. The first person enters the middle of the circle, states his/her name, and performs some identifying gesture (i.e. a jumping jack or the Britney Spears dance!). Here is where you choose your own adventure: (Modified from the Stonehill College Orientation Leader Manual, 1997)

Option 1 - The group can then simultaneously imitate the person by saying their name and repeating the gesture.

Option 2 - Each person has to repeat every person’s gesture that came before them, then that person does their gesture.

Option 3 - After the person does their gesture, have the entire group repeat the gestures of every person before that person.

6. "Birthday Line-up" - This is not only a super way to get to know a little more about the members of your group, it is also a great test of your group’s communication skills. Have your group line up according to birthday without speaking to each other. Have January birthdays on one side of the line and December on the other. Hand signals are permitted, but remember, no talking! After the group has finished lining themselves up, have them state when their birthdays to see how well they did.

7. "Tail Chase" – For this activity, you will need “tails” for every person that is going to participate. “Tails” can be made out of shredded t-shirts, towels, or lengths of rope. Pass out the tails to everyone and instruct them to place the tail around their belt, through a belt loop, or tucked into the waste-line of their pants or shorts. (Make sure that the tail is not tucked in too deeply or tied to your belt or belt loop, as it needs to be able to be pulled off without too much force.) This activity works best within a large space with definite boundaries (i.e. a large room, a basketball court, etc.). Instruct the group to move into the space. The leader starts this activity off by yelling, "go". Once the leader has shouted this, the group attempts to steal each other’s tails (and protect their own!). Once a person’s tail has been pulled out, they are eliminated and must sit off to the side. Play continues until there is one person left with their tail.

8. "He Said...She Said" - Begin this activity by dividing the men from the women in the group. Pass out pieces of paper and instruct each person to write a question that they’ve always wanted to know about the opposite sex. The groups can either work as individuals or work collaboratively. Have one group (the men or the women) form a circle with the other group sitting on the inside of the circle.

Once the group has finished coming up with their questions, instruct the outside group to ask the inside group for responses to their questions. Once a question has been asked, the inside group responds without interruption from the outside group. (Very Important: No one has to answer anything. If someone is uncomfortable or simply does not want to answer a question, they must not be forced to answer.) Once all of the outside group’s questions have been asked, the two groups switch places and repeat the process.

9. "The Caterpillar" - Begin this activity by having everyone lie side-by-side on his or her stomachs. It is important to lie very close together (and is helpful to have smaller individuals placed between two larger ones). Instruct one of the individuals on the end of the line roll over onto his/her neighbor and keep rolling down the entire group. When he/she gets to the end of the line, they lie on their stomachs as close to the end person as possible. The next person at the other end of the line then begins to roll and the process is repeated until each person has had a chance to roll over everyone. (Modified from the Stonehill College Orientation Leader Manual, 1997)

10. "Skin the Snake" - Start this icebreaker by having your group form a single file line. Instruct each person to place their left hand between their legs and their right hand in front of them. Have the group join hands (grabbing the right hand of the person in front of them and the left hand of the person in back of them.) Instruct the last person in line to lie down and the rest of the group to step backwards over him/her (keeping hands linked). As each person steps over the person behind him or her, each person lies down as well. Once the last person lies down, that person jumps up and begins to walk over the line, picking up people as they go along. Once this is completed, the line should be back to the position it started in. (Modified from the Stonehill College Orientation Leader Manual, 1997)
BUILDING TRUST

1. "Lap-Sit" - Begin this activity by instructing everyone in the group to stand in a circle shoulder to shoulder. Have the group turn to their right (maintaining the circle and standing with their toes touching the heels of the person in front of them. **(Very Important: Everyone in the circle must be very close to each other. If the circle is not feeling tight enough, have them inch closer to the center of the circle).**

Instruct everyone in the circle to put their hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them. On the count of three, have the group (very gently) begin to ease their way down and sit on the lap of the person behind them. It might be helpful if people squat gradually according to the count (i.e. "1" bending your knees, "2" beginning to sit on the person’s lap, "3" sitting on the person’s lap) To add a little challenge to this activity, try to walk forward as a group. On the count of three, have the group take a step forward and then backward. Try rotating your group once around! Once the group is done, have everyone begin to stand up by using the count of three method used to sit down.

2. "Trust Falls (Pairs)" - Begin this activity by having group members pair off. Instruct the pairs to have one person stand 2-3 feet directly behind his/her partner, facing the same direction. Instruct the person standing in front to stand with his/her feet together, arms crossed over his/her chest, and eyes closed. The person in front close his/her eyes and falls backwards, keeping legs straight, allowing his/her partner to catch him/her. **(Very important: The two people must have the following dialogue before any falling takes place. Faller – "Spotter Ready", Spotter – "Ready" (if ready) "Not Ready" (if not ready), Faller – "Falling", Spotter – "Fall Away").**

3. "Trust falls (Group)" – For this activity, you will need at least 8-10 people and an object that is 3 to 4 feet high (picnic table, bleachers, a chair, etc.). Ask the group for a volunteer and have that person climb onto the elevated object. The remainder of the group then forms two lines facing each other behind the object. Have the two line securely grasps the wrists of the person across from them.

Instruct the volunteer to turn their back to the two lines and stand with his/her feet together, arms crossed over his/her chest, and eyes closed. Instruct the volunteer to fall backwards into the arms of the group and is passed along to the back of the line. **(Very important: The following dialogue must take place before the person falls. Faller – "Spotters Ready", Spotters – "Ready" (if ready) "Not Ready" (if not ready), Faller – "Falling", Spotters – "Fall Away").** Remember to be in a safe area such as grassy areas. Do not do trust falls on hard surfaces.

4. "Trust Walks" - Begin this activity by instructing your group to line up in a single file. Have the group place one arm on the shoulders of the person in front of them. Pass out blindfolds (i.e. bandanas, shreds of old t-shirts, shreds of towels, etc.) or, if none are available, have everyone close their eyes with exception of the first person in the line. That person is now the leader of the group.

Instruct the group leader to lead the group around the area bringing the group through various obstacles (doors, chairs, down stairs, picnic tables). The success of this activity lies in the ability of the leader to communicate with the rest of the group. The remainder of the group also has to make sure that they are communicating with the other members of the group in order to ensure that everyone has safe passage throughout the group’s journey.

2. "Stand up" - This activity begins by having your group find a partner. Instruct the pairs to stand back-to-back and interlock their arms. Have the interlocked pair sit down supporting each other as they make their way to the ground.

Now, keeping their arms locked together, instruct the pairs to stand up. You can make this activity more challenging by having two pairs match up to make it a group of 4. Keep adding even pairs, having them stand opposite one another. Keep adding pairs until you are using the entire group. **(Modified from the Stonehill College Orientation Leader Manual, 1997)**

5. "Willow in the Wind" – Have the group form a small circle of about 8 people standing shoulder-to-shoulder and facing the middle of the circle. Instruct the circle to hold their hands at chest height, with their palms facing forward. **(Very Important: Make sure that the circle is standing in an athletic stance with one foot slightly behind the other and knees slightly bent.)**

Ask the group for a volunteer to stand in the center of the circle. Instruct the volunteer to stand with his/her feet together, arms crossed over his/her chest, and eyes closed. Keeping his/her feet stationary and body straight, but relaxed, have the volunteer let him/herself begin to start leaning backwards into the outer circle. Everybody in the circle supports him/her with GENTLE pushes of the palms and moves the person from side to side and back and forth across the circle. **(Very Important: Make sure there are at least two people supporting the willow at all times.)** **(Modified from the Stonehill College Orientation Leader Manual, 1997)**
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND TEAMBUILDING

1. "Human Pretzel" - This is a very traditional icebreaker and gets a group to work together on solving a common problem. It is a lot of fun and encourages a lot of group interaction. Begin this activity by having your group form one or two circles (depending upon size). Have everyone take two hands of the other people standing in the circle (without grabbing both hands of the same person). After the group has all joined hands, they will now be in a giant knot. The object of this activity is to become untangled and form a circle again without letting go of anyone’s hands. This exercise is very possible...so don’t give up!!! All it takes is good communication and lots of teamwork!

2. "Lego Community" - This is a great exercise to learn the little things that make us who we are as well as stress the importance of the role each person plays in a community. Individual differences are shared while community characteristics and strengths are discovered. (In addition...you get to play with Legos!)

Begin this activity by having your group circle up on the floor or sit around a table. Dump a pile of Legos into the middle of the circle or the center of the table and instruct everyone to grab a handful of Legos. Once everyone has a handful of Legos, start building a structure with everyone adding one piece at a time.

There is a slight catch, however. For every piece a member attaches to the structure, they must reveal something about themselves. You can either pass the structure in a circle or leave it in the middle for people to add pieces on as they see fit.

Upon completing the exercise, have a discussion about how each member in the group is unique and how each member adds their own personal characteristics to the community as a whole. The Lego structure that is created can serve as a symbolic representation of how the community is always changing, becoming bigger and stronger by the more you share. It is also symbolic of how all of our lives intertwine with each other.

3. "Four Up" - Begin this activity by breaking your group up into groups of 10. Have your group sit on the floor or ground in a circle. The object of this game is to have 4 people standing in the group at all times and for no more than five seconds at a time. It may be a little difficult at first, but your group will pick this up quickly! (Modified from the Stonehill College Orientation Leader Manual, 1997)

4. "Creative Contraptions" – Prior to starting this activity, write a number of machines on a set of index cards (i.e. garbage truck, Xerox machine, slot machine, toaster, etc.). To start this activity, separate your group into smaller groups of four or five people. Give the groups 15 minutes to work out a skit in which they act out the function of the machine. Each member must be participate in the skit in some manner.

After the fifteen minutes are up, have the larger group reassemble and perform their skits and have the other participants try to guess what it is. (Modified from the Stonehill College Orientation Leader Manual, 1997)

5. "Crush Your Fears" - Pass out little scraps of paper, balloons, and pens to your group members. Tell the group to identify some of the fears that they have (about the program that they are working on, the task they are about to take on, etc.). Have them write the fear on a piece of scrap paper. After they are done writing, have them fold up the paper and insert each fear into the balloon. Inflate the balloon and then all at once...have them pop their balloons. By identifying and placing the fears in a balloon, people can see that if you put your mind to it, you can crush away your fears!