TEEN FAVORITES

INSTRUCTOR APPROVED

Icebreaker, Energizer, and Reflection

ACTIVITIES
ICEBREAKER

Icebreakers give teens a chance to get to know one another and promote a culture of belonging in your program. Use icebreakers at the start of each program day. By week two, invite teens to choose and lead the icebreaker. (Pages 1-6)

ENERGIZER

Energizers help your group re-focus, and can help bring the group together before or after an activity. Use energizers as a response to a lull in the group’s energy, between activities, or after a break. By week two, invite teens to call for an energizer when one is needed, and to choose and lead the energizers. (Pages 5-9)

REFLECTION

Reflection activities allow young people to process the experience they’re having, name the skills they’re using and connect with one another and you. Use reflection activities after an activity as needed, and at the end of each program day. (Pages 10-12)
Teens write some example feeling words on the board or chart paper, like “happy, frustrated, excited.”

Explain the check in, and what it means to be “in.” When a teen is “in,” they commit to participating, any shared norms you have set, and being present mentally for the day.

At the start of each day, each participant says “I'm [name], and I'm [how you’re feeling today and why - teens can use a word on the board or another word] and I’m In!”

Circle up. You will start in the center. Using big voice and gestures, say:

1. “I'm [ your name].” The group repeats back “I'm [your name].”
2. “And I’m [how you feel or how you’re doing]” the group repeats back
3. Then, walk up to a new person and trade places with them so that it’s their turn in the middle.
1. In four corners of the room, post one paper in each corner. On each large post-it paper there are different topics.

2. Explain to everyone that it does not matter which corner they decide to stand by because they will be moving around the room.

3. Explain that every corner has a list of topics and questions where the large post-it holds the one answer (each corner containing different answers). For example, if one of the questions you ask is “Favorite food,” you might write “pizza,” “tacos,” “cheeseburger” and “salad,” one available answer on each post it.

4. You then ask a question to the whole group, like “which best describes your favorite food?” If none of the posted answers are correct, they should choose the one they identify most with.

Start with light questions, like favorite food or Movie/music category. As the game continues, questions become more personal such as: number of siblings, eye color, what are your future goals.

5. As the exercise continues, take moments to have the youth reflect about what they have in common, and what is different between them.
From After School Matters instructor Luis

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voice and gestures, say:

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   back "I’m [your name]."

2. "And I’m [how you feel or how you’re
doing]" the group repeats back

3. Then, walk up to a new person and
   trade places with them so that it’s their turn in the
   middle.

From After School Matters staff and instructor Jillian

1. Give everyone a sticky note

2. Circle up

3. Each person marks where they are standing with
   a sticky note

are blowing for anyone who…” say something true about
you, like has 2 siblings, or was born in another country, or
has a dog.

5. Anyone in the circle for whom this is also true
must find a new place in the circle, marked by a sticky
note

6. You may not trade with a neighbor (Someone
right next to you!)

7. If someone says something that is only true
about them—no one else moves—everyone should clap
and say “You’re unique!”
WORLD TRAVELER
ICEBREAKER
VERBAL COMMUNICATION

From After School Matters staff and instructor Tammara

1. Sentence starter is “I would like to fly to...”

2. Each person finishes the sentence with the name of a city, country or landmark. No place can be repeated by another participant.

3. The first place mentioned must begin with the first letter of the alphabet, and the next place following in consecutive order. For example, first student would like to fly to Australia, the second would say, I would like to fly to Boston. This continues until all students have had a turn. If there are more than 26 participants, then the next person will go back to the beginning of the alphabet.

4. If time permits, the 2nd round gets harder, the participants must identify a place they’d like to fly to that begins with the first letter of their first name. No place can be repeated by another participant.

NOTES:
Have an amazing activity to share with other After School Matters instructors?
Email Emily Nott
emily.nott@afterschoolmatters.org!
**ASHÉ ENERGIZER**

**COLLABORATION**

From After School Matters staff Dana

1. Circle up. One teen “conductor” stands in the middle of the circle.

2. The “Conductor” starts a sound: vocal sound, clapping, snapping or stomping repeated in rhythm.

3. They point to the next person, who adds a sound on top of that repeated sound. The sound can be a snap, clap, stomp, or vocal sound.

Once each person has added to the beat, the conductor can raise or lower the volume, fade certain sounds up or down, or add a new sound.

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**P.I.E.S.**

**ICEBREAKER**

**REFLECTION**

**VERBAL COMMUNICATION**

From After School Matters instructor Ric

1. Bring in a talking piece that means something to you personally.

2. Circle up

3. Introduce what the talking piece means as part of your group norms.

4. Each person shares their preferred name, pronouns, and how they’re doing Physically, Intellectually, Emotionally, and Spiritually (P.I.E.S.)

This can be effective when done at the beginning and end of program to help you gauge your program’s effect on each teen. After the first time you do this, you can ask a teen Volunteer to lead the P.I.E.S. exercise. This activity can be used as a “Check-in” or icebreaker activity, and/or as a “Check-out” or reflection activity, but is most effective when done at the beginning and end of each program day.

More on the domains of wellness at nationalwellness.org
**TALKING CIRCLE**

**ICEBREAKER**

**REFLECTION**

**VERBAL COMMUNICATION**

From After School Matters instructor Spencer

1. Bring in a talking piece that means something to you personally.

2. Circle up

3. Introduce what the talking piece means as part of your group norms.

4. Start with each person sharing their preferred name, pronouns, and one word describing how they feel today. You can say “Pass,” but everyone should have the talking piece and a chance to speak.

5. Then, introduce a funny question like “Who would play you in a movie?”

6. Last, have a teen offer a question.

After the first time you do this, you can ask a teen volunteer to lead the talking circle. This activity can be used as a “Check-in” or icebreaker activity, and/or as a “Check-out” or reflection activity.

More on the indigenous origin and methods of this practice at restorativejustice.org

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**ZIP, ZAP, ZOP**

**ENERGIZER**

**COLLABORATION**

From After School Matters instructor David

1. Gather everyone into a circle (Standing) and make sure everyone can see everyone.

2. Say the title, and make sure everyone knows the 3 Z’s: “Zip, Zap, Zop.”

3. Make it clear how important it is to stay focused.

4. One person starts off, use your hand and arm to point to whomever you wish to pass the energy to and loudly say “Zip.”

5. The person who was pointed at then has to send the energy to a different person across the circle by using their hand and arm to point and say “Zap.”

6. This is repeated, but each person must say a different “Z” in its order Zip, Zap, Zop.

7. As the energy and flow continues, so does the speed but you must remain focused you know the order of the Z’s.

Variation: If a teen says the word out of order, they sit in the middle and quietly say one of the three words. This distracts the remaining teens, adding a challenge! As more teens join the center of the circle, the challenge increases.
ENERGY PASS
ENERGIZER
COLLABORATION

From After School Matters instructor Melissa
1. Circle up
2. The first person starts a sound and motion, for example “Hah!” and a jump. The next person in the circle duplicates, sending the same sound and motion all the way around the circle. Then, the next person to their left starts a different, new sound and motion and sends that around the circle.
3. The goal is to keep the energy up, and keep the sound/motion moving quickly. If it stops, or if the energy level dips down, you can send it back to the person who started it to begin the sound/motion again.

If it is close to the beginning of program, you can have teens use their names in this game so they can learn one another’s names.

VARIATION: Put on a catchy song with a good dance beat. The first person starts a dance move, and everyone duplicates. Then the next person, etc.

ROSE, THORN, BUD
ICEBREAKER
REFLECTION

From After School Matters staff Eboni
1. Circle up at the beginning or end of program
2. Have teens share one highlight (rose), one challenge (thorn), and one thing they’re looking forward to (bud).

This activity works well at the beginning of a program day to check in and share reflections on the school day or weekend. It also works at the end of a program day to reflect together.

As the program session progresses, invite teens to lead this check in or check out as part of your daily ritual!
From After School Matters instructor Keith

1. Post your 6 MHA Skill Building block posters in your program space.

2. At the end of each program day, each teen gets 3 sticky notes (use 3 different colors).


4. Circle up. Each teen shares their reflections, and decides which of the 6 skill building blocks most reflects that Highlight, Shout-out, and Challenge. They stick the note on that poster.

As the program session progresses, you can watch the highlights, shout-outs, and challenges build up to see which skills your teens are using in program, which they are struggling with, and which you can address more robustly in activities.

From After School Matters staff Jillian

Circle up. Determine something you now know (head), something you now feel (heart), something you now can do (hands). Share your head, heart, hands with the group.

From After School Matters instructor Nicole

Circle up. Hold one end of a long ball of yarn. Share something you’re grateful for with someone in the circle. While holding the end, pass the yarn to the person you offered gratitude to.

Teens loop the yarn around their finger and share something with someone else, passing the yarn to that person.

No person should get a second gratitude until everyone has been recognized. At the end, you should have a spider-web like structure with everyone holding the yarn. Teens can choose to cut a piece of yarn for a keepsake. This activity works best at the very end of program, after your final showcase.