

Clique Crushers

Use a variety of methods to randomly form small groups.

1. Label small paper slips 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4 and so on. Place each slip in a separate balloon (one for each person). Then inflate the balloons. Give the young people each a balloon when they enter the room. Play three minutes of "Bat the Balloon." Kids try to keep all the balloons in the air, not allowing the balloons to touch the floor. When you yell "Stop," kids each grab a balloon and pop it any way they can (for example, by sitting or stepping on it). All the ones form a group, twos form a group, and so on.
2. As kids enter, give each a piece of colored bubble gum (grape, banana, strawberry). Kids blow bubbles and get into groups according to who's chewing the same color /flavor.
3. Use different colors or shapes of name tags. Design the name tags according to your meeting theme. Group according to similar shapes, or form small groups with one of each shape.
4. To form pairs, ask everyone to take off one shoe. Pile the shoes in the center of the room. On "Go," each person chooses a shoe other than his or her own and finds the owner.

Use a variety of methods to discuss questions. Everyone listens as each person talks.

5. Gather in a circle. Ask a question such as "What's your favorite childhood memory?" Spin a soda bottle. The person it points to answers the question and spins again.
6. Gather half the kids in one circle and the other half in a circle around them. Play music. The inner circle walks clockwise and the outer circle walks counterclockwise. When you stop the music, kids stop and face the closest person in the opposite circle. Ask get-to-know-you questions and have pairs or trios answer. Start the music, start walking and repeat the process.
7. Gather in a circle. Place a chair in the center. Choose one person to sit in the chair (the person closest to the front of the room, or the person closest to you). Everyone asks him or her questions interview-style. For example, "What's your favorite food?" "What's your favorite hobby?" or "If you could do anything you want on a Saturday morning, what would you do?" After one minute, the interviewee chooses another person to sit in the middle.

Do activities that promote togetherness.

8. Know everyone's name and help others know names by beginning each meeting with a name game. For example, play "Name a Like." Gather everyone in a circle and ask each person to think of something he or she likes to do that starts with the same letter as his or her first name. One person starts, "My name is Susan and I like to swim." The next person says, "Her name is Susan and she likes to swim; my name is Mary and I like to munch on potato chips." The process continues until the last person in the circle repeats all the names and "likes." A variation is instead of naming a like, each person pantomimes it.