

Getting-to-know-you/Sponge Activities: These activities can be used as getting-to-know-you activities, as **in-between activities to redirect participant’s energy and attention, and to “soak up time” if necessary, as would a sponge. There are hundreds more of these kinds** of engaging activities for young people; find activities that will best suit your participants and the dynamics of your group.

Lesson Plans:

- 1) Getting-to-Know-You BINGO
- 2) **“If you were in my shoes...”**
- 3) Two Truths and a Lie
- 4) Question Ball

Lesson: Getting-to-Know-You BINGO

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: How are we similar? How are we different?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants get to know each other by asking each other questions, **writing down each other’s names, and identifying similarities and differences.**

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: This exercise is a getting-to-know-you ice breaker that gets participants up and moving around and talking to each other. It is also a powerful way for participants to see they are not alone and others may share their life experiences. Knowing they **have an ally amongst their peers may save someone’s life as feeling isolated or outcast is a common cause for gang and drug involvement and suicide.**

MATERIALS:

- BINGO sheets
- Pens or pencils

LENGTH OF LESSON: 15 minutes

PROCEDURE:

1. Prepare a BINGO sheet for each participant.
2. Explain to participants that this is a way for them to learn about each other and find out what they have in common and how they differ.
3. Explain that for this game they will have 10 minutes to fill out their BINGO sheets with the names of their peers. Explain that they will walk around asking each other questions from the **BINGO box and then write their friend’s name down for that box. Give an example: “if the BINGO box says ‘brown eyes’ you might ask your friend ‘do you have brown eyes?’ or ‘what color eyes do you have?’ then you would write their name in the box. The goal is to get all of the BINGO boxes filled in, but it is not a race or competition.**
4. Pass out the BINGO sheets and pens or pencils. Direct the participants to write their own name for one box. Remind them they can only put their name in one box!

5. Direct the participants to stand up and begin mingling and filling in their BINGO sheets. Give participants 7 to 10 minutes for this activity.
6. Bring participants back to their seats. Remind them it is ok if they did not fill in the entire sheet.
7. Ask participants to stand up if the box you read fits them. Read a few boxes, pausing between each one to give participants time to sit back down.
8. Begin a discussion by asking: What did you notice? Did you know you were not the only one who...[something from a BINGO box]? **How did it make you feel to do this activity?**

JOURNAL PROMPT: Write a few sentences about the box you put your name in. What is something surprising you learned about someone else?

EVALUATION: Did participants fill in a box with their own name? Did participants mingle as they got names for each box? Were participants able to analyze the information in the boxes, finding commonalities and differences amongst themselves?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Have participants create their own BINGO sheets with creative ideas for each box.

Sample BINGO boxes (create a BINGO sheet that best suits your participants!)

- Brown eyes
- Green eyes
- Blue eyes
- Is an only child
- Has an older sibling
- Has a younger sibling
- Babysits for siblings
- Knows how to swim
- Was born in another country
- Parents do not speak English
- Speaks two languages
- Has bullied someone
- Has been bullied
- Has a family member in jail
- Has heard gun shots
- Lives with only one parent
- Lives with grandparents or aunts or uncles
- Adopted/foster care
- Has traveled out of the state
- Has lived in another state
- Has traveled out of the country
- Has been in a fight
- Knows somebody who has died from violence
- Has been to 2 or more schools
- Can cook food from their culture
- Is afraid of flying
- Wants to be an artist

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Has brown eyes	Has been in a fight	Plays sports	Babysits for siblings	Wears glasses
Wants to go to college	Has an older sibling	Wants to be an artist	African-American	White
Has four letters in her first name	Is afraid of flying	Knows how to swim	Parents do not speak English	Has a family member in jail
Has been bullied	Likes to read	Has gotten at least 3 A's in school	Knows somebody who has died from violence	Has travelled to another country
Has no brothers and sisters	Can cook food from their culture	Speaks two languages	Likes scary movies	Has blue eyes

Lesson: “If You Were In My Shoes...”

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS: How are we similar? How are we different?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants get to know each other by sharing what life is like “in their shoes;” participants build empathy by identifying similarities and differences.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE: This activity is a way for participants to share what their life is like **and to learn about what other’s life is like. It is also** a powerful way for participants to see that they are not alone and that others may share their life experiences. Knowing they have an ally amongst their peers will help the girls feel accepted and understood.

MATERIALS:

- Paper
- Pens, pencils, crayons

LENGTH OF LESSON: 15 to 20 minutes

PROCEDURE:

1. Pass out paper and pens. Have participants sit at desk or table. Explain that today they will **have a chance to share what life is like “in their shoes.” Share the idea that no one really knows what someone else’s life is like unless they “walk a mile in their shoes.” This means that everyone’s life experiences are unique and that no one can know exactly what their life is like unless they tell them. Considering this, it also means that they should try to understand someone else before judging them or criticizing them.**
2. Direct the participants to draw a shoe on their paper. Then have them write or draw what it **is like to live in their shoes. They should finish the sentence, “If you were in my shoes...” several times. They might write: “...you would have to walk through a gang neighborhood to get to school,” “...your mom would yell at you to make breakfast every day,” “...you would see your sister do drugs.” Participants can work together. Assist as necessary.**
3. Participants clean up their work stations as they finish their shoes. Arrange chairs in a circle.
4. Invite participants to stand up and share what life is like in their shoes, displaying their shoe pictures as they speak. Ask the group to notice any similarities amongst their lives. Ask follow-up questions in private as necessary.
5. Explain that as our feet grow or our shoes get worn out, we may need new shoes. Explain that this means that as we grow and get older and mature, we change. Explain that this means that we can always change our lives; we can always get a new pair of shoes.

JOURNAL PROMPT: What is life like in your shoes? What do you like about living in your shoes? **What is something you’d like to change about life in your shoes?**

EVALUATION: Did the participants share aspects of their life on their shoe pictures? Did participants seem interested in learning about the lives of their peers? Did participants understand that everyone has different experiences?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Organize a shoe drive and have participants donate their gently used shoes to other children. Have a company donate shoes to Girls Only.

*Activity adapted from multiple sources.

Lesson: Two Truths and a Lie

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: How well do we know each other?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants get to know each other by sharing facts (and fictions) about their lives.

MATERIALS:

- Paper
- Pens, pencils

LENGTH OF LESSON: 15 minutes

PROCEDURE:

1. Explain that this ice breaker will be a fun way for everyone to get to know each other. Tell participants that in this game they will each share three things about themselves: two things that are true and one that is not. After they share their three things, the rest of the group will guess which one is not true.
2. Explain that the truths can be anything about themselves that they want to share. Give **examples such as, “I have a dog” or “My parents are divorced” or “My favorite ice cream flavor is chocolate”**. Now explain that the lie can be creative and outrageous or can be something that the others might actually think is true to try to trick them. Give examples such as, **“I have a cat” (you don’t have a cat) or “I traveled to France this summer” (you didn’t, but you hope to go someday!)**. Do a sample by sharing two truths and a lie and having participants guess which one is your lie.
3. Give participants a few minutes to think of their three things. Have them write all three things on paper.
4. Have one participant say their three things out loud and allow the others to guess which thing is not true. Continue having each participant share and having the others guess. Allow discussion to follow based on what each **participant shares (example: “Oh wow, I didn’t know you had a dog! What is her name? What kind of dog is she? Do you walk her?”)**
5. When everyone has shared, remind participants that this was a game and that you are not promoting lying.

EVALUATION: Did participants share information about themselves? Were participants creative **with the fictions they told about themselves?** Did participants express interest in each others' lives?

JOURNAL PROMPT: What were your two truths? What is something that is true about you that **you didn't share out loud? Have you ever told a lie? Why did you tell it?**

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Change the game to be two lies and a truth. Engage participants in a longer discussion about honesty and lying.

Lesson: Question Ball

ESSENTIAL QUESTION: How can we get to know each other quickly?

OBJECTIVES/PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS: Participants get to know each other by answering questions chosen randomly.

MATERIALS:

- One, two, or three small beach balls
- Collection of questions

LENGTH OF LESSON: 15 minutes

PROCEDURE:

1. Preparation: write questions or short comments on the beach balls in permanent ink. Samples: favorite movie, favorite food, what grade are you in? favorite color, everyone do jumping jacks, favorite subject in school, run in place for 10 seconds, show a dance move.
2. As the facilitator, start by introducing yourself (Hi, my name is _____) and then tossing the ball in the air and catching it. Read whatever question or comment your right thumb lands on out loud and answer it.
3. After the question is answered, toss the ball to someone in the group. Whoever catches it stands up, introduces themselves, reads the question or comment out loud, then answers or performs the answer.
4. Continue tossing the ball until everyone in the group has had a chance to introduce themselves.

JOURNAL PROMPT: What was your favorite question ball question to answer? Why?

EVALUATION: Did participants answer the questions? Were participants engaged as they got to know each other?

RELATED ACTIVITIES: Have participants create their own question balls to learn more about their peers.