

# **Ice-Breaking Games**

These games are especially well-suited for the very beginning of the Guiding year, when you are introducing new girls into your unit. They can also be played at bridging events, camps, and any time when the girls are meeting new people. The object of these games is to get everyone comfortable, have some fun, and hopefully learn a few names!

## **Games List**

Ali Baba And The 40 Thieves  
Artifact Game  
Chairs  
Circle Tag  
Common Link  
Cosmic Catch  
Dark, Isn't It?  
Dizzy Dance  
Dr. Mix-Up  
I Like People Who...  
Know Your Neighbour  
Mena Mega (NAME GAME)  
Mingle Mingle  
Name Acrostics  
Name That Song  
Network  
Quirks  
Smarties  
The Great Shoe Dive  
The Name Game  
The Name Jive  
Toe Bash  
Toilet Paper Quiz  
SPUD  
Suck and Blow  
Switching Hats  
Wedgie (aka Bomb Drop)  
What's Your Age/Shoe Size?  
Who Am I?

## **Ali Baba And The 40 Thieves**

Thanks to Linda Gardner for posting this game to the WAGGGS-L Mailing List!

Girls line up shoulder to shoulder. The leader of the game is one of the end girls. The whole group chants "Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves" over and over again. The leader begins an action on one chant (such as clapping her hands). At the next chant, the girl next to the leader picks up the first action, the leader starts a 2nd. On the next chant, the 3rd girl in line picks up the first action, the 2nd girl picks up the 2nd action and the leader begins a 3<sup>rd</sup> action. And so on...

## **Artifact Game**

Many thanks to Margaret Fraser, who posted this game to the Guide Mailing List!

Each person is told ahead of time to bring ten objects with some meaning to them to whatever event you are doing this at. When they arrive, give them a bag with a number on it and get them to carefully place their objects into it. Then make sure each person gets someone else's bag. They have ten minutes to write down ideas about what the person who owns the objects is like, and to try to guess who they are. It is best if you don't do the guessing until after everyone has had their say. This would also work as an end of camp game, to see what people have learned about each other.

## **Chairs**

Thanks to Katherine Town who submitted this game to the Guide Mailing List!

Everyone gets a chair and sits in a circle. The Guider has a list of items she reads out. If any of them apply to you, you move the appropriate number of seats clockwise.

Examples:

1. Anyone with one brother, move one seat clockwise. If you have two brothers, move two seats.
2. Anyone with black hair, move one seat clockwise.
3. Anyone who is a Spark, or has been a Spark, move two seats clockwise.
4. Anyone who lives in \_\_\_\_\_ Area move one seat clockwise.
5. Anyone over the age of 21, move one seat counterclockwise.
6. Everyone wearing brown shoes, move one seat.
7. Everyone in Guides, move one seat.

The idea is to move all around the circle, and end up back where you started. It becomes fun because if you move, but your neighbour doesn't, you sit on her lap! Sometimes, you can have three people occupying the same chair!! Make sure you have lots of categories so that everyone gets lots of chances to move, e.g. all Branches of Guiding, all hair colours (at different times, of course), and so on.

## **Circle Tag**

Many thanks to Margaret Fraser, who posted this game to the Guide Mailing List!

This game needs lots of space. Arrange the girls in a circle with everyone holding hands, except for two. This pair is "it". They run around the circle until they feel like tagging someone. The runner on the inside tags a pair of hands, and these two girls come out of the circle run in the opposite direction around the circle, trying to get back into their spot before the first pair gets there. If they don't succeed, they become "it". They have to keep holding hands through this process.

## **Common Link**

Many thanks to Denise Davis for posting this idea to the WAGGGS-L Mailing List!

Source: Northern California Girl Scout Trainer's Consortium training session, summer 1996.

Divide the group into teams of three or four. Each team has to come up with 5-10 different traits that are common to all members in the team -- brown hair, an older brother, been in GS/GG more than 10 years, etc. After five minutes or so, the teams share their common traits with the group. Points are scored for each trait that isn't also on someone else's list. So if two teams listed that everyone in the team wore glasses, neither team would get a point for that trait. The team with the most points wins, but so does everyone else, as you've all discovered some pretty interesting things about one another!

## **Cosmic Catch**

Thanks very much to Sally Garnaat of Sahuaro Girl Scout Council for posting this game to the WAGGGS-L List!

Form a circle. Have 2-4 (or more if you're brave) items to throw (e.g. Koosh ball, stuffed animal, knotted bandana, etc). Before you throw to someone you have to say their name. Each person can only be the catcher 1 time. The last person would throw it back to the starter. Once you have gone through the circle once, the trick is to repeat the sequence and \*add\* more items so there are several items being thrown at once! Each person has to remember who to throw to and who threw to them. To make it really interesting, \*reverse\* the direction of throwing, so each person would be throwing to the person who had thrown to them in the previous round. (Be nice - let people know \*before\* you start the reverse round!)

## **Dark, Isn't It?**

Many thanks to Joan D. for posting this game to the WAGGGS-L Mailing List!

Source: "Cub Scout Leader How-to Book"

Tell the audience that this is a test of intelligence, coordination, and the ability to follow directions. Have each person raise his/her left hand and point left index finger to the right, parallel to the floor. Then have them raise the right hand and hold right index finger on a level with the left finger, pointing in the opposite direction. Then raise the left hand 2 inches and lower the right hand 2 inches. Now ask them to close their eyes. After a moment, remark innocently, "Dark, isn't it?"

## **Dizzy Dance**

Many thanks to Margaret Kieser for posting this game to the Guide Mailing List!

Divide the girls into their patrols and then line them up (lines spaced about 2 arm's widths away) facing a position 6 metres away. In front of each line (at the 6m position), make a mark on the ground (chalk or drawn on the ground). When a whistle is blown, the first girl in each line must

run as fast as she can to the mark on the ground, and keeping her index finger on the mark, turn around 15 times. After this, she must run back (if she can!!) to her line and touch the hand of the next person, who then does the same.

The first team to get all their girls back is the winner.

This game makes you EXTREMELY dizzy, so make sure there is enough room to move around in! All the Guiders who played this ended up on the floor in a heap! This is a very good ice-breaker, as well as a stomach muscle exerciser (from all the laughing).

## **Dr. Mix-Up**

All the girls stand in a circle, holding hands. Select one or two girls to be "Dr. Mix-Up"... they leave the room for a moment. When they're gone, everyone else does their best to get tangled up, by climbing over arms, under legs etc., without letting go of their neighbours' hands. When the circle is suitably tangled, everyone yells "Dr. Mix-Up! Come and fix us!". The Dr. Mix-Ups then come in and try to untangle the circle by directing individuals to go under arms, around bodies, etc. This game is also an excellent 30-second game or Co-operative game.

## **I Like People Who...**

Thanks very much to Jean Agra (Chesapeake Bay GSC) who e-mailed me this game!

Everyone needs a place marker to stand on - tape, rubber spot or even a chalk mark.

Everyone forms a circle and stands on their spot. One girl is in the middle, her spot is removed. She calls out "I like people who . . ." Suggestions: like camping, eat cereal for breakfast, love Brownies. Anyone who falls into that category must change places with another person in the circle to whom the statement applies. "It" tries to get a spot also and the person who is left in the middle makes the next statement. You may not take a space next to you!

## **Know Your Neighbour**

Thanks to Jane Maddin for posting this game to the Guide Mailing List!

This game helps the players learn each other's names and at the same time have some fun. It's a good 'ice-breaker' for the first night at camp. One player is designated to be IT. He takes his place in the centre of the players, sitting in a circle in the dark. IT suddenly flashes his flashlight on one of the players and asks "Who are your next door neighbours?" And then he flashes the light on the nearby neighbours. If the player who was asked the question, can't name both neighbours correctly, he becomes IT. If he does name them correctly, IT asks him "How is So and So?", naming either of the players. If the reply is "OK", the players remain seated, but if the answer is "Not so good", all players must change seats. While everyone is shifting IT tries to get a seat. If he succeeds the one without a spot then becomes IT. Note: Until everyone is sure of the names, IT must give them time to learn the names of their neighbours before they shift.

## **Mena Mega (NAME GAME)**

Many thanks to Denise Davis (Muir Trail GSC) , who e-mailed me this game!

Source: Northern California Girl Scout Trainer's Consortium training session, summer 1996.

Take the letters in your name (first, last, whatever works) and scramble them to form a new word. Then make up a definition of your new word which describes you. For example, the name "Denise" can become "siende". "Siende" in this case meant understanding, because Denise felt she had a knack for understanding what others are trying to say, and rephrasing their words so everyone else can understand, too. The group can then share what their new names mean.

## **Mingle Mingle**

Thanks to Kristen Byrnes for posting this game to the Guide Mailing List!

Another ice breaker we've used for younger girls is Mingle - basically everyone is slightly bouncing in a group (kind of like a bunch of electrons) saying "mingle mingle mingle" and then a leader calls out a number. The girls have to get into groups of that number. You do this several times. We then do something with the last group that gets formed - quite often you make a human sculpture. Sometimes we have the other groups guess what it is and others we give them a theme i.e. monsters.

## **Name Acrostics**

Many thanks to Joan D. for posting this game to the WAGGGS-L Mailing List!

Source: "Cub Scout Leader How-to Book"

As people arrive to your event, hand them a pencil and card. Ask them to print their full name in capitals vertically at the left of the card. They move about, trying to find persons whose last names begin with those letters. For variation, use the monthly theme or other word along the left of the card.

## **Name That Song**

Thanks very much to Robin Tolbert, a Jr.Leader and Council Trainer with the Freedom Valley GSC, PA, who e-mailed me this game!

Give each person a plain white paper plate (more sturdy than paper) and have crayons available. Before passing them out, you should number the plates on the back. Ask each person to draw a song (no words, just pictures). Then the plates are passed along while each participant writes the name of the song on a sheet of paper with the corresponding number. At the end you go through them one by one. You'll get lots of laughs over wrong guesses and funny drawings!

## **Network**

Thanks very much to Robin Tolbert, a Jr. Leader and Council Trainer with the Freedom Valley GSC, PA, who e-mailed me this game!

If you have enough time (this can take awhile), this is an activity that could set everyone up to "network" over the summer:

Give each person a sheet of newsprint/flip-chart paper and a marker. Ask them to write, on the top half of the paper, three things they are good at (craft skill, people skill, hobby, ...). Then have them draw a line to split the page and write three things they would like to learn more about or need help with. Then everyone mills around reading others' lists and 1 – signs up (with name/phone #) to teach/help others items on the bottom half of their list or 2 - signs up (with name/phone #) asking to learn about items on the top half of their list.

Everyone takes their own paper home with the promise to try to reach out over the summer.

## **Quirks**

Thanks to my friend Christy, who taught this game to me! This is a particularly good icebreaker to use with a group of adults.

Everyone is asked to tell the group three of their personal quirks, either past or present. Two must be true and one is false. The rest of the group must decide which quirk is false. This was a hoot! We played three rounds: personal quirks and idiosyncrasies, pet peeves and dislikes, and the most bizarre situations you've ever been in.

For example:

I once pulled all the muscles in my knee because I was running around in swimming flippers. I once knitted a scarf on a pair of "legs" from a flamingo lawn ornament.  
I once was really late for school because I locked myself in a garage.

Which of these do you think is false?

## **Smarties**

I learned this game at a Facilitator's Training in South Wellington Division, which was run by Nina Stubbs and Janice Monahan.

This game is great for a small group of adults who have come together for a training or meeting. Ask each person to pour themselves a small handful of Smarties. Then from their handful, ask them to put aside a candy with each of their three most favourite colour. Once everyone has chosen their colours, put up a poster with the following questions on it:

Red: If you were a girl member, what is your favourite memory? If not, what got you involved in Guiding as an adult?

Yellow: What do you enjoy most about being a Guider?

Purple: Tell us a little about your family.

Green: Tell us a little about your hobbies and interests outside of Guiding.

Blue: Tell us a little about your work (past or present) or schooling.

Orange: Is there anything you've never done, but would like to try someday?

Brown: What do you enjoy most about the age group you're currently working with?

Pink: If you could go anywhere in the world for free, where would you go?

Then go around the group and have each person tell the group their answers for each of their three coloured Smarties.

Note: we used Smarties instead of M&M's because in their manufacture, M&M's have most probably come in contact with peanuts at some point.

## **The Great Shoe Dive**

This game works best with lots and lots of players, at least 30-40. Get everyone to take off their left shoe. Put all the shoes in a pile. At "Go!", everyone dives for the pile and grabs a shoe, any shoe. The object of the game is then for each player to find the person who has their shoe and reclaim it!

## **The Name Game**

Sit all the girls in a circle. One of the girls (or a leader) starts off the game by saying "Hi! My name is...". Then the girl next to her continues by saying "Hi! My name is... and sitting next to me is...". This continues on around the circle, until the last girl to introduce herself also has to introduce the entire circle! This is a great way to learn names, especially for leaders like myself who have a terrible time remembering more than three things at a time!

## **The Name Jive**

Sit everyone in a circle. Leaders have a special role to play in this game, so make sure they participate too! The goal of this game is to learn everyone's name by making up a silly rhyme. Following around the circle, each girl has a chance to make up a silly rhyme about herself. Once she's said her rhyme, everyone repeats it. Meanwhile the leaders must quickly think up a second line to their verse. Here is an example:

Girl 1: "Bouncy Becky plays ball."

Everyone: "Bouncy Becky plays ball."

Leader: (totally spontaneously) "She plays it in the spring and fall!"

Everyone: "She plays it in the spring and fall!"

Girl 2: "Kooky Carrie kicks the couch."

Everyone: "Kooky Carrie kicks the couch."

Leader: "She holds her toe and then says OUCH!"

Everyone: "She holds her toe and then says OUCH!"

Proceed around the circle in this fashion. Once everyone has had a chance to make up a rhyme for themselves, go around the circle again as fast as possible, trying to remember both parts of everyone's rhyme along the way. This is a GREAT game! In fact, this is the ONLY icebreaker game I've played where I've actually remembered a good portion of the girls' names afterwards!

## **Toe Bash**

...many thanks to Katherine Lariviere from Ottawa Area who sent me this game!

Everyone sits in a circle, with their legs out towards the center. One person is designated to start in the middle. The person in the middle is given a rolled-up newspaper or any other harmless "basher". A name is called to start the game, usually by the leader, or a designated person. The toe-basher must then hit the person who's name has been called, before this person calls a new name. This recently named person must then name another person, and so on, until the toe-basher succeeds in hitting someone's feet before they can call someone else's name. Then the two switch places. The person who was in the middle must call out a name before sitting down again, or they can be "bashed" by the new person in the middle. And the game continues. If the name of the person in the middle is called, the person who called it must take his place.

The game can last up to half an hour, depending on the group size and dynamics... but can be stopped at any time.

## **Toilet Paper Quiz**

Thanks very much to Kathi Sheridan for posting this great idea to the WAGGGS-L Mailing List!

Have someone standing with a roll of toilet paper at the entrance to your event/meeting. Ask everyone entering to take as many pieces as they will need. After opening your meeting, ask everyone to tell one item about themselves for each piece of toilet paper they took. Note: This could take a LONG time if people take a lot of paper, but it's funny!

## **SPUD!**

All you need for this game is a bean bag. Gather all the girls together in a standing circle, close enough that everyone touches elbows. Pick someone to stand in the centre of the circle with the bean bag. This girl then throws the bean bag up into the air and calls out someone's name. Everyone scatters as far and as fast as they can, except the girl whose name has been called: she grabs the bean bag. Once she has the bag, she yells "Freeze!" and everyone freezes in their tracks. The girl with the bean bag then picks someone to be her "target". She is allowed to take as many steps toward her target as there are letters in the target's name, spelling the target's name as she goes (don't worry too much about misspellings). Once she has taken as many steps as she is allowed, she throws the bean bag at her target. If she hits her intended target, that girl picks up a letter "S". This girl then becomes the next to stand in the centre of the circle and toss the bag up in the air. The game continues until someone has accumulated enough letters to spell the word "SPUD".

## **Suck and Blow**

You will need an ordinary playing card. Gather all the players into a circle. The goal of the game is to get the playing card all the way around the circle by sucking on it and then blowing it to the next person. No hands allowed! The first player puts the card against her mouth and sucks air in to "stick" the card in place. The next player presses her lips to the other side of the card: at this point, the first player blows air out and the second player sucks air in. If everything works right,

the card should now be stuck to the lips of the second player. It is quite a challenge to get the card all the way around the circle.

## **Switching Hats**

You will need a hat or headband for every player, paper, and markers. This game works best when adapted to a theme, and at an event with at least 20-30 people. I will describe how we played it at a Pathfinder Spring Break Camp, which is an annual Pathfinder event held in the Ottawa Area. The theme for this camp was "cartoons". On each hat or headband, attach a name tag with the name of one of the participants and the name of a cartoon character. Hand the hats out randomly to all the participants. The first thing that everyone has to do is find their own hat! Once a girl finds her own hat, the next thing she must do is find other cartoon characters (in this case) who belong to her group. For example, we had Mickey and Minnie Mouse, Ren and Stimpy, Pinky and the Brain, the whole Simpson family, etc. etc. Once all the members of a cartoon group have been found, the group should sit down together and introduce themselves!

## **Wedgie** (also known as Bomb Drop)

Thanks very much to Bonnie Curtis, who taught me this game when I visited her Pathfinder meeting!

You will need a largeish coin ("loonies" or "toonies" work well) and a paper target for each team. Divide your group into teams and have them line up at one end of your playing area. Place a paper bulls-eye target or other receptacle at the other end of the playing area. At "go", the first girl in each line takes the coin, wedges it between her bum cheeks, and shuffles as fast as she can to the target! When she arrives, she has to drop the coin onto the target, aiming for the center! You can have someone to keep score if you like. This game is a hoot!

## **What's Your Age/Shoe Size?**

This is a silent game. The object of the game is for the whole group to arrange themselves by age or by shoe size without talking! If you meet in a gym, you can make the game more difficult by making the group arrange themselves as above while staying on one of the painted lines on the floor. At camp, try using a campfire log instead!

## **Who Am I?**

You will need paper, markers, and safety pins. This is another game that works best with a theme. Again I will describe this using the "cartoon" theme. For each player, write down the name of a cartoon character on a piece of paper and pin it to the player's back. The goal of the game is for the girls to figure out what cartoon character they are by asking other girls questions. They can only ask each girl one question!

Questions? Comments? Confused by my instructions? Or do you have a great ice-breaker you'd like me to add? Please e-mail me at [nice\\_dragon@geocities.com](mailto:nice_dragon@geocities.com) and I'll be happy to write you back!