

Effective Youth Ministry Free Resource

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Regards,

Ken and Julie Moser

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Mixers and icebreakers

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These mixers and icebreakers are designed to help your group get to know each other. They are a great way to kick off your youth meeting time.

For more mixer ideas see "*Creative Christian Ideas*" for Youth Groups and "*Programs 2 Go*" by Ken Moser.

If you have a great mixer that you have created – send it to us and, if suitable, we will update this document to include it along with your name.

Musical handshake

Have everyone standing and begin playing music. As the music plays everyone continually shakes hands with each other. When the music stops your partner is the person you are shaking hands with (or if you are not shaking hands with someone, your partner is the person closest to you that also is not shaking hands with someone). You introduce yourselves and answer a sharing question provided on PowerPoint. Repeat 4-5 times.

You will need: mixing music, power point for questions

Grab a hand

Stand in a tight circle with everyone holding his/her right hand inward. Everyone moves in close and randomly grabs the hand of one other person. You must all hold tightly to that hand and untangle. The person whose hand you have is your sharing partner. Introduce yourselves and answer a sharing question provided on PowerPoint. Do this four times using these instructions:

- Everyone reach in *right* hand and grab hand of one other person.
- Everyone reach in *left* hand and grab hand of one other person.
- Everyone reach in *right* hand *with eyes closed* and grab hand of one other person.
- Everyone reach in *left* hand *with eyes closed* and grab hand of one other person.

You will need: power point for questions

Mixer: grab a hand (variation)

Stand in a tight circle with everyone facing inward. Everyone moves inwards and takes hands of two other people randomly. The group has to unravel without breaking hands. The groups that are formed when you unravel are your sharing partners. Introduce yourselves and answer a sharing question provided on PowerPoint. Repeat 2-3 times.

Music Mixer (Idea by Scott Tubman)

Place four signs in four corners of the room that read:

"I love this song"

"I hate this song"

"I think this song is okay"

"I don't know this song"

Play a part of a song and ask the group members to go to the corner that describes how they feel about the song. When everyone has chosen a location give a question to ask to the people in their corner. It is easier if you are able to put each question on PowerPoint for everyone to see. Try to choose a variety of songs and have at least 4-5 rounds.

NSEW (Never, Sometimes, Everyday, Whatever)

Here is a simple mixer that works well with all ages, especially junior high. Place four signs around the room. Each sign has a big letter for each point of the compass (N S E W). If you can, place them in the actual directions they refer to. Under the letter 'N' write the word 'Never'. Under the letter 'S' write 'Sometimes'. Under 'E' write 'Everyday'. Under 'W' write 'Whatever' (meaning "I don't really know or really care.") You read out a statement that can be answered by choosing one of the four categories and the youth simply walk to the appropriate corner. You then give them a 'get to know you' question that they answer with the person(s) next to them. Move on to the next statement followed by the next 'get to know you question'.

Please note:

- This should be run fairly quickly with a younger group. Don't give them a lot of time to answer the questions. (The older the group is, the longer you can give them.)
- This activity works really well if you can do it with PowerPoint. This means that you don't need to keep shouting out over the group so they can hear the statements & questions. Have 2x slides per round: the 1st slide is for the statement, the 2nd slide has the 'get to know you' question. See below. (If you don't have a video projector a microphone will come in handy.)

Suggested Statements and Questions for this mixer:

The 1st line is the statement that moves people to various corners. The 2nd is the question they answer with the person next to them. I suggest you use two slides, show the statement and then as the group begins to gather in the corners, show the get to know you question.

Statement: I love corn on the cob...

Sharing question: What was your favourite part of the week so far?

Statement: I go on Facebook...

Sharing Question: What was the best thing you've had to eat this week?

Statement: I listen to the radio...

Sharing question: One thing I love about youth group is...

Statement: I go to the beach... (Change this for your area.)

Sharing question: One thing I look forward to about next week is...

Statement: I clean my room...

Sharing question: One thing I've learned at youth group this year is...

Facebook mixer: Who's status is that?

Here is a great mixer that will work well in youth group of around twenty people or less.

Spend some time the day of youth group checking everybody's Facebook status. Write each one down on a sheet of paper (including the person's name).

In youth group, form pairs or trios and hand each pair/trio a piece of paper and a pen. Read aloud a Facebook status, and each pair/trio writes down whose status they think is. Work through the list until all have been read.

You finish by giving all the correct answers one by one. A fun way to reveal the name for each status is to read the status, have all the groups shout out their guesses and then ask the person that it belongs to stand up.

See which pair/trio were able to guess the most names correctly.

NOTE: If someone doesn't have Facebook, you could give them a status by:

- A) simply making up a status
- B) Ask them before youth group to tell you what they would say for a status
- C) Ascribe a famous quote for them (for example quotes from Shakespeare)

OPTIONAL: When you are finished you could pick out a few of the statuses and ask select youth to comment on their posting and tell the group about how they are.

Three facts (this is similar to the Facebook mixer)

Before the youth meeting go to each group member and ask them to share three facts about themselves. Ask for information that other group members may not know. Write the facts next to their name so you don't forget who they belong to.

In youth group, form pairs or trios and hand each pair/trio a piece of paper and a pen. Read aloud the three facts for someone, and each pair/trio writes down they think is describing. Work through the list until all have been read.

You finish by giving all the correct answers one by one. A fun way to reveal the name for each set of three facts is to read the facts, have all the groups shout out their guesses and then ask the person that it is describing to stand up.

See which pair/trio were able to guess the most names correctly.

Would you rather (in seats)

This mixer is more of a simple sharing exercise. It can be run with a very small group or a very large group with good results. Simply read out the statements one at a time and have the youth chat with the people next to them (pairs or trios). After they have discussed each statement you may like to have them share their answer by asking them to raise their hands for each option. NOTE: There may be a few too many statements listed here- you can cut any of these statements that are not appropriate. You may also like to put the questions on PowerPoint (a separate slide for each question).

Suggested Questions:

Would you rather...

Eat pizza every night for a month or steak every night for a month?

Be a good dancer or run fast?

Be able to memorize a Dictionary or speak 5 languages fluently?

Play the drums or tap dance?

Breathe under water or walk on top of it?

Have a mullet or a Mohawk?

Grow like a giant or shrink to an ant?

Have super strong arms or really fast legs?

Tell funny jokes or make people think?

Move to Asia or move to Europe?

Be able to fix things (mechanically) or be good at public speaking?

Sleep in late or get up early and start the day

Be in the summer heat of the Tropics or the winter snow of Canada?

Would you rather (moving around)

Have the whole group stand up and have the centre of the room cleared of chairs or obstructions. The leader reads a "would you rather" choice (see list below) and points to opposites sides of the room for each option (for example would you rather do dishes – point to left side of the room, or do the gardening – point to the right side of the room). People move to the left or right side of the room do demonstrate their answer. They then say hello to people in that group and ask them why they chose that option.

Suggested options:

Would you rather...

Do the dishes OR do the gardening

See an action movie OR a romantic comedy

Drive for 8 hours OR hike for 8 hours

Live in Norway OR Live in Fiji

Play video games OR play a sport

People swap

Ask everyone to form a pair with another person (they cannot be solo or triplets, they must be in a pair). Give them a sharing question and then a short time to share their answers with each other. When they are finished they need to match up with another pair and introduce their partner to the other pair by telling them their partners name and the answer their answer to the sharing question. They then swap partners with the people in the other pair and start again with a new sharing question. Repeat this 3 or 4 times. The goal is to avoid having the same partner again.

Some suggested sharing questions:

If you could drive anywhere for the day, where would you go?

If you could fly anywhere for a week where would you go?

What was the best thing in your week?

What are you looking forward to in the coming week?

Small to large group

-Ask everyone to pair up with one other person. Share with that person: *What do you like doing on your own?*

-Stay in your pair and find another pair (you should now be in a quad). Each person share with the quad: *What do you like to do with the help of others (eg ski, computer games)?*

-As a quad find another quad (you should now be in an octet). Each person share with the octet: *Are you a big group person or small group person?*

-As Octet merge with other octet (or have everyone merge together). Have everyone in the group share "yes" or "no" to the question: *I would love to spend a whole year on a desert island. (You can change the last question to any yes/no question you think would suit your group).*

Easy OR difficult

Have the whole group stand up and have the centre of the room cleared of chairs or obstructions. Designate one side of the room EASY and one side DIFFICULT (perhaps put a sign up on each side of the room to indicate which side is which. The leader reads an activity such as "ironing" (see list below) and people choose whether they find that activity EASY or DIFFICULT by moving to the side of the room designated EASY or DIFFICULT. They then share with the people around them why that activity is easy or difficult for them. (If you like, they can also choose the middle of the room to show that it is a neither easy or difficult).

Suggestion activities:

Ironing

Writing an essay

Skiing

Sewing

Skipping rope

Chopping wood

Crazy ball

You will need enough balls for people in the group in a variety of 4-5 different colours.

Have the group stand in a circle. Throw all the balls into the centre of the group. Everyone needs to run to the centre and grab one ball. Then form groups and pairs to answer the sharing questions below.

-Ask everyone with the same colour ball to get into a group.

When the group is formed each member answers the question: What is your favourite colour and why?

-Ask everyone to form groups that have all colours represented.

When the group is formed each member answers the question: What is your favourite sport and why?

-Ask everyone to get into pairs with someone with the same colour ball.

When they have formed pairs each person answers the question: if you could paint your bedroom any colour, what would it be?

-Ask everyone to form pairs with someone with a different coloured ball.

When they have formed pairs each person answers the question: If you were offered free tickets to any sporting event what would you go to and who would you want to go with?

Crazy ball (variation)

A more active version of this mixer: After every question, have the group come into a circle again and throw their ball into the middle. Then have each person grab a new ball. Form pairs with the same colour or, if the group is not too large, form groups with all balls of the same colour and answer the sharing question.