

Ice breakers

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Emoji Chat.

Prepare A5 cards of depicting different emojis.

Divide the group into subgroups of pairs, with an older and younger generation being represented.

Each pair chooses an emoji (which is facing downward). Each pair has to tell a true story which reflects the emotion on the card.

The stories should be in as much detail as possible. Remember the incident like a movie in your head and explain what you see one step at a time—what happened, what you thought, and what you felt before, during, and after.

To stimulate memories the following topics can be suggested:

Did you ever . . . ● see a lion? ● go swimming? ● go on a boat? ● take a cruise? ● go to a beach? ● visit an art gallery? ● stay on a farm? ● sleep in a cabin or tent? ● go to a county fair? ● go berry or vegetable picking? ● see a circus? ● act in a play? ● see a really scary movie? ● get a bad grade? ● win a prize? ● have a good luck charm? ● make something you were really proud of? ● move to a new house? ● travel overseas? ● live in a foreign country? ● stay in a fancy hotel? ● drive in a convertible? ● have a pet? ● bake bread? ● play an instrument?

After discussions, each pair can share with the group – time permitting.

An alternative is to encourage the pairs to make up a story from one of the above topics. The rest of the group has to decide whether it was a true story or not.

The “Getting to Know You” Cards

Make up cards with the following questions

About School: What subjects do/did you like the most? What were some of the school rules? Did you have homework? What was your school day like?

About Family: How many people are in your family? Where were you in the family (oldest, youngest)? Did you live in one place or move around? What did you like most about your family?

About Growing Up: What was life like when you were younger? Did you have any problems? How did you solve them? What is your favourite childhood memory?

Recreation: What did people do for fun when you were growing up? What did you do as a family? Did you have hobbies? Did you collect anything?

Clothes: What is your favourite colour? Have you ever worn a hat? What do/did people wear to school? to religious services? What is/was in fashion?

What is your favourite sweetie? Describe how it tastes. How do your teeth feel after eating a lot of it?

Travel: Where have you travelled? Where would you like to travel and why?

Pets: Do you have any pets? What are their names? What is your favourite kind of pet and why? Do you think people look like their pets?

Good Health: What is “good health”? What are three things people can do to improve their health?

Television: Do you watch TV? If so, what is your favourite show? How do you feel about TV?

Ocean: Do you have any special feelings when you think about looking out over the ocean? Which ocean do you think about when you think of the ocean? Have you ever been fishing? Did you catch anything? Have you ever swum in the ocean?

Music: What is your favourite kind of music? What is your favourite song? How do you feel listening to your favourite music?

Hiking: Have you ever gone hiking? If yes, where did you go and how did you feel about it? Where would you like to go hiking?

Summer: Which would you rather be—too hot or too cold? What do you like to do during the summer?

Dancing: Do you like to dance? What dances do you know? Which, if any, dances would you like to learn?

Holidays: What is your favourite holiday? What other special days do you celebrate?

“Getting To Know You” Cards

Create intergenerational pairings. Have participants introduce themselves: As they state their names, have them share something they are doing in school or in the community, or a favourite hobby that tells something about themselves.

Use the “Getting to Know You” cards to stimulate more information sharing. Have participants take turns picking up cards and asking questions of each other. If someone doesn’t want to answer a question, that’s fine—just go on to the next question or next card.

At the end of the session, ask each participant to say a few words about similarities and differences between their own lives and those of their other-aged friends.

Two Truths and a Lie

“Two Truths and a Lie” provides an intergenerational group of participants with a fun, non-pressured way to introduce themselves and meet others.

Create intergenerational pairings. Have each person state his or her name.

Inform participants that they are to come up with three statements about themselves; two are to be truths and one is to be a falsehood.

Each person gets a turn saying their three statements followed by a period in which their partner has to guess which of the three statements is a falsehood.

As facilitator for the activity, model the process, present very different types of information (e.g., I had a dog named Spot when I was a kid, I broke my leg in six places when I was in high school, I met the President of the United States last year.) Invite the group to guess which statement is the falsehood.

Time permitting, reconvene in a large group and invite participants to share with the large group.

This activity also presents an opportunity to have a conversation about the ethics of lying. To launch such a discussion, ask: “When is it okay (if ever) to not tell the truth?” In case the activity turns into a lively discussion of strongly held points of view, ensure that the atmosphere remains open and that all participants feel comfortable about voicing their views. The discussion should be one of values clarification rather than moral instruction.

Some of the truths may be surprising to members of both generations and therefore help to dispel generational stereotypes.