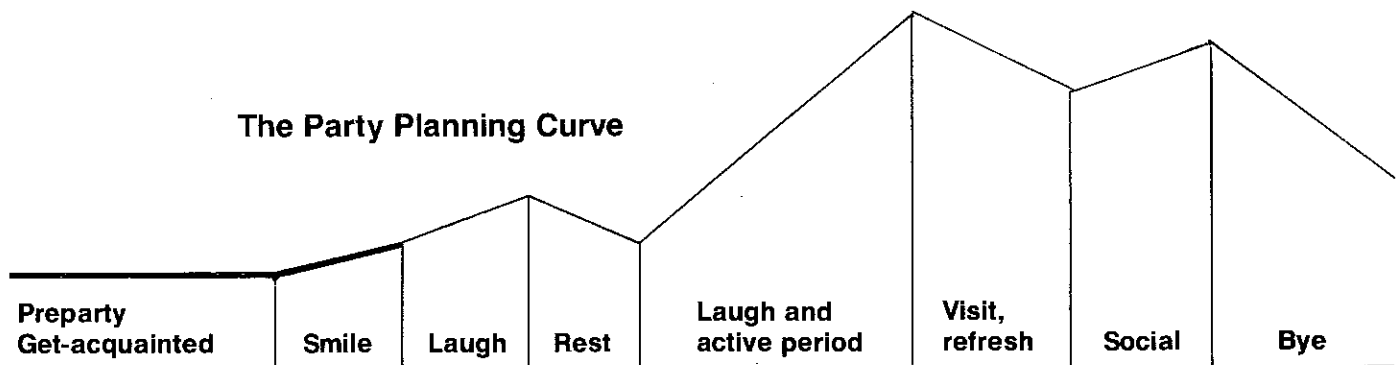




EXTENSION RECREATION PROGRAMS

Preparty and Get-Acquainted Activities

The Party Planning Curve



Have you ever attended a party where you weren't involved soon in some activity or it took most of the evening before you had a chance to become acquainted with the group? If so, you were probably thinking to yourself, "What a dead party, why doesn't someone start something?" or "Why should I stick around here?"

The first 5 to 10 minutes after a participant arrives at the party can mean the difference between success and failure for this person. If people become actively involved within a very short period and are given the opportunity to meet others, their chances of enjoyment are greatly increased. Thus you want your party ready to start as soon as your first guest arrives, and the opportunities to mix around with others should be numerous.

The following activities will help your group to become better acquainted. Your first activities have a tendency to set the tempo for the evening, so keep them moving and show lots of enthusiasm. In relation to the party planning curve, these games are preparty and lead-off games for the smile period.

Lover's Knot

Audience: Any age

Equipment: String

Time: 15 min.

Formation: Couples

Rules: Provide a 40-inch piece of string for each player. Have a few assistants to help tie the couples together as they arrive. Handcuff the girl by tying an end of her string to each wrist. Then tie one end of her partner's string to his right wrist, loop the other end around her string, and tie it to his left wrist. The couple is linked together. In this game, the partners must get apart without breaking or untying the strings. The trick is simple—slip the loop of string between the wrist and the partner's string, from the bottom (elbow side rather than finger side) and slide it over the hand. This leaves the strings tied as before, but the partners are separated.

Cooperative Extension Service

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Autograph Hunt

Audience: Any age

Equipment: 3x5 cards, pencils

Time: 10-15 min.

Formation: Mass

Rules: Give each person a 3x5 card and a pencil as he/she comes into the party area. Tell him/her to print his/her name along one side of the card. Use both first and last names. Then find other people with first names starting with each letter in the name. (If too many have trouble finding enough first names, then use first and last names, then perhaps middle names.)

P.S. At completion of this, the cards can then be used for "Four-Letter Word Forming" activity.

Four-Letter Word Forming

Audience: Any age

Equipment: 3x5 cards, pins

Time: 5-10 min.

Formation: Mass

Rules: This game is one of the best mixers. Use cards and print at least one letter of the alphabet on each. Omit the letters J, Q, X, and Z, and add at least one extra set of vowels. Pin one card on each player. Appoint several judges, one to every 15 players, to stand in conspicuous spots with pencils.

When the starting signal is given, players arrange themselves in groups of three to form short words. Form four-letter words if there are many participants. A group of players in correct order approaches one of the judges, who writes the word on each card. The players then separate to form new combinations. The player with the most words on his/her card is the winner.

Squirm

Audience: Any age

Equipment: Rubber bands

Time: 3-5 min.

Formation: Circle

Rules: Place rubber band over head, below the hairline in the back and on the tip of the nose in the front. The object is to move the rubber band from the nose down over the mouth and chin and around the neck by means of the face muscles **only**. . .this is a good warmer-upper.

Zip and Zap (Good for learning names)

Audience: Any age

Time: 10 min.

Formation: Circle

Rules: Players stand or sit in circle with one or more IT. When IT points at a player and says "Zip," the player must say the first name of the player to the right before IT counts to 10. If not the player becomes IT. For "Zap," it is the name of the player on the left. Variation—add "Zup," and he/she has to give his/her own name. This is harder than you think.

Odd or Even

Audience: Any age

Equipment: Beans, corn, or some other small objects

Time: 8-10 min.

Formation: Mass

Rules: Each player is given some beans or corn to hold in one closed palm. The player places one or more beans in the other hand, approaches another player, and asks, "Odd or even?" If the second player guesses incorrectly, the first player wins the same number of beans he/she holds. If the second player guesses correctly, he/she wins the number that the first player holds. This game can be combined with "Yes and no." Each time a player answers a question with **yes** or **no**, that player must give up a bean. Be sure that each person is greeted at the door, given beans, and knows how to play the game. A few enthusiastic committee members will keep the game going. Other words that may be used are **I** or **me**.

Bingo

Audience: Any age

Equipment: Bingo cards, pencils

Time: 15 min.

Formation: Mass

Rules: Hand out cards to people as they come in the door. Have players fill the boxes on their cards with the names of different persons at the party. When a person's card is filled, have him/her sit in a designated area. (Remember that the leaders should participate also.) After everyone has been seated, the leader gets up and calls out one name on his/her card. The person whose name was called then gets up and calls out a name on his/her card. The procedure continues until a "Bingo" occurs. A "Bingo" occurs when all the names on one line vertically, horizontally, or diagonally have been called. You can call several times until you think it's an appropriate stopping place.

Know Your Size

Audience: Any age

Equipment: String

Time: 3-5 min.

Formation: Mass

Rules: Have several pieces of string at least a yard long. Each person lays a string on the floor and makes it into a circle that looks the right size, then tries it on! This provides entertainment both for those who have already tried and for the newcomers.

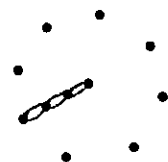
Choo Choo

Audience: Any age

Time: 5-8 min.

Formation: Circle

Rules: The leader steps inside the circle and stands in front



of another player. He/she asks the name of the person, then takes that person's right hand, and the two do a jump step (first right foot forward, then left) as the name is repeated five times (two longs and three shorts: "Helen, Helen, Helen-Helen-Helen"). The leader moves off with the newly introduced person following with hands on the leader's shoulders. After the third person is added, the line reverses each time, making the person at the end of the line the new leader.

Game continues until all persons are part of the train. In larger groups, have several trains going at the same time. This is fun indoors or out with any age group.

Crazy Handshakes

Audience: Any age

Time: 5-8 min.

Formation: Single file line

Rules: Players start walking around the room when music begins. When it stops, everyone tries to get back to back with someone. When the leader calls out the handshake they are to use, the players turn, introduce themselves, and shake hands. When the music starts, players walk until the music stops again. Some handshakes that are fun are these: Chinese handshake—shake one's own hand and bow three times

Dead fish—weak clasp, barely shaking

Paul Bunyan—grasp one's own right thumb in left fist, hold other person's right hand with own right (what remains) and "saw"

Wisconsin handshake—one person interlaces fingers, leaving thumbs free; the other person vigorously "milks" the thumbs

Pumphandle handshake—vigorous up and down motion

Henry Ford—vigorous cranking motion while shaking

Victory handshake—clasp one's own hands above head and shout "hooray"

Hydramatic—no clutch (take hold of hands but do not clutch)

Odd Person

Audience: Any age

Equipment: Paper and pencil

Time: 5-8 min.

Formation: Mass

Rules: Pre-assign some people to come to the party wearing something odd—e.g., different earrings, socks that do not match, shoestrings that do not match, etc. Then give this list to each person as he/she comes and tell him/her to find the people that are wearing the odd combinations. Warn them not to show others the names on their list or they may not have a chance at being the first to find all the odd people. Variation: List a number of items e.g., girl born in April, boy 6 feet tall, girl with size 6 shoe, boy with red hair, and others. Have each person find someone that fits the description and sign his/her name beside the appropriate item.

Cops and Robbers

Audience: Any age

Time: 5-8 min.

Formation: Two circles

Rules: Form two circles, boys outside, girls inside, or vice versa if boys are fewer in number than the girls. Be sure everyone has at least one partner. (In some cases where numbers are uneven, one boy may have two girls or vice versa.) Have them introduce themselves to each other. At a given signal they all march to their right. At another signal they stop and face new partners. This time they introduce themselves and then the boys ask the girls for some item they have with them (shoe, hairpin, ring, etc.). Have them change partners at least four times and change off every other time as to who gives the other an object they have with them. Then as the leader calls out, "Here come the cops," everyone must return the items to the rightful owners. Set a time limit and do not let the game drag out.

Who Am I?

Audience: Any age

Equipment: Sheets of paper with names on

Time: 5-8 min.

Formation: Mass

Rules: As the guests arrive, pin the name of a famous person on the back of each. Players move about the group trying to identify their names by asking questions. When correctly identified the person pins the name on his/her lapel and may be called by that name the remainder of the evening. Only "yes" and "no" may be used in answering questions. Variations: Use names of nursery-rhyme characters, comic-book characters, etc.

Plenty of Fish in the Sea

Audience: Any age

Equipment: Paper and pencil

Time: 3-5 min.

Formation: Mass

Rules: As people arrive, give everyone a card on which to write his/her name, hometown, and hobby. Collect the cards and, when all are present, let each one draw a card. On signal, each is to find the person whose card he/she has drawn and talk over what is written. When the meeting reconvenes, call for a show of hands to find how many met their match. Collect and do again.

Put Yourself Through a Card

Audience: Any age

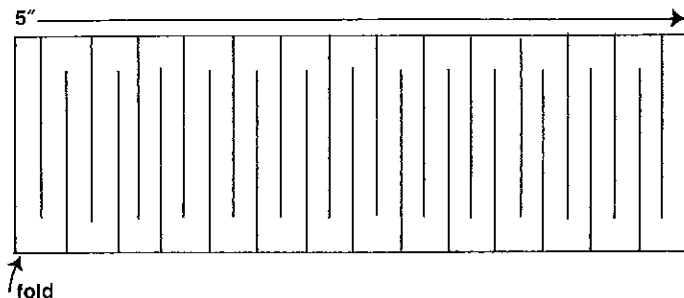
Equipment: 3x5 card, scissors (optional)

Time: 3-5 min.

Formation: Mass

Rules: Give early arrivals at the party 3x5 cards and challenge them to cut or tear the cards in such a way that they can put themselves completely through the cards.

Solution: Fold the card lengthwise and cut or tear in parallel lines $\frac{1}{4}$ inch apart, first from one edge, then from the other. When finished, cut through the folded edge, leaving the first loop on either end intact. You then have an "elastic" band that stretches over a very large person.



Mystery Guest

Audience: Any age

Time: 3-5 min.

Formation: Mass

Rules: As people arrive, explain that there is a mystery guest in the room. Tell them to introduce themselves to everyone asking, "Are you the Mystery Guest?" (He/she is to answer in the affirmative.) At the end of the period, the mystery guest announces the first person to learn his/her identity and awards him/her a prize (which could be applause from everyone else).

Sack Shake

Audience: Any age

Time: 5-7 min.

Equipment: Paper sacks and pencils

Formation: Mass

Rules: Tie a paper sack on each guest's writing hand. Guests move about shaking hands, trying to keep the paper bag in good condition. Then have the person shaking your hand sign your bag with his/her opposite hand. Each person counts the number of people whose hands he/she shook. Give a prize to the person who shook hands with the most people and to the one who has the least battered paper bag.