

NAME GAME WITH SIGNS: WHAT'S MY SIGN?

A GROUP EXERCISE TO LEARN NAMES

NOTES

Name Game with Signs is a good beginning name exercise. The adjectives participants select often stay with them throughout the rest of the class, and even beyond. We have a "Bad Brad" who will always be "Bad Brad" to us. Because each participant adds an adjective and an action to his or her name, it takes longer than Plain Name Game, and is not suitable for groups of more than 12 or 15. However, it works very well to break larger groups up and have them learn the names of some of their group members through this exercise.

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

4-12 people per small group, unlimited number of small groups

The fewer people in a small group, the shorter a period of time is necessary. A group of 4 will take perhaps 5 minutes; a group of 12 may take 20 minutes.

MATERIALS

None

SET UP

Break the large group into groups of no more than 12. We usually divide the large group by 10 or 12 to get the number of small groups.

INSTRUCTIONS

Participants must remove their name tags. Each small group forms a circle, an arm's length apart. We sometimes have them alphabetize themselves by first name, but it is not necessary in the small group. Each participant thinks of an adjective that he or she can also act out to assign before his or her name.

Here are some examples:

Angelic Ann (makes a halo above head with hands)

Bouncing Beth (bounces lightly on balls of feet)

Crazy Christy (twirls index finger at temple)

Dancing Dave (dances)

Jazzy Jack (mimes play the saxophone)

Leaping Larry (leaps in place)

Sassy Sue (claps hand on hip and winks)

The adjective and action do not have to describe the person truthfully; an athlete might be Clumsy Claire. It is more important that the adjective have an easily portrayed accompanying action. The adjectives do not have to be alliterative but they should be memorable. George, for example, might be Curious George, and mime being a monkey.

The first participant says his or her adjective and first name and performs the action: *Angelic Ann*. The second participant first repeats the adjective, name and action of the first person, and then says and does his or her set; *Angelic Ann, Bouncing Beth*. The third person repeats the first person's set, then the second person's set, and finally his or her set: *Angelic Ann, Bouncing Beth, Crazy Christy*.

Each participant continues in turn, repeating all the preceding sets, performing the actions as well, and ending with his or her set.

When all participants have had a turn, the facilitator may end the exercise by:

- Having the whole group do all the sets together, keeping the same order
- Asking a group member to run through all the sets in reverse order
- Having the group mix up the order and then having a couple of folks try to run the sets in the new order
- Having the group straighten itself into a line, keeping the original order, and performing all the sets simultaneously, as a kind of chorus line. It's fun to have each small group perform its set for the rest of the groups.