

Finding Favorites - Ice Breaker/Team Builder

Summary:

This is an easy, fun ice-breaker that requires no materials. It allows the students to share something about themselves comfortably without becoming too personal. It's a good ice-breaker because it takes so little time and the students will quickly feel comfortable with their peers. This team builder takes 10 – 20 minutes, depending on the number of groups that you have.

Instructions:

1. First tell the students that you are going to do an ice-breaker, and that although it may feel goofy, that these are really effective at helping people to find others with similar interests and helping the group to connect. Being light-hearted in your presentation can help.
2. Divide the students into groups of four or five people. Tell the groups that their assignment is to **identify and share** their favorite item in a category that you provide, such as their favorite place, song, movie, or meal (you choose which).
3. Now ask the students to **share why** the selected item is their personal favorite with their small group.
4. Round 2: Next choose another category, perhaps focusing more closely on the geosciences. For example, you could ask them to identify their favorite class this year, their favorite part of the hydrosphere (atmosphere/ocean/lakes/rivers/glaciers), or their favorite topic in the field that the REU centers on.
5. Bring everyone together into one group. Now ask each individual to share their favorite, but **not the “why”** with the larger group. This moves quickly. It also generates laughter as participants get to hear what every other attendee selected.

Use your imagination and be creative. After you try this one or two times, you'll see which categories work well, and how much time to give them.