

The Sort and Mingle Game

Summary:

An icebreaker that gets the group to move towards various parts of the room and to find others with shared interests and preferences, based on different categories. This is a terrific activity to use at the beginning of an event or program to help people to feel more comfortable with each other.

Instructions:

The first part of the game is the “Sorting” game. You throw out two contrasting choices and the group has to move either East or West of the room. For example, “Are you from this geographic region or that geographic region? (depending on where people in the crowd hail from). Give them a few minutes to move around and chat with each other about where they are from.

Next, ask them to sort in terms of a general area of science interest. “Find others who are interested in meteorology, climate science, or [fill in the blank].” Use rough categories of science that you think cover their interests. Give them a few minutes to find others with similar interests and to chat.

Finally, pick some fun or silly category, and let them self-organize accordingly. One example is to find others who share your favorite kind of food. After a few minutes, go around to each group and ask them which type of food their group favors. Examples from a recent activity like this included Indian food, pasta, vegetarian food, Asian food, and bacon.

By the end of the activity, you’ll find that people are much more comfortable, they have connected with a few people, and your program will be off to a good start.