



Speed Networking Lesson Plan

Goal:

Learn how to make a basic introduction (smile, look someone in the eyes, shake hands), and tell a new acquaintance a few things about yourself. Learn how to be a good listener and ask questions about someone else.

How it works:

Seats should be set up in pairs, facing each other. Putting them in a circle will help guide the flow of the activity. Chairs could also be set up across a table, and the tables could be numbered. It's good to have some chairs represented by students, and some by adults. There should be pairings of chairs equal to HALF the amount of the group. (IE: 24 students, have 12 pairs of chair groupings)

Students will be given the explanation of the activity and explained the timing. Once the activity starts, students find a starting point and after the sound of the bell, networking would begin. After 3 minutes, students would shift to the next chair/pair location.

This process would continue for how ever many minutes needed. Then, the entire group would reconvene, with 5-7 minutes left in the session's time, to discuss what was learned.

Supplies:

Pairs of chairs (or chairs and tables) – equal to the # of participants

Buzzer/bell

"Ask Me" name tags

Variation:

If all of the participants have something in common (i.e.: they are all a part of the same high school class), you can modify this process by creating "ask me" name tags. Students would pick and wear an "ask me" name tag. This name tag then becomes the conversation starter for the pair of students.

"Ask Me" suggestions:

about my favorite web site
about a big win
what I learned this year
what's my favorite city
how I handle stress
who's my role model
my toughest challenge now

about my favorite store
what I'm most proud of
my favorite band/song
my favorite book
my favorite vacation place
for the best places to bike
I solved a tough problem

about my pet
about my hobby
my favorite saying
my personal motto

Script for Leader:

Welcome to Speed Networking! The purpose of this exercise is to practice “the art of starting and maintaining a conversation.” As you will learn, when you first meet someone, you should shake his or her hand (using your right hand) and introduce yourself. Be sure to look the person right in the eye – and Smile! **This should be fun!**

During this activity, you’ll have an opportunity to tell a handful of people in this room about yourself, through a quick, one-on-one conversation.

Half of you will stay in your position and the other half will move around to the stations, but everyone will need to participate in each one-on-one conversation.

Remember, networking is an activity to create and foster relationships for mutual benefit – so let’s try to make conversations related to things we all share in common: school. Here are some starter or opening questions:

- What are your favorite subjects in school? Why?
- What other school-related activities are you involved in?
- Who has been your most favorite teacher so far?
- What are some of your career interests?

Be sure to listen to what others have to say and ask questions – preferably not questions that can be answered with a “yes” or “no” answer.

OK, Let’s begin. Everyone who has a birthday in Sept – Dec – find a chair. *(expand months, if needed to fill spots. Make sure adults participating are scattered within the circle or path of the paired chairs).*

When I say go, everyone will need to find a starting point – this will be the person you have your first networking conversation with. You will both stand, shake hands and introduce yourselves, then sit and start a conversation using some of our starter questions. After 3 minutes, I’ll ring a bell and everyone will shift to the RIGHT and start a new introduction/conversation.

(at end of session – with 5-7 minutes left)

Let’s huddle up before our time together ends.

- What were some good questions other asked?
- When did you feel the most comfortable?
- Did anyone get a fun or unusual question? (Showing that you are curious is a GOOD thing!)

You’ll find, after you ask and answer questions over and over, your answers will become easier. It’s also hard for some people to talk about themselves – but this, too, gets easier with practice. Practice maintaining a conversation with adults in your life – parents or other family members, teachers, coaches, etc. -- and meeting people, and making a strong first impression at interviews — will become easier.