

## Ideas for Icebreakers

Icebreakers are short activities that help “break the ice” at the beginning of class. The purpose of icebreakers is to enable participants and instructors to meet and get to know each other, so they feel more comfortable sharing during the session. Icebreakers can also be used to “anchor” the participants to the class by prompting them to think about how the topic relates to them. For example, an icebreaker for a fruits and vegetables cooking class could ask clients to share their personal favorite fruit and vegetable dishes. Icebreakers can either be questions or small activities. When a question is used as an icebreaker, it should be an easy open-ended question that does not have a right or wrong answer and cannot be answered with a simple “yes” or “no.”

### **Components of an Icebreaker:**

Icebreakers usually include three parts: an *introduction*, a *main question* and *regrouping or debriefing*.

- In the *introduction*, participants introduce themselves, their children or other companions. Have them to share their children’s ages. (Pregnant women might share a delivery date and baby’s sex). Instructors should first introduce themselves. This shows the group how to introduce themselves and one way to answer the question.
- Following the introduction participants share the answers to the *main icebreaker question*.
- Then there is usually a *regroup or debriefing* which tells participants what is coming next and highlights the relevance to the learning activity.

### **Sample of Icebreaker Questions:**

Set a positive tone that supports sharing the answers to the icebreaker questions below.

**General Icebreakers:** Have participants introduce themselves and...

- Share a favorite vegetable or herb to use in cooking
- Share a fast, healthy food that they prepare
- Share a favorite healthy food (*Note: Do not comment on whether or not it is healthy at this time, but note it. This will help open up participation.*)
- Share a favorite food that they frequently purchase
- Share a favorite healthy snack or food that they prepare
- Share a favorite form of exercise and what makes it fun
- Share one thing they do to take care of themselves

**Icebreakers for Children’s Classes:** Ask participants to introduce themselves, their children’s first names and ages and to...

- Share children’s favorite fruits or vegetables
- Share a favorite childhood food

- Share a vegetable or fruit that has been offered to children this week, and the children's response
- Share a favorite childhood snack
- Share techniques to get children to like brushing teeth
- Share a favorite green food and another green food that children like to eat (Can substitute any color)
- Share an enjoyable outdoor activity

**Icebreakers for Infant Classes:** Have participants introduce themselves, their babies, the baby's age and...

- Share if baby has a favorite thing such as a blanket, doll or pacifier
- Share something new the baby has been doing
- Share methods of finding time to eat and sleep with a new baby

**Icebreakers for Prenatal Classes:** Have participants introduce themselves and say the baby's due date, whether they know if it is a boy or a girl and...

- Share something about their pregnancy
- Share how eating habits have changed since pregnancy or how they are the same
- Share what they have heard about breastfeeding

(*Note:* Do not comment on the negative items at this time but note them. This assists in overcoming discussion barriers.)

**Icebreakers for Breastfeeding Classes:** Have participants introduce themselves, their babies, the baby's age and...

- Share favorite things about breastfeeding
- Share something the new baby has been doing

**Icebreakers for Postpartum Classes:** Have participants introduce themselves, their children, the baby's age and...

- Share self-care techniques
- Share how they meet their children's needs
- Share an enjoyable activity mothers do just for themselves

Source: Adapted from LA 54: "Icebreakers for Facilitated Discussion Groups."