

Inclusion Activities

Jeanne Gibbs, author of the *Tribes Learning Community* process—a classroom management/cooperative learning program that has been running strong since the mid-seventies, and continues to be recognized as one of the top 22 selected programs for improving school communities. <http://tribes.com/> recommends ample use of activities to make every student feel like they are a part of a group during the first weeks of any new school program. In my experience, these inclusion activities are well worth the time they take in terms of improving the climate and collaborative nature of any classroom experience. Here are a few of our favorites:

The Name Game:

Have students stand in a circle. Start with the first person who says “I’m _____,” the next person says, “You’re _____, and I’m _____.” Go around the whole circle adding another name each time until the last person attempts to name each person before naming him or herself. It’s particularly fun for the kids if the teacher goes last, since that’s the hardest part. You can scaffold this process with nametags. You can extend it with alliteration so that each person adds an adjective to their name for example, “I’m terrific Tony.”

Partner Introduction:

1. State that we are a unique group about to start an exciting journey over summer school together, and like any people coming together, we need to learn about each other.
2. Have students form pairs and decide who is going to interview first.
3. Interviewee has one minute to tell the partner everything they want to tell them about themselves—age, favorites, etc. After one minute the interviewer has one minute to ask about all the things they still may not know about their partner. They may say that “I don’t know your name, I don’t know how many people are in your family, I don’t know what your favorite ___is....etc.” The interviewee simply listens to the questions, then after one minute has 1-2 minutes to share whatever answers they want to respond to.
4. For younger students you may want to list ideas and use a language frame; for older ones, please make sure to remind them about asking appropriate questions.
5. Have partners switch roles and finish the next cycle.
6. Provide closure by having each person share one thing they learned about their partner, “This is _____, and I learned that she/he _____.”

Snowball:

Have students fold a piece of scratch paper from the recycle bin in 4. Prompt them to write answers to your questions in each of the four corners about themselves. This is a great way for the teacher to get to know a class quickly. For example you may say, “Write in the upper right corner how old you are today,” or “Write in the upper left corner how many years you have been in school in Plymouth,” or “What did you have for breakfast?” or “What time did you go to bed?” “What’s your favorite subject in school?” etc.

Next have students stand in a circle and crumple up their papers into a snowball. When you say “toss,” they throw them all in the center. When you say “pick up,” they pick up a new snowball and open it. Then you can ask students to read aloud the answer to the questions and have students who had the same answer raise their hands.

Warning—this is very energizing ...a good way to get the wiggles out, but also will need some settle down time afterwards.

People Hunt:

Provide a grid such as the one on the next page with questions to ask of each other. Give students 10-15 minutes to find students for each category as possible.

Once students have completed their people hunts, ask reflection questions such as:

- What did you learn that surprised you?
- What did you learn about someone that was the same with you?
- Raise your hand if you play soccer, baseball, etc.
- Show me with your fingers how many languages you speak
- Who has a birthday this summer?
- Can anyone cross their eyes?
- Who has a new baby at home?
- Etc. etc.



People Hunt

Let's get to know each other!

Find someone who:

Lives closest to this school

Name		Where they live	
------	--	-----------------	--

Lives furthest from this school

Name		Where they live.	
------	--	------------------	--

Is a member of a sports team

Name		What team?	
------	--	------------	--

Has more than 3 siblings:

Name		How many brothers?		How many sisters?	
------	--	--------------------	--	-------------------	--

Speaks two or more languages:

Name		What languages?	
------	--	-----------------	--

Has a birthday within a month of yours

Name		Birthday	
------	--	----------	--

Can cross his or her eyes

Name		
------	--	--

Was born in a different country

Name		Where born?	
------	--	-------------	--

Has a new baby in their home

Name		Baby's name		How old?	
------	--	-------------	--	----------	--