

HANDSHAKES

Objective – Participants will meet one another, learn names and unique facts about others in the group.

Materials – none

Number of Participants – 8 - 100

Framework: Start by getting the entire group in a circle. Ask the participants to look around the circle and identify at least one person they do not know very well. Each participant should find a partner (one of the other participants they do not know very well) and stand next to that person. The middle of the circle can be used for lost souls that do not have a partner, if there is an odd number have the facilitator(s) step out of the activity. Demonstrate the first handshake, have the participants shake hands using this handshake, introducing themselves, where they are from/what grade they are in, and one fun fact. Have the participants find another partner. Demonstrate the second handshake, again sharing names, grade levels, and a fun fact. Continue this for as many handshakes as you want. Challenge the group to find their partners for particular handshakes as you call them out.

Rules: Everyone must have a partner. If there is an odd number, have an adult or facilitator step out, or have a group of three participants work together. Encourage the participants to partner with someone they do not know very well. It is important for the participants to be able to see each new handshake that is being demonstrated by the lead facilitator; instruct them to move to where they can see the demonstration. It may be helpful to have a countdown to find a new partner (example: “Quickly find a new partner in 10...9...8...”)

Lumberjack Handshake – Person 1 sticks their thumb up, their partner (Person 2) grips the thumb in their palm and sticks their thumb up. Then Person 1 grips Person 2’s thumb and sticks their other thumb up. Person 2 grips the thumb. This creates a “thumb stack”. The partners move their hands back and forth simulating a saw cutting down a tree.

Fisherman’s Handshake – Both participants make a motion as if they are casting a fishing rod. They extend their right hands to one another, sliding past the palm and wrist of one another and clap their hand against the forearm of their partner. This results in a flapping sound, like a fish out of water.

Cow Handshake – Person 1 interlaces his/her own fingers with thumbs up and flips their hands over so the thumbs are pointed down. Person 2 mocks milking a cow by gripping Person 1’s thumbs.

Mistake Handshake – Share this fact: The average person makes 7 mistakes a day. Partners begin to give each other a high five, but miss hands and reach beyond hands

towards their partner's shoulder. Each person reaches over their partner's shoulder and pats them on the back.

Coffee Pump Pot – Both participants go in for a normal handshake, miss hands and reach for their partner's right foot, which is lifted in the air behind them. They grab hold of the foot and pump the leg lightly up and down.

Crab Handshake – Participants stand facing opposite each other, but just to their partner's left. Each person steps forward with their left foot and reaches with their right hand under their leg and shakes hands with their partner.

Debriefing Questions:

Variations:

- Have participants share a new fun fact with each handshake. Pre-determine which handshakes will be paired with which fact. Example: Lumberjack – if you could travel anywhere, where would you go?, Fisherman – favorite food, Cow – favorite kind of ice cream, Crab – fun fact that most people don't know about you. This encourages the participants to share more about themselves and open up a little bit more. With this option, it is helpful to write down the combinations of handshakes and facts.
- After you have run through the handshakes again, with the participants finding their partners for each of the handshakes have them form a circle standing next to their partner for the final handshake. Ask the participants to review their partner's name, grade/school, and fun fact. Then one pair at a time, have the participants introduce their partner to the group. This is a great way to begin the process of talking in front of a group of people for some participants. Remind the participants to speak loudly and clearly when addressing the entire group so they all begin to learn each other's names.
- Change from handshakes to High Fives.
- Encourage the participants to come up with handshakes to share with the group.