The Question:

It's been a little heavy on the list lately, so I'm going to break it up a bit. I have a group I need to split into 10 teams of 4 people. Anyone care to share their favorite methods to divide groups into teams, smaller groups, etc?? A good icebreaker that achieves this? Your super secret algorithmic progression for division?

Cheers,

James Bennett

http://www.facilitutor.com

1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4

If you want to get exotic.
1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8, 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8 and then you go 1’s and 5’s here, 2’s and 6’s here, etc.

James Moss

I would give them each number 1 to 40

Then put individual #1 to 40 in a bag and pull from the bag to group them as the numbers are pulled.

Nafiseh Sedaghat

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Get out a deck of playing cards. Use ten sets of four of the face cards or numbers. Have them choose a card and then get in groups of all 2’s, 3’s 4’s.

You might choose to leave out the Kings, Queens, jacks and Aces for some reasons that might be obvious.

Tom Leahy
Give everybody gumballs of a different color (the right number for your groups). Have them eat them as they are arriving, then divide them by the color of their tongues.

Jordan Rimmer

James,

One of my favorites for random division is to do several rounds of Incorporations...that is forming and reforming groups quickly based on a distinction: e.g. Find everybody born in the same month as you, find all who used the same toothpaste this morning, find 2 other people that drive the same type car as you a form a group of 3, (....insert more if here if desired... ) Finally get into a group of 4 that have the same color clothing as you...or something equally easy/appropriate...and now you've had a quick mixer and you also have your 10 groups of 4.

Have fun!

Anthony Curtis

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I don't use this all that often, but I like playing the game "Clumps."

You start out calling random numbers that the group must clump into.

2, 15, 8, 6, etc. (Usually there are a few people left out, and a variation is to award "bonus points" to the team that invites strays into their group--of course, the team dissolves as the next number is called.). When the game starts, people tend to gravitate to those they know well, but after 4 or 5 rounds, everyone is clumping randomly.
Then you call out "4," and you have your groups. I make a point of

never telling the group that the game is being played to sort into

smaller groups.

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I use animals to divide into groups. Circle up, arms length apart, eyes closed. Go around and whisper the name of an animal in each person’s ear.

Then announce, “Keeping your eyes closed, make the sound of your animal, and find all others of like kind!”

It is way fun, mass chaos that eventually sorts out.

I then go to the “lost sheep” and tap on the shoulder; they make their sound, their accumulating group calls to them, etc.
For four groups, I would use COWS, PIGS, DUCK, TURKEYS.

For several groups of four, add sufficient animals with distinctive sounds and go for the fun.

You will need ten animals.

If you run out of farm animals, go to the woods for more!

Try some birds.

Cam Mosher

**Note:** This is similar to an activity known as Hog Call, which uses word pairs or animal sounds for blindfolded participants to find each other. (Silver Bullets, Pg. 98)

Howdy

here are some off the top of my head...

If dividing into teams I may ask a question and how you answer splits you into teams. The questions:

"Do you crumple or fold?" The best part about this is that most people I have done this with are slightly shocked that I asked this while moving to their group but then look at someone on the other team and say something like "YOU FOLD, I cant believe you fold!"

(oh and the teams split pretty evenly.)
Cross your arms, Which arm is crossed OVER the other? Works for interdigitated hands as well and you ask Which thumb is over the other?

(I find the arm question leads to an even split more than the thumb.)

Larger groups I may play a game like:

Captain My Captain and shout out the even number split to "Get in a Life boat“ So 40 people = 10 in a life boat for 4 groups. (Yay Math!)

Categories and shout out "favorite fruit" and either the group naturally picks four fruit or I start combining fruits to make fruit shakes that has the number split I'm looking for.

That was fun. Have a good day
Robert Brack (and I fold.)

We have called it the baseball break up but use whatever sport you want...

I cut and pasted a write up I had for it from a newsletter. Substitute the number 4 for the number 10 and 10 for the number 8 below.

Have the large group break into smaller groups based on the number of small groups you will want in the end. (ie. 80 people and you want 8 groups of 10. Have the large group break into 10 groups of 8.) Of course they will all clump up with their best buds.

Now have the small teams assign positions on a baseball team to each member (i.e. 8 members of the smaller groups assign one person to be catcher, one pitcher, one shortstop, one right fielder, etc).

At this point you separate the group by position and have all the catchers stand over here, all the pitchers stand over here... etc. Most folks at this point have not figured out that these will be their small groups you want them in. They might think you are just preparing them for some crazy version of baseball and they need to stand in their position.

Once they are split up by positions, viola, you have your small groups of 10.

Christopher Ortiz

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One of the most creative that I learned a few years back (from Karl Rohnke) was...

To have the whole group close their eyes, each participant uses their index finger as a paintbrush and to draws the profile of a German Shepherd dog in the air in front of themselves...give the group a few seconds to trace the profile with their finger out in front of them...

After 20 seconds or so, have the group open their eyes and then separate the group according to which direction the German Shepherd was facing (left of right). Typically it splits the group 50/50 for me...

Another splitter from there could work- such as the arms crossed/dominant hand/dominant eye...to get the group into additional groups.

*I did try to see if the German Shepherd would work as a splitter to get 3 groups, (Left, Right,
and facing yourself)....worked once, failed miserably another
time....ummmmmmmmmmm......alright, next activity!

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Splitting The Group With Cards
Cut the Deck

Type of Initiative: Splitting the Group Up/Group Management

Group Size: 10-52 participants (if you have more people, add decks of cards and do the math).

Playing the Game: There are several ways to divide your groups with a deck of cards. This could be introduced at any time during your program.

Many times when you work with a larger group of people, there are mini-cliques already formed.

Here are some creative ways to encourage your participants to meet others and get to know more about those they are not as close with.

And let’s face it, there are some people you just don’t want to have in the same group!

Here are some creative ways to split up the group using a deck of cards.

1. Odds and Evens

   · Using the entire deck: 52 cards, 26 odds, 26 evens (Aces = 1, Jacks = 11, Queens = 12, Kings = 13)

   · Take out the Royalty cards: 40 cards, 20 odds, 20 evens (Aces = 1)
· Each suit: 13 cards, 7 odds, 6 evens

· Two suits: 26 cards, 14 odds, 12 evens

· Three suits: 39 cards, 21 odds, 12 evens

· Each suit without royalty cards: 10 cards, 5 odds, 5 evens

2. Color of the Cards

· Full deck: 52 cards, 26 black cards, 26 red cards

· Hearts: 13 red cards

· Spades: 13 black cards

· Diamonds: 13 red cards

· Clubs: 13 black cards
3. Suit of the Cards

- Full deck: 52 cards, 4 suits (hearts, spades, diamonds, and clubs) 13 per group

- Two suits: 26 cards, 13 per group

4. Number or face value of the Cards

- Full deck: 52 cards, groups of 4 (four 9’s, four Jacks)

- Three suits: 39 cards, groups of 3 (three 7’s, three Aces)

- Two suits: 26 cards, pairs (two 3’s, two Queens)

5. Pairs based on the like color and rank (use this one only if everyone will end up with a partner)

- Full deck: 52 cards, 26 pairs of people (2 of diamonds and 2 of hearts)
Playing With a Full Deck, Michelle Cummings

You can get a free ebook with 9 activities from the book for signing up for my free e-newsletter at www.training-wheels.com. You can order the book there as well!

Enjoy!

Michelle

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