

# BOUNDARY BREAKERS

## Purpose

To get members of a group to know one another through the use of questions that are designed to reveal mutual concerns, interests and insights between people who are not necessarily close friends.

**Note:** Using Boundary Breakers with a group can.....

help make individuals feel safe in the group

encourage participation

help individuals establish and maintain friendships

provide the group leader with insights which can facilitate individual success

help process group experiences to facilitate learning and improvement

## Procedure

1. Tell group members that you are going to ask them a number of questions.
2. Questions should not be explained. Each person should just respond to what he/she hears.
3. Tell group members that when they answer a question, they should just honestly respond to the question and not try to have, for example, the "best" or the "funniest" answer. Also, they should not "cop out" by just repeating an answer already given by someone else.
4. Tell group members that they may "pass" if they cannot think of an answer, but you will come back to them. Keep track of individuals who "pass."
5. Communicate the rules to group members.
6. Ask each person in the group the same question. Start with a different person for each question. **Call on each person by name.**
7. The first questions asked should be "low risk." Once a rapport has been established with a group, the range of questions can be expanded. You may choose questions from the list that follows, or you may generate your own questions. There are also several books that contain questions that may be used for this activity such as ones authored by Bret Nicholaus and Paul Lowrie.
8. Optional: You may choose to use the Synthesis Set as closure for the activity. Do not tell group members about it beforehand.

## Rules

1. Every answer is a right answer.
2. We are here to listen.
3. We are not here to debate.
4. We are not here to disagree.
5. We are not here to judge.
6. We are not here to entertain.
7. Be sincere in your answers.

## Additional Notes

1. Make a list of questions to have ready when you need them.
2. Keep track of questions you ask the group to avoid repeating questions.

3. Ask group members to generate the questions.

# BOUNDARY BREAKERS

## Low Risk Questions

1. What is your favorite food?
2. What is your favorite kind of pizza?
3. What is your favorite dessert?
4. What is your favorite flavor of ice cream?
5. What is your favorite cereal?
6. What person now living would you most like to meet?
7. What person no longer living do you wish you could have met?
8. What living leader do you admire the most and why?
9. Who is your favorite cartoon character?
10. What is your favorite season and why?
11. What is your favorite candy bar?
12. What's your favorite amusement park ride?
13. What amusement park ride do you dislike the most?
14. What is your favorite arcade game?
15. What is your favorite hobby?
16. What food do you dislike the most?
17. When you were younger, what was your favorite toy?
18. What was your favorite Halloween costume?
19. What was your favorite birthday present?
20. What is your favorite subject?
21. What subject do you dislike the most?
22. What car would you most like to own?
23. What pet would you most like to have?
24. What commercial do you dislike the most?
25. What commercial do you like the most?
26. What is your favorite day of the week and why?
27. If you won the lottery, what is the first thing you would do?
28. What do like to do the most in your free time?
29. What is your favorite song?
30. What musical instrument do you wish you could play?
31. What country would you like to visit the most?
32. What place in the United States would you like to visit?
33. What was the best vacation you ever took?
34. What's the first thing you do when you get home from school?
35. What's your favorite TV show?
36. What TV show do you dislike the most?
37. What is your all-time favorite movie?
38. What is the best movie you saw in the last month?
39. What's the scariest movie you ever saw?
40. What's your favorite color?
41. What adjective describes your favorite color?
42. In what sport do you most like to participate?
43. What sport do you like to watch the most?
44. Who is your favorite sport idol/hero?
45. Who is your favorite actor or actress?
46. If you could live in any time period other than the present, what time period would you choose?

47. During the summer months, what do you most like to do?
48. What is the title of the last book you read?
49. If you could be an animal, which one would you like to be?
50. If you were President of the United States, what's the first thing you would do?
51. What business would you like to own?
52. What is your favorite thing to do with your friends?
53. Besides money, what is one thing you would like to have a lot of?
54. What supernatural power do you wish you had?
55. What magical power do you wish you had?
56. What chore do you dislike doing the most?
57. What chore do you like doing the most?
58. What is your favorite souvenir or memento?

### Higher Risk Questions

1. If you could be invisible for a day, what would you do?
2. What are you most proud of?
3. What's the best book you ever read?
4. What is one thing you would like to create more than anything else?
5. What event in the last (month, 3 months, year, etc.) stands out in your mind the most?
6. What is the greatest problem in the United States today?
7. Who has it easier, boys or girls? Why?
8. For what would you risk your life?
9. What word best describes how you feel about your life right now?
10. What is your greatest worry?
11. What is the most beautiful thing you have ever seen?
12. What is the most frightening thing you have ever seen?
13. What do you think is your best quality?
14. What makes you a good friend?
15. What is your greatest fear?
16. What future discovery are you looking forward to the most?
17. What person has influenced your life the most?
18. Who is the person you most admire?
19. If you could change places with anyone, who would it be?
20. What is one thing you would change about your school?
21. What is one thing you would change about the world?
22. What would your parents say if you flew to China and didn't tell them?
23. What would your parents do or say if you had straight A's on your report card?
24. What would your parents do or say if you got an F on your report card?
25. What experience has had the most impact on your life?
26. What is the biggest problem facing kids your age?
27. Your house is on fire. Your relatives and pets are safe. What is the one thing you would want to save the most?
28. What one thing makes you the most angry?
29. What was the most embarrassing thing that ever happened to you?
30. What's the thing that other people do that bothers you the most?
31. Ten years from now, where do you think you'll be living?
32. Ten years from now, what do you think your occupation will be?
33. Would you rather be the oldest, youngest, or middle child and why?
34. What one word best describes your parents?
35. What one word would your parents use to describe you?
36. What do your parents do that embarrasses you the most?
37. What do you like the most about your mother/father?

38. If you could change one thing about your parents, what would it be?
39. How do you want your friends to describe you?
40. If you could change the past, what one thing would you change?
41. What is your favorite daydream?
42. What is the hardest thing about growing up?
43. What is the best thing about growing up?
44. What is one thing about yourself that you wish you could change?
45. What is the best thing that could happen to you?
46. What is the bravest thing you ever did?
47. What is the luckiest thing that ever happened to you?
48. What word best describes people your age?
49. What is the one thing (not living) that you would most like to smash?
50. What is a talent or ability that you don't already have that you wish you had?
51. What is one word that describes how you feel about school?
52. If you could pick a new first name for yourself, what one would you choose?
53. What quality in a friend is most important to you?
54. What is one thing you wish you could do that you're not allowed to do now?
55. What subject is the most frequent topic of discussion among your friends?
56. What's the best thing about your home?
57. What is the greatest sound in the world?
58. If you were going to be shipwrecked on a desert island, what one item would you most want to take with you? (You cannot take a radio, TV, or a friend)
59. I was scared the most when \_\_\_\_\_
60. I get scared when \_\_\_\_\_
61. I am happiest when \_\_\_\_\_
62. I am most comfortable when \_\_\_\_\_
63. If I were five years older, I would \_\_\_\_\_
64. I felt like crying when \_\_\_\_\_
65. I choose friends who are \_\_\_\_\_
66. Tomorrow I am going to \_\_\_\_\_
67. It was funny when \_\_\_\_\_
68. I wish \_\_\_\_\_
69. During vacations, I like to \_\_\_\_\_
70. When I think about the future, I \_\_\_\_\_
71. I think the world would be a better place if \_\_\_\_\_
72. One thing I never want to do is \_\_\_\_\_
73. People really help each other when they \_\_\_\_\_
74. One thing I never want to do is \_\_\_\_\_

## Synthesis Set

Select questions and tell the group to answer them in light of the answers given by the group members.

1. Which person did you learn the most about?
2. Which person did you want to learn more about?
3. Which person do you think you could get along with best over a long period of time?
4. Which answer surprised you the most?
5. Which person do you feel is most like you?