

At the start of the year, use icebreakers to help members get to know each other. Then use team builders throughout the year to build connections. In activities that ask members to share information about themselves or what their team created, allow members to volunteer so those who are uncomfortable with sharing can just listen.

Here are a few activities to try. Find more icebreakers and team builders in the “Running a Club” section at kiwaniskids.org/grouping/officer-and-member-resources.

ICEBREAKERS

ROSE AND THORN

Purpose: For members to learn about each other and their similarities.

Time: 15 minutes

Instructions: At the beginning of the school year, ask members to form small groups. Have them think about their experiences over the school break and identify one “rose” (something positive) and one “thorn” (something challenging or negative) about starting school. Ask them to share their rose and thorn with other students in their group. When everyone has had a chance to share, ask for volunteers to share a similarity they had with another member. Help members understand that positives and negatives in experiences are normal — and that reflecting can help them learn about themselves, learn about others and think about how they can make experiences better.

SHOW AND TELL

Purpose: For members to get to know one another.

Time: 20-30 minutes

Preparation: Ask members to bring one item that represents them, their culture or what they care about, to the next club meeting. Ask them to be prepared to tell others about it.

Instructions: At the meeting, ask members to share with the club what the item is, why they chose it and how it’s meaningful to them.

BOOK OF ME

Purpose: To learn about each other.

Time: 15-20 minutes

Supplies: Paper and markers.

Instructions: Allow members to sit where they are comfortable within the room. Give each person a sheet of paper and markers. Ask members to create a book cover that represents their story — likes, dislikes, goals, dreams and anything else they would like to share. When they are ready, ask members to share with the group.

TEAM BUILDERS

TALLEST TOWER

Purpose: To learn about what members have in common and to work as a team.

Time: 25-30 minutes

Supplies: Index cards (at least five per person) and pens.

Instructions: Divide members into small groups. Ask them to talk with their teammates to find things that they have in common. Instruct them to write each similarity on an index card (one per card). Then, when they have a stack of cards, each team must build a tower using their cards. The group that builds the tallest tower — that can stay standing — wins!

PASS THE DOUGH

Purpose: To learn how to work together as a team.

Time: 25-30 minutes

Supplies: Play-Doh. A whistle.

Instructions: Separate members into groups of five and ask them to sit in a circle. Give each group two to three containers of Play-Doh. Instruct members to decide what their group will create with the Play-Doh. Examples: an animal, spaghetti and meatballs, a truck, a baseball and bat. Explain that one member in each group will mold the Play-Doh for 20 seconds. The advisor will blow the whistle when it's time to pass the Play-Doh to another member. Continue until one group completes their sculpture. Do additional rounds, with each group choosing a new item to create. The groups can share their finished and unfinished sculptures with the club after each round.

Close the activity with reflection questions:

- Would this task have been easier or harder if you were by yourself?
- What was difficult about working with a team to complete the goal?
- What did your team do well that helped you complete the goal?