ICE BREAKERS

Autobiographical Show & Tell
Tell each student to find one object they have with them on the trip that they
think says something about them as a person. One at a time, have each person
show their object to the group, and explain what it represents about them.

A One and a Two
Pass around something -- candy, toilet paper, whatever. Each person takes as much
as they want. One at a time, have each person tell one random fact about
themselves for each item they took.
Variation: M&M Game -- Have each person take a set number of M&M’s (3-4
usually works well). Once everyone has theirs, make each color representative of a
different subject. Example: Red = About My Family, Yellow = Best Spring Break,
Green = Why I Came on this Program, Brown = One Talent I Have, etc. One at a
time, have each person tell one random fact/story about themselves in each of the
subjects that match the colors they took.

Names & Motions
Standing in a circle, each person in the group has to say their name and a motion to
go with their name that represents something the person likes to do (skiing,
dancing, reading, etc). The rest of the group then says "Hi, ---" while repeating
the motion. The trick is that as each person is added, the group has to remember
and repeat each of the names and motions leading up to that one.

Name Tag Personality Switch
Make sure each person has a nametag. Each person goes up to someone else, tells
three facts about him/herself, learns facts about the other person, and then
trades nametags -- and identities. Person A then becomes Person B and
approaches Person C to repeat the process, introducing him/herself as Person B
and giving Person B's three facts. By the end of a few minutes, each person has
"been" almost everyone else. One at a time, everyone then introduces themselves
to the group as the person whose nametag they end up with last. Make sure that
you have the real person identify him/herself, retrieve the nametag, and reveal
the facts that they originally shared. Chances are they will have changed a bit by
the final report!
Ice Breakers

Symbols
On a large sheet of paper, everyone in the group draws a symbol that represents them, and that incorporates one strength and one weakness of theirs. Post the paper in the front of the room, and have each person take turns explaining their symbol and what it means to the class.
Discuss: What did you notice about the similarities and differences among the symbols? What makes up people’s identities? Importance of knowing your own strengths and weaknesses.

Human Scavenger Hunt
Give the group a sheet of paper asking them to find someone in the group who is, for example, an only child, a Republican, a Cubs fan, owns a skateboard, has a pet snake, etc. Make them random enough so that someone in the group is likely to be in that category, but probably no more than three or four people are. If you know interesting facts about kids, feel free to add these (e.g., has been to Africa or is a competitive figure skater). Have kids mingle to get the answers.
Variation: People Bingo -- Same as above, but make the handout in the form of a bingo board, and have kids compete to get "bingo".

Finding Common Ground
Pick a partner you don’t know very well, and find five unusual things the two of you have in common. This can be anything, from favorite food to future plans. Each pair then reports back a few of their best things to the group.
* This activity works well if the group is unusually quiet, or if some members are having trouble finding things they have in common. It works best while doing something else, such as walking or driving from one place to another, or doing a mindless activity like raking leaves.

Forced Choice
Have members stand in the middle of the room and move to one side or another as a way to answer a particular question. Is the person more chocolate or vanilla? More Coke or Pepsi? More inside or outside? More TV or movie? etc.
* This activity also works well to split up a group in two (for volunteer work, for teams for a groupbuilding game, etc), especially when the choices are pretty random (loud people vs quiet people or rap vs rock, for example, would probably not be good choices). Keep giving choices until the group is evenly split.
Ice Breakers

Around the World
Set up a circle of chairs, one less than there are people in the group. One person
stands in the middle and says something about themselves, such as "I have been to
another country" or "I wear glasses." Everyone else to whom that statement also
applies has to stand up and trade chairs with another person who has stood up,
while the person in the middle tries to find a chair. Whoever’s left standing has to
call out the next statement.

Two Truths & A Lie
Each person in the group introduces themselves and gives three facts or stories
about themselves. Two should be true and one should be a lie, and the more
bizarre they all are, the better. The rest of the group has to guess which is the
lie. People can get points for guessing the lie, or for fooling the rest of the group.
This game can also be played in small groups of three, in which two people tell true
stories, and one tells the lie.

Cartoon Game
Have the group sit in a circle, legs crossed underneath them, with the person
leading the activity standing up in the middle. Each student picks their favorite
cartoon character (has to be something no one else has named). Review several
times until everyone is familiar with everyone else’s characters. Start by having
someone in the circle shout out one of the cartoon characters. The person in the
middle then has to find the person that matches the cartoon character and tag
them, before that person can call out the name of another cartoon character. But,
you can’t call out a character that doesn’t exist, your own character, or the
character of the person in the middle. If the person in the middle tags the person
sitting down before they can call out another character, then they have to switch
places. (Just try it -- it sounds more complicated than it is).
Variation: Instead of cartoon characters, use favorite movie, embarrassing
childhood nickname, etc.

Elbow Tag
The group splits up into pairs, and each pair links elbows loosely. One pair is split
up: one person becomes "it," while the other gets to be chased. The chassee runs
until they don’t want to be chased anymore, and then links arms with one of the
pairs for safety. The person on the other side of the new threesome then has to
leave and be chased. If “it” catches the person being chased, they have to switch
roles. If you have a large group, you can have people split into 3s, 4s, or 5s!
LIFEBOAT EXERCISE

For this everyone will need a big piece of paper and something to draw and write with, such as markers or crayons. Explain to the group that you will be drawing your lifeboat, and that lifeboat is to represent your family values, the values you received from your parents, grandparents, siblings, and anyone else who helped to raise you. Have everyone express how their family values affected the way they thought about any or all of the following:

- religion/spirituality/faith
- politics/citizenship/community involvement
- education/learning/knowledge
- work/job/career
- voluntarism/community service

After you have finished illustrating your lifeboat of family values, draw your own lifeboat if your values are different from those of your family. Once everyone is finished drawing and/or writing take some time to allow everyone in the group to share what their lifeboat stands for and how it effects them today. Make sure you allow enough time for this exercise as it can take a while. The Lifeboat Exercise works well when your group is forming because it allows group members to learn things about each others background and history which they probably didn't know before and it encourages a deeper level of friendship among the participants.

COAT OF ARMS

Everyone receives a piece of paper with an outline of a traditional Coat-of-Arms (like in Medieval times)—with five or six spaces to be filled. The participants then complete their Coat of Arms with symbols of who they are, where they come from, what priorities and people they consider important, etc. Of course, allow a lot of time for sharing with all of these exercises.

PERSONAL MAP

Give everyone a large sheet of newsprint or drawing paper and some markers—and a corner to be alone for about 20-30 minutes. Everyone writes or draws some sort of representation of how he/she got to this place: i.e. what people, events, decisions and other influences made you who you are today and caused you to end up here, on this alternative break trip. Allow plenty of time for sharing, and post the maps on the walls afterwards, if you have space. This is a wonderful way to explore your own past and future and to share an important part of who you are with your group. If you save this exercise until you’ve built up some pretty solid group trust, people will be much more willing to explore some really meaningful issues.
Cultural Introductions

Understanding and managing Diversity includes expanding our definition of culture. Listed below are some variables of diversity that gain importance as we begin to explore our cultural identity:

**PRIMARY DIMENSIONS**
- Age
- Physical Abilities
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Sexual Orientation

**SECONDARY DIMENSIONS**
- Education
- Class/Income
- Religious Beliefs
- Military Experience
- Lifestyles / Work-Family
- Nationality
- Language / Accent
- Geographic Location
- Other

**Exercise:**

Introduce yourself to members of your group. Include where you grew up.

From the list above, select and explain two cultural variables that have had the most importance to you in terms of your cultural identity. Complete the following:

I choose __________________________ because __________________________

I choose __________________________ because __________________________