

COMMUNITY BUILDING



1. THE NAME GAME

- ▶ **WHAT?** Learn and remember student names and interesting qualities through a kinesthetic and memorable game!
- ▶ **WHY?** “A person’s name is to him or her the sweetest and most important sound in any language.” — Dale Carnegie. Nothing is more important for building rapport and community than learning people’s names, especially when pronounced correctly. Forgetting names can erode trust and community.
- ▶ **WHEN?** At the start of the year or when a new student or adult enters the classroom.

MATERIALS

- ❑ No materials & no prep needed
- ❑ Optional- Tennis ball or light object (see extensions for more details)

SEL FOCUS

- **Social Awareness:** Recognizing strengths in others
- **Relationship Skills:** Communicating effectively and seeking & offering help when needed

Launch Activity (3min+)

- I. **3min- Discuss** the following questions with students:
 1. Some might say that our name is the most important word in the world. Why is that and why is it important to remember and call people by their name?
 2. How does it feel when someone remembers your name? Has someone forgotten your name? How does that feel?

SEL Routine (9min+)

1. **2min- Ask students** to 1. Think of an **adjective** for their name starting with the same letter that represents some quality about them (*e.g. Video game Victor, Bouncy Billy, Grateful Gerry, Justice Jeremy, Awesome Amy, Curious Carlos*) and 2. An **action move** to visibly act out their adjective (*Curious Carlos pretends he is using a magnifying glass to be curious*). 3. Finally, they will briefly **explain** why they chose that adjective (*Carlos is curious about science*). If they find it difficult, they can use their phones to find adjectives that match the first letter of their names or they can ask each other for help. The teacher first models this with his/her own name. Note: To make it easier, the first letters of adjective and name don’t have to match.
2. **1min- Students form a circle**
3. **1min- Explain and model instructions:**
 - a. The teacher will go first: say their name, adjective, act out their action move, and explain their adjective. The teacher will then call on the first student to do the same.
 - b. The next student will repeat the previous person’s name (teacher) and adjective while acting it out before introducing their own name and adjective. To reduce anxiety and keep the game fun, students can ask their peers for help or clues when stuck.
 - c. This process continues with each new student repeating former persons’ names and adjectives in order, until all have had a chance to share.
 - d. Continue until students have memorized each other’s names and then select students at random for the group to name and act out to add challenge and more practice.
4. **5min- Play the Name Game!**



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- Continued -

Extensions

1. 3min- Discussion Questions:

- How did this game feel when we started it compared to the middle of it?
- What helped you learn the names of your peers?
- How did it feel when people said your name correctly and learned about your quality?
- How do you feel now that you know your peers' names and why does this matter?
- What did you learn from this activity and what will you apply to your life?

2. Introduce Objects: You can introduce a tennis ball or a soft light object such as a teddy bear or foam football. Student A will throw the object to Student B while saying B's name and adjective before saying hers/his. This new student then throws the ball to someone else, repeating the pattern (saying the catcher's name before their own name). Continue the game by speeding it up and avoiding mistakes! The key is repetition!

3. Teach name memory techniques: World Memory Championship winners use a technique to memorize names.

1. Develop a clear focus and intent to memorize names.

2. Focus on the person you're talking to.

3. Check for proper pronunciation and if you didn't hear correctly, ask them to say it again.

4. Repeat their name in your mind several times and mention it as you speak to them as much as possible. (*Ex: Mike Gadson*)

5. Focus on a specific feature of their face that stands out (*Mike's big ears*)

6. Link the new name with something you already know that sounds like it. (*Mike sounds like a microphone, or that's the name of cousin Mike, and Gadson sounds like Godson*)

7. Connect the new name or face with a visual image. (*I'm picturing a microphone*)

8. Connect facial features with visual images (*I'll picture my Godson Johnny with a microphone singing and peaking out of Mike's ears*).

9. Practice visualizing this image several times and when you see Mike you will visualize your mental image that will help you recall his name.

4. Continue this tradition as new students enter your class. You don't have to do the entire activity, but encourage students to introduce themselves with their adjective and action throughout the year. Use when a guest speaker, a staff member, or other important adult enters your class.

5. Content Infusion: Use the memory technique, described above, when teaching students new vocabulary words. Students read the new word and identify a part of the word that sounds familiar. *Ex: The word "Vehement". Part of the word sounds like 'vehicle'. Then they will picture an action occurring with the similar word part in a way that explains the definition. Ex 1: Students visualize a bright yellow vehicle with a man and a bullhorn, yelling and raving about his favorite sports team. He even has his face painted and seems very passionate and forceful. Ex 2: "Benevolent" sounds like "bueno" meaning good or "benefit", something positive. Or it sounds like "Ben is not violent," so he must be kind. Carly decides to visualize her uncle Ben being kind and generous by giving people hugs and help in the community. Students write their word tips on an index card or glossary and then share their strategies with a peer. They can decide to keep their own word strategy or use their peers if it is more memorable than theirs. The trick is to make the story vivid, exaggerated, funny, and odd!*