First Year Orientation
Ice Breaking or Introductory Activities
Large Group Exercises

Reception Line
- Divide everyone into two groups have them stand facing each other
- Each talks to the person across from them until signaled (lights flashed)
- At the signal, the person at the end of the line moves to the other end.
Consequently, everyone has a new person to talk to.

Giant Map
- Ask the group to form a giant map, with one end of the room being the East Coast and the other the West Coast. Each person stands “on the map” in the location to represent where they were born.
- Facilitator asks the participants where they are from to check to see how closely the map resembles the U.S. He or she tries to find commonalities among people
- People can be asked what “stereotypes” they have about a specific state, region, (or)
- People can be asked to move where they live now, where they would like to live, or where they would like to vacation.

Jump Rope (outside)
- Everyone lines up single file and two volunteers are asked to twirl
- Each participant goes through the jump rope once as quickly as possible
- A facilitator times their success. Every time someone misses the rope, the line forms and they begin again.

Pins and Straws
Each group is given a package of drinking straws and straight pins the object is to build an object that is the strongest, tallest and the most creative of the groups

That’s Me Discussion
1. The one thing that nobody in this room realizes about me . . .
2. My favorite leisure time activity is . . .
3. A perfect day for me would be to . . .
4. The actor or actress who should portray me in the movie of my life is . . .

72 Seconds of Fun
- Seventy-two seconds is all participants get for introductions
- Tell participants they have 72 seconds to meet as many people as possible
- Instruct them to tell others their name, where they live, and what hall they are living in, their favorite memory of ND, etc.
- When time is up the groups reconvenes

Birth Order
Mill around and find 4-5 other people who have the same birth order in their family as you. Share with each other what was the advantage/disadvantage of your birth position.
Group Shuffle
- Divide participants into small groups using ordinary playing cards
- If you’ve got 32 participants, for example, and you want them in four groups of eight, simply take eight spades, eight diamonds, and so on out of the deck
- Shuffle, distribute the cards, and then assemble groups according to suit
- Form your groups based upon identical pictures in the deck
- Divide your participants into two groups and have one form a circle facing inward, the other looks at a partner
- Tell the outer group to move clockwise and the inner group to move counterclockwise until you tell them to stop
- Have the people directly facing each other spend a few minutes talking about their school experiences and how those experiences prepared them for their Notre Dame experience
- That information is then used for everyone to introduce their partners to the rest of the group
- Clusters of partners can form the work groups for the next part of the activity

You’re It
Have everyone in a big circle. You stay in the middle to start the game. Instruct them by demonstrating. The object of the game is to have another person be in the middle. When the person is in the middle they need to introduce themselves and then tell one thing about them that others do not know. To get someone else in the middle they need to say “Everyone move” Individuals need to try to move across the circle and not just change places with the person next to them. The person that does not get a spot is the person in the middle. The game continues until you say stop. Also, they need to try to move the game in a quick pace to make it fun. Eg.: everyone wearing jeans moves, everyone wearing socks moves, everyone with a tag moves, etc.

Howdy Partner - The Disclosure Wheel
Have everyone count off in two’s. Once everyone has their number, ask the entire One’s to move to the center of the room and form a circle facing out. Once in place, ask all of the two’s to also form a circle around the one’s - facing a one. If there is an odd number, you are going to have to step in and participate. Have everyone introduce themselves to their partner by stating “Howdy Partner” and then shaking their hand and formally introducing him or herself. Ask the partners to discuss a question - please remind them that it is important that both partners get a chance to answer the question. Once the first question is completed (allow only a few minutes) tell the partners to say good bye to each other “Goodbye Partner.” At this point, the individuals on the outside (the two’s) need to move one person to their left. Again, encourage them to reach out and greet their new partner by saying “Howdy Partner.” Continue this format until everyone goes around the room and has the chance to meet and talk to one another.
Uno/Go Fish
A different way to divide people into groups is to shuffle a deck of cards played from their childhood (e.g., Go Fish, Uno) and then hand one to each participant. Groups can either be formed by assembling holders of like cards or all different characters.

Birthday Line/Area Code/Zipcode
Have participants line up according to birth month and date, area code, zipcode. No talking allowed.

Something Unique
- Everyone stands in a straight line side to side
- Someone says something they think is unique about themselves
- If others have done the same thing they step forward also
- Everyone steps back in place and the next person attempts to find something unique about themselves.

Birthdays
- Players are asked to quickly find others who are born in the same month as they were
- The facilitator then calls out the months and each group gives a big cheer. This allows the participants to discover if more than one group formed for the same month
- Groups then have one minute to develop a cheer for their month
- After the minute the facilitator calls out each month in order with the respective group jumping up to give its cheer and then sitting down again

Poker Hand
Distribute one card per person. Have them find four others w/ best hand

Commonalities
- Divide into groups of approximately 10 people
- Have each group identify 15 things they as a group have in common. Commonalities can’t be things all human beings or everyone in the larger group have in common.
- Share with other groups

Wild Animal Hunters
- People get into pairs and each pair picks an animal
- People then go on opposite sides of the room, but not directly across from their partner
- With their eyes closed, everyone makes the sounds of their animal and walks toward the middle, attempting to find their partner through sound
- May be done with groups of people also.

Telephone
- The first person is handed an idea or a phrase and whispers it in the ear of the next person.
- The process continues until the last person says aloud what they hear.
Bigger and Better/Scavenger Hunt

- Teams start with a paper clip and go to University offices/departments to exchange it for something “bigger and better.”
- This continues throughout the specified time period when the teams have to report back. The team with the biggest thing wins. The team must be able to keep their “thing” (ie: not a park bench or someone’s boat).
- It does not matter how many times they exchange things in between as long as they are back on time.
- Large teams (ie: 30) are fine so they may carry the final item back. **please do not take items from another hall without permission!**

Neighbors

- The group forms a circle (sitting) with one person standing in the middle.
- The person in the middle walks up to someone and says “What are your neighbor’s names?” If they don’t know the names of both people next to them by a count of 5, they are in the middle.
- If they DO know their neighbor’s names, the person in the middle says “Do you like your neighbor?” The person being questioned says “no” and tells why (ie: they are wearing tennis shoes)
- Then everyone wearing tennis shoes needs to find a new seat and the person left standing in the middle is “it” and the process starts all over (people have new neighbors and therefore have to learn new names)

Wild Animal Hunters

- People get into pairs and each pair picks a wild animal.
- People then go on opposite sides of the room/field, but not directly across from their partner.
- With eyes closed, everyone makes the sound of their animal and walks toward the middle, attempting to find their partner through sound.

- Variations: Barnyard animal sounds, sounds of their astrological signs, etc

Wheel In A Wheel

- The group numbers off into twos. The ones form a circle shoulder to shoulder facing outward. Twos form a circle on the outside facing the ones. Each “2” should be facing one “1”.
- Leader reads a question and ones have 30 seconds to respond.
- Blow the whistle and twos have 30 seconds to respond to the same question.
- Blow the whistle and the twos move one person to the right (ones remain stationary) for the next question.

Orchestra

- Participants are each handed a card which lists a musical instrument.
- By making the sound of that instrument, participants must find the others who have the same instrument.
- Groups then have 3 minutes to rehearse their parts to “Notre Dame Victory March”
- The group reassembles with the facilitator acting as the conductor. Ask the group to tune up first; instrument by instrument. Then the entire group “plays” the tune.
The A to Z Race
- Materials Needed: One piece of paper and a pen/pencil for each group.
- Break the group down into small groups of 5 to 10 people and have them sit in a circle on the floor. You'll need at least two groups to make a competition. Give each group a piece of paper and a pen/pencil. Have them write down on the paper the entire alphabet in a vertical line from A to Z. The object of the race is to find as many objects as possible which begin with each individual letter, write the object down on the paper and then physically place that object in the center of the table. (For example a person wearing a necklace would write that item next to N and place it in the center of the circle.) Each group must read and show each item they have thrown in the center of the circle. The group with the most items before the 5-minute time is up is declared the champion.
- Facilitators Note: This is a fun team building ice breaker that gets everyone involved from the very beginning. A word of advice on this one is to have no other rules except for those that you read above. Average running time for this activity is approximately 10 minutes.

The Slide Show Chronicles
- Materials needed: A wall and a clicker (or slide remote)
- Have the participants form a semi-circle around a plain wall. Have them close their eyes and think of the one or two of their favorite photo’s. Ask them to visualize those photos in their heads for a while. Starting with yourself, stand at the front of the room and pretend to be holding a slide remote control unit. Take them on a visual journey describing your slides to the best of your ability. Once you have completed your presentation pass the unit on to the next person. Continue until everyone has had the opportunity to participate.
- Facilitators Note: This ice breaker works best with small groups of 20 or less. Break a larger group down into smaller units. Average running time is approximately 20 minutes.

Activities adapted from the following sources including *The Encyclopedia of Ice Breakers*, *Playfair*, *New Games*