

Breaking the Ice: Building Respectful Culture in the School Choral Program

LMEA Professional Development Conference

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Importance of Retreats and Bonding Activities

- Building community
- Creating a healthy environment and respectful culture
- Paving the way for student ownership
- Opportunity to connect with standards and rubric
 - National Core Arts Standards - Music Ensembles
 - National Institute for Excellence in Teaching Rubric

Effective Retreat Practices

- Location considerations
 - Off-campus options recommended
 - On-campus options: auditorium, larger classrooms, etc.
- Time frames
- Pacing and structure
 - Begin with opening icebreaker - first impressions matter!
 - Balance team-building activities with rehearsals and sectionals
 - Try not to let students sing for too long at a time (30-40 minute mini-rehearsals)
 - Short ice-breakers can break up a longer rehearsal segment and improve focus
 - Balance ice-breakers with meaningful activities which encourage critical thinking
 - Unstructured breaks, snacks, meals
- Goals
 - Building community within the group
 - Creating opportunity for every student to participate fully
 - Building section unity
 - Providing solid foundation on repertoire
 - Providing student leadership opportunities
- Creative approaches to team building
 - Student grouping
 - Student ownership of activities
 - Cultural awareness

Creating Your Team Building Activities

- What is the purpose of this activity? Team building, learning names, just a break?
- Can it provide an opportunity for student leadership or for humanizing the teacher?
- Can this have a positive impact on the ensemble sound?
- When is the best time in the semester to use this activity?
- How much time should you allot for the activity?
- Can you tie this activity to the National Standards or NIET Rubric? *(If not, that's OK!)*

Activity Name	
Instructions	
Purpose/Instructional Use Suggestions	
Length	Group Size
Age Group	Standards (National)
Materials Needed	NIET Rubric







A Non-Exhaustive List of Activities and Games to Consider

Name Game Ball	Awk Talks	Rock Paper Scissors Bracket
Question Ball	Yarn Ball Spider Web	Count to 26
Clock Face Icebreaker	Change It Up	Question of the Day
Performance-Based Activities	Have You Seen My Goat?	Piece of the Puzzle
Small Group Sight Read	Personality Tests	Program Flow Activity
Choir Olympics	Snowball	Voice Placement

Scan this QR code for examples of retreat activities, student information forms, retreat schedules, and icebreaker questions:



Reach out if you have questions for us!

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