

Connecting Questions as Introductions

Introductions invite people to tell their own story—to be known in the ways they want to be known. It is also a way for people to talk about what is important to them. For that reason, we think a lot about what kind of questions we ask people to introduce themselves with. We want the question to introduce new ways of seeing one another. It should humanize and cut across, rather than reinforce, preconceived categories.

These questions invite people to share the best of themselves and what is most meaningful to them. We intentionally lean toward stories, values, and shining moments—towards things people might have in common. We lean away from rank, resumé, or position.

The connections that are built through introductions serve as part of the groundwork to hold the more difficult conversations that will come.

Directions

For this exercise, choose an introduction question and share it with the group. It can be helpful to have the question written somewhere where participants can see it as they reflect.

Give a set amount of time for participants to think and reflect silently about their response and take notes on what they want to say. Let people know as they reflect how much time they will have to respond to the question.

Then, when the set amount of time for reflection has passed, go around in a circle and have participants respond to the prompt—with each person given the same amount of time to share.

Use a timer to time each speaker and remind them that they have *up to* the designated time to speak and that people should take a breath between speakers.

There should always be the option to pass, or to pass for now.

Some Connecting Questions

- Share a story about a wise person in your life—past or present—who inspires you to do the work you do in the world today (whatever that means to you right now).
- Share an object that would help the group understand something you care deeply about or are committed to in some way.
- One skill you have that you could teach someone else and one thing you really wish you could learn.
- One thing that you are newly in love with or passionate about.



- What toy did you love as a child? Why did it mean so much to you?
- One routine you have that you look forward to every day, week or month?
- One place in the world that has special meaning to you and why.
- One object in your home that would help explain what is really important to you.
- Some place you really feel you belong and one place you feel you need to go.