

## 7. Getting to Know Your Students Better

*We say, "A person is a person through other persons." I need you in order to be me and you need me in order to be you.*

Desmond Tutu

The activities featured below provide opportunities not only for you to gain a better knowledge and understanding of your students, but for your students to come to know one another better in fun, engaging ways.

**Heigh Ho:** Have students sit in a circle. Appoint someone to be It. It stands in the middle of the circle and says, "Everyone who is wearing sandals, change places." Everyone has to move to another chair. It then runs to a chair and sits down. This will leave someone standing who then becomes It. The new It can say something else like "Everyone who watched TV last night, change places!" or "Everyone who wishes it was still summer vacation, change places!" If the person who is It says, "Heigh Ho" everyone must change places. Play the game quickly.

**What Is My Wish?:** Ask students to work in pairs. Have them decide who is A and who is B. The As tell the Bs three things about themselves, two of which must be factual. One of the things told must be a wish that A has. The wish should be shrouded in subtlety so that B has to listen actively and wonder which details are true and which detail is a wish. Here are some examples.

*My name is Astrid. I was named after my mother's aunt who is a professional singer and lives in Los Angeles. I live with my cat, Abbie, a black and white cat that I found in the park where she had been abandoned. Which facts are true? What is my wish?*

*My name is Victor. I live in a house that has a wireless connection to the Internet. When I clap my hands, the lights in my bedroom go on or off. Which facts are true? What is my wish?*

*My name is Salvadore. I speak three languages fluently and have lived in five countries. It take me five minutes to walk to school because I live across the road. What is my wish?*

*My name is Saeeda. I love clothes and am lucky to know how to sew so I have new outfits every week. I have two cats and a brother. What is my wish?*

After the students have guessed what are the facts and what are the wishes, let them spend some time talking to one another about their hopes and dreams. You can judge how much time is needed by being sensitive to the amount of discussion going on in the partner groups. You might decide to ask some students to introduce their partners to the class, or individuals can talk to the class about what they discussed with their partners.

**May I Have Your Autograph?:** Hand out copies of the Autograph Worksheet (page 23) to your students. Ask them to approach their classmates seeking answers to the questions on their sheets. Not only do they have to speak to a variety of people until they get yes answers, they need to establish details, such as where someone travelled outside the country or what great movie someone saw in the past four days. The autographs confirm that students shared personal data and may help students feel important. The completed forms can become the basis for class discussion and teacher review.

# Autograph Worksheet

Find people in the room who have done at least one of the following things or have some of the qualities or attributes identified. Have them record their full name on the space beside the event, quality, or attribute. Ask them questions about the information. Record a short note on the sheet to remind yourself of the conversation. Make sure that you get as many names as possible on the sheet. Have people record their names only once. Try to meet as many people as possible! **Find someone who**

has travelled outside the country this year (Autograph) \_\_\_\_\_

Where? \_\_\_\_\_

had something exciting happen to them today (Autograph) \_\_\_\_\_

What happened? \_\_\_\_\_

looks after their siblings after school sometimes (Autograph) \_\_\_\_\_

Names of siblings: \_\_\_\_\_

watched a great movie in the past four days (Autograph) \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

speaks more than one language fluently (Autograph) \_\_\_\_\_

List: \_\_\_\_\_

has a hobby (Autograph) \_\_\_\_\_

What? \_\_\_\_\_

has a favorite TV program (Autograph) \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

has a great book to recommend (Autograph) \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Author: \_\_\_\_\_

has met someone famous (Autograph) \_\_\_\_\_

Who? \_\_\_\_\_

loves to cook (Autograph) \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite food/recipe: \_\_\_\_\_