Enjoyifying Your Zoom

A Facilitator's Guide to Building Community, Creating Comfort and Engaging Volunteers in your Online Gatherings

Ideas created & compiled by Tamara Staton,
CCL Education & Resilience Coordinator
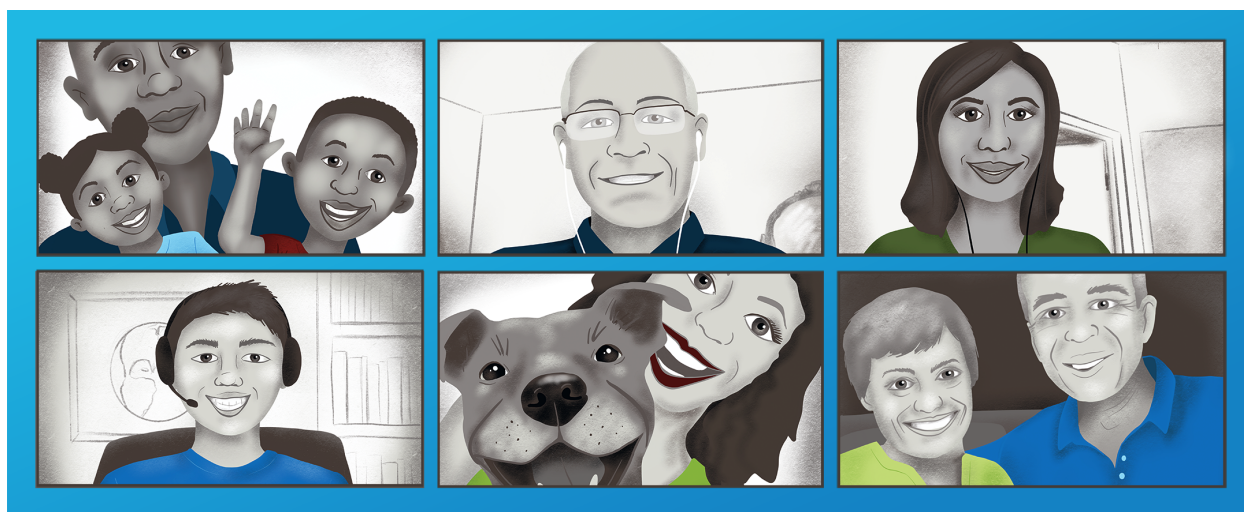*Most recent update: 1/31/23*

Citizens' Climate Lobby

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Introduction

Many people are motivated to participate in activities that help them feel connected, engaged and happy. When we focus on creating such opportunities for people in our online gatherings, we support their development and ability to be effective advocates. This document was created to support you in finding and implementing activities for your meetings to help build community, create an increased comfort level among your volunteers, and make your gatherings fun and engaging for everyone. I've separated the activities into distinct categories, though there is naturally some overlap. Feel free to be creative and be open to imperfection and awkwardness the first few times you try them, especially if you're new/er to getting outside the box around online facilitation! **While there are many activities here, even just using ONE short activity can change the experience of your gathering.** Enjoy!

Enjoyify Your Zoom: 3 Simple Steps

1. **Energize**: *"How can I up my energy before and during the event?"*
2. **Personalize**: *"How can I connect the content to what people care about?"*
3. **Smile**-**ize**: *"How can I help people enjoy their experience?"*

Energize: What helps you feel alive? *Do more of THAT before, and optimally, during your call. Bonus points for asking* others *what helps them feel alive and doing more of* THAT. =)

Personalize: Who is in your online gathering?
- Introverts, extroverts, engineers, teachers, retired people, cat lovers, jokesters, serious people, talkers, listeners…the list goes on, of course!
- Not sure? Want more detail? Do an activity early on that helps you find out AND gets people smiling (see "Stand up if" on p.5 below)
- Try to have something for 'everyone'
  - Mix it up regularly (every 10-15 mins) with…
    - An opener to community build (in chat /breakouts),
    - Breakout room time (small groups / partners)
    - Space for people to contribute (in chat, or aloud)
    - Polls, images, listening, sharing, discussion time…

Smile-ize: People smile when…
- *They can relate, they feel relaxed, they're having fun, they feel confident, they see irony…they see themselves in the content / process*
- Help people feel more of the above in your meetings
- Need ideas? See below for ideas to try and links to check out!

General Facilitation Tips

- **Facilitator energy is the most important** aspect of creating engaging gatherings - *what could you do to make a 1% shift in your own energy for your meetings? What makes you smile and laugh?*
- **Give very clear instruction**s. Add instructions to the chat whenever possible, especially before sending people to breakout rooms.
- **Respond to people** after they share so they feel valued. Get creative about this when you can, letting it develop into a short conversation when time allows.
- **Use people's responses as an opportunity to actively engage the whole group** (*if someone says they like birds, consider taking the whole group on 'flight' with their arms!*)
- **Consider various personalities, learning styles and interests** in the activities your plan
- When putting people into breakout rooms:
    - Include how people can decide who will start the activity or share first, like:
        - *Alphabetical by first / last name*
        - *Birthday closest to now*
        - *Youngest*
        - *Smallest shoe size*
        - *Person closest to well-known landmarks (pick one!)*
    - Type into the "Broadcast" button on the bottom of the Breakout room box to let people know when their time is halfway up in breakout rooms
- **Get on the line early**, **be ready** with your materials, and **consider having an opening question on a slide, or even music playing** quietly in the background. For additional Zoom suggestions, including polling and content presentation pointers, see these trainings on CCL community: How to Host Online Zoom Meetings & Planning and Facilitating a Group Meeting.

Deinhibitizers / Openers

Whenever possible, I start my meetings off with an opportunity for people to connect to the space and the group. The more engaging I can make it, optimally with smiles and even some laughter, the better. For smaller groups, it can be nice for everyone to get a chance to speak - though sometimes that works best in breakout rooms. I try to give at least 5-10 mins for opening and introductions (next section). See this list for additional ideas of short activities.

Overall Purpose: *Meet people where they are and make space for people to be present.*

- **2 then 2** (5 mins)
  - Invite people to type into the chat two words that represent their current state of mind or well-being. Invite people to read through the chat, and either invite silence for 30 seconds or read through some of the responses anonymously with a compassionate tone. Then invite people to type two words into the chat that represent the state of being they'd like to have by the end of the call. Read and appreciate the responses anonymously with energy.
- **Chat Storm of Frustration and Gratitude** (5 mins)
  - Good to use when it's likely that people may be navigating strong emotions in the world. Invite people to share in the chat 1-3 words or phrases that speak to any frustrations they are experiencing lately, about CCL or life right now. All feelings are welcome, though encourage them to remain respectful of all individuals.Then do the same with words that express gratitude in their life.

Overall Purpose: *Create a sense of lightness, hope and/or community; help give people a sense of where the group is as a whole.*

- **Celebration Station** (3 -15 mins, depending on group size)
  - Invite people to share in the chat (or aloud - either popcorn style or the whole group - depending on how much time and how many people you have) what they are celebrating lately in their chapter or their CCL community. Give guidelines of 15-20 secs or 1-2 sentences each person.
- **Musical Quote Walk** (5-10 mins, depending on group size)
  - Gather a number of quotes that speak to the tone or mood you'd like to create in your meeting. Put them on slides and let them run through them for your pre-call (5-10 mins before official call start) or at the beginning of your call. As a transition to your meeting/call, invite people to share (in the chat or aloud) which quote resonates with them right now and why. Having music quietly playing in the background creates a positive mood.
- **This or that? (**2-3 mins)

- ○ Invite people to raise their hand (OR touch your nose, rub your elbow, two thumbs up…) IF…
    - ■ You prefer Crest? Toms? Sensodyne? Etc.
    - ■ Live on the East Coast / West Coast?
    - ■ Shampoo first? Soap first? (in the shower) - [use with a group that you know…]
    - ■ You put your pants on first? Shirt on first? [use with a group that you know…]
  - ○ *Make up your own...think of ideas that will get people laughing and relating. Here is an entire [list of this or that questions](#).*

- **Stand up if…[personalize these for your group as needed]**
  - ○ Touch your nose if…you're a cat lover…
  - ○ Stretch one arm if…you're a dog lover…
  - ○ Twist your wrists if…you don't participate in animal bias…
  - ○ Do a standing rain dance if…you love the rain.
  - ○ Raise both arms if…you like snow better than rain.
  - ○ Do a backbend if…_____
  - ○ Pat your arms if…_____
  - ○ Do a neck roll if…food brings you joy.
  - ○ Swing your arms if…chocolate brings you even more joy.
  - ○ Swagger your shoulders if…you're more a fruity sugar kind of person.
  - ○ Bounce up and down if… you've ever done the backpacking through Europe thing in your life.
  - ○ Gimme a thumbs up if…you think it would be pretty awesome to take members of Congress out into the wilderness.
  - ○ Gimme two thumbs up if…you think it would be even cooler to leave some of those members out in the wilderness.
  - ○ And last, but certainly not least….Lean in and scrunch up your face if…you are so ready to move on and focus on _____ now!

Introductions

Overall Purpose: *To help people get to know each other, generally put people at ease and help create a safe space where people can lean in, share, and take action with greater ease.*

- **Simple Ice breaker Questions** (5-25 mins, depending on group size, chat or individual share): Invite people to share their answer to ONE question that you choose for the whole group. Formulate questions based on current events, seasons, holidays, what people might be

thinking about, working on, etc. Be careful about getting too personal. See [this](#) list for additional ideas.

- *How did someone help you in a way that was meaningful to you, big or small, personal or professional?*
- *What is the thing that you are most looking forward to right now?*
- *Have you ever quit doing something that you used to be really passionate about? Do you regret it? Happy you quit?*
- *What do you love about your life right now?*
- *Why did you come to this meeting? Experienced: Why do you like carbon pricing and why are you willing to put yourself out there to advocate for it?*
- *One sentence about which animal characteristic you would choose considering the state of the world right now*
- *3 favorite words about summer?*
- *Are you a cat or dog person and why?*
- *What do you do to help yourself deal with bad climate news?*
- *What do you 💚 about CCL? If new, what do you 💚 about taking action on climate?*
- *Are you the type to make a new year's resolution? Why / why not?*
- *A sentence about your favorite COVID comfort food*
- *What is one thing you know about CCL and why it might be good for you?*
- *3 words for what are you looking forward to/enjoying with spring coming or daylight savings time?*
- *One sentence about one new or interesting activity you've been doing?*
- *3 adjectives that describe your Mom (around Mother's Day)...*

- **Metaphorical Icebreaker Questions:** Help make space for people to recognize, accept and express their individual experience, which is part of the process of staying resilient.
    - *If you could pick any animal characteristic to embody, which would you choose & why?*
    - *If you were a musical instrument, which one would you be and why?*
    - *If you were a month of the year, which would you choose and why?*
    - *If you were a weather pattern, which one would you be and why?*
    - *If you were a song, what genre would you be in and why?*
    - *If you were a structure, what natural element/s would you be made of and why?*
    - *If you could embody any natural land or water feature, which would you be and why?*

- **Creative Name Tags** (2-5 mins)
    - Teach people how to rename themselves on Zoom *(right click on your photo or click on the 3 dots in the upper right corner)*, and then invite people to "rename themselves." You can spend time highlighting these or not. Some ideas are:
        - Name + their superpower (extra points for silly!)
        - Name + favorite superhero
        - Instagram handle (for younger groups) (@climatecoach)

- ■ Name + ideal job title
- ■ Name + favorite personality characteristic about themselves

- ● **Show and Tell** (5-15 mins, depending on group size)
  - ○ What can you show us that is within arms reach that represents even just a little bit of who you are or what you care about? (30 second limit)
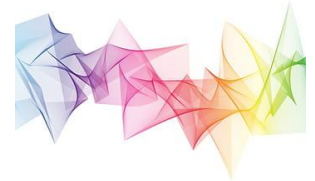
Transitions

Overall Purpose: *To help the group move from one topic to another. By separating topics with activities, some people are able to be more present.*

- ● **Group Count** (1-3 mins, depending on group size and collaboration)
  - ○ The object is for the group to count from 1-10 (or however high you choose as the facilitator or collaboratively as a group) without planning who will say what number. Only one person can speak at a time and if two or more people speak simultaneously, the counting returns to one.
- ● **Energy Check** (30 seconds):
  - ○ Ask the group to share in the chat or on their hands (fist = low energy, 5 fingers = high) how their energy is right now. If it is low, you may want to take a minute to do one of the activities below.

Energizers

Overall Purpose: *To infuse the space and the group with energy. Creating a shift in energy helps to integrate the different parts of the brain, which contributes to better focus (among other things!).*

- ● **Stop-Drop-Go:** (5 mins)
  - ○ Similar to 'Simon Says.' Tell the group that you will give them a mix of 3 different commands, each of which has a different set of actions that goes along with it. Before starting the game, teach the commands, encouraging them to do them with you.
    - ■ Round 1: **Stop** = hold hands up. **Drop** = Squat quickly or bend. **Go** = run in place
    - ■ Round 2: **Stop** = run in place. **Drop** = Stay standing. **Go** = hold hands up
- ● **Body Spelling:** (2-3 mins)
  - ○ Invite people to write various words (or draw pictures) with various body parts. Choose 1-3. i.e.,:
    - ■ *Spell out your first name with your elbow. OR Draw a smiley face with…*
    - ■ *Spell out your last name with your toe. OR Draw a tree with…*

- - ■ *Spell out 'climate' with your nose. OR Draw a cloud with…*
    - ■ *Spell out your nose silom's name with your hips. OR Draw a heart with…*

- **Body Pat** (1-2 mins)
    - ○ Invite people to join you in standing up (as they're able) and pat themselves all over their body, starting at each shoulder and going down each arm, moving down the torso, each leg, etc. Potentially end with a few full body jumps.

- **Dance Party** (1-3 mins)
    - ○ Read the group for this one, and/or get their buy-in on stepping outside the box and upping the energy. Challenge by choice, as always - no one has to dance if they don't want to. Key to a good dance party: HIGH energy music that you like but doesn't offend - the group will follow your lead, so be sure you LOVE it. Don't be afraid to do parts of songs, but be sure to fade out vs. just cutting it off - that's annoying and too jarring to the nervous system. If you're in need of song ideas, mine the Pandora Cleaning Station, African Tribal Spirits, Cycling Radio, Dance Radio, or similar for energetic tunes. One song idea: "Better when I'm dancing" by Megan Trainor.

Partner / Small Group Activities

Overall Purpose: *To increase people's comfort level with one another, which puts most people more at ease and helps create a safe space where people can take action.*

These activities are effective in smaller groups of 5-8, and often work well in breakout rooms with larger groups. Describe the games to the larger group, then label the breakout rooms with the activity name and let people choose their room. Give them 10-20 minutes for the activity and, if you have more time, let them choose another room for a second round.

- **If you Really Knew Me You Would Know**…(10-15 mins)
    - ○ 1-5 Rounds. In partners or groups of 3, someone starts by completing the above prompt: "If you really knew me, you would know _____". The other partner or group members follow with their own statements. Continue going back and forth or around the group, potentially inviting the group members (in your initial instructions) to share more vulnerable responses with each successive round.
        I.e. *If you really knew me, you'd know…*
        - ■ *…how much I really love sharpies.*
        - ■ *…that I play the nose flute.*
        - ■ *…that I played the clarinet in 7th and 8th grade.*
        - ■ *…when I'm put on the spot, I can't think of anything!*
        - ■ *…I'm really feeling overwhelmed by the state of the world lately.*
- **Never Have I Ever:**

- ○ Hold up five fingers (or 10 for a larger group) and share something you have never actually done. If someone HAS done that thing, they put a finger down. Part of the fun is asking about and learning about people's stories. Feel free to dive deep and get distracted with this game! Take turns sharing until someone has no fingers left to play with. Some amusing Never Have I Ever prompts are:
    - ■ *Never Have I Ever been skydiving.*
    - ■ *Never Have I Ever visited South America.*
    - ■ *Never Have I Ever gotten suspended from school or work.*
    - ■ *Never Have I Ever broken a bone.*
- **The Never-Ending Story**
  - ○ Great large group icebreaker for exercising your team's creativity. To start, begin telling the first sentence of a story. Then, pass the story on to the next person. Each following person elaborates on what the previous person created.
- **The Questions Game**
  - ○ This activity is a hybrid between a game and a discussion. Click here for instructions and a list of questions.
- **Discussion Questions** *(for additional question ideas, see here and above in Introductions)*
  - ○ *What do you love about the fall season, and how did you make the most of it this year?*
  - ○ Most enjoyable media these days
    - ■ *What books / movies/ podcasts / shows are you enjoying these days and why?*
  - ○ Favorite holidays
    - ■ *What is your favorite holiday? What do you love about it? What are some family traditions or traditions you've started on your own that you enjoy?*
  - ○ Philosophical Adventures - see this thorough list for great ideas on philosophical topics
- **Blind Portraits** (~5-10 mins) - *best for partners or small groups of 3-4*
  - ○ Grab a blank piece of paper and pen. Without looking at your paper once you start drawing, and without having access to your peripheral vision (blocking with a book can be helpful online), draw your partner's face. This can also work in groups of 3 - the group just needs to decide who will draw whom. Give ~1-2 mins to draw, ~3 minutes to debrief in a larger group with an Art Gallery of Blind Portraits. Take a screenshot with people holding up their portraits, with faces and portraits showing!
- **Silly Face Screenshots** (~1-2 min)
  - ○ Best with groups that are mostly comfortable with you and / or each other, or who are willing to let go of taking themselves so seriously. Would be a great activity to add to the end of another one. Just like it sounds, take one or a series of silly face screenshots! You'll need someone who knows how to do a full screen grab and optimally share those with you or the group. Be sure to get everyone's permission before sharing / posting.
- **Scattergories**

- A fun word game that can be adapted online at this link. Quickly fill out a category list with answers that begin with the same letter. Score points if no other player matches your answers. To win the game, score the most points.

Group Games for Online Spaces

Overall Purpose: *To build community, create laughter and a sense of lightness, and increase people's comfort levels with one another. This can help put people more at ease and help create a safe space where action can be taken with greater ease. Better for social events than monthly chapter mtgs.*

The following games require a personal subscription, some of which are free, others of which can be purchased online. Each of these games needs 10-20 mins, depending upon set up and experience.

- Kahoot: "Create, play and share fun games! Find millions of trivia games to play in person or via video…" Free personal account for up to 10 people. $4/mo for up to 20. $20/mo for up to 50.
- Quiplash: "Quiplash is the gut-busting battle of wits and wittiness! Just use your phone or tablet to answer simple prompts like those below. Currently $4.99 in the U.S., normally $9.99.
  - Something you'd be surprised to see a donkey do
  - A double rainbow doesn't have gold at the end of it. Instead, it has _____.
  - A better name for France
- Drawful Two: "Building on the original hit, Drawful 2 takes parties to the next level by allowing players to make their own crazy prompts." Currently $4.99 in the U.S., normally $9.99.
- Poll Everywhere games: Poll Everywhere has a variety of pre-created games and activities on their platform, including simple trivia questions, visual cloud creations and Q&A opportunities. Free account available for 25 max audience size and unlimited questions.

For more group games that work well online:
- 12 Large Group Icebreakers: Games & Activities
- 53 Best Zoom Games to Play
- 10 Fun Games to Play on Zoom that will Amp up your Next Virtual Party

Additional online game ideas:
- How to Play Family Feud on Zoom
- How to play Mafia on Zoom and Google Meet
- Codenames Game Online (free)

Closing Activities

Overall Purpose: To leave people with a feeling of completion for the gathering and simultaneously help them integrate and apply the meeting content.

- **Rampage of Appreciation** (30 secs)
  - Invite people to share, either through the chat or individually for 30 seconds each, anything that comes to mind that they feel grateful for. Anything goes, personal, professional or CCL oriented. Use a timer and an agreed upon motion that you'll make so they know their time is up.
- **One Bold Action** (1-5 mins)
  - Invite people to share, either through the chat or individually for 1 sentence, phrase or 15 seconds, what ONE bold action is that they are going to commit to taking as a result of their time here today.
- **1% change** (1-5mins)
  - Invite people to share, "What is something that might contribute to a 1% change that you'd like to make?" Share in the chat or aloud. Validate responses uniquely.
- **One thing you're taking away / Highlight** (1-5 mins)
  - Invite people to share, "What is one thing you're taking away from today?" OR "What is one highlight for you today?" Share in the chat or in partners/small groups, or aloud in the whole group. If you go into breakout groups, be sure to give a few minutes to highlight some responses from the small groups, either in the chat or aloud.