

Seven Questions

Here is an exercise that is fairly easy to do, as well as modify, given the personality of your students. This exercise serves to get the participants to know something about the lives of the students in their section and can take the group to a fairly deep understanding of each other in a short period of time.

Separate the section into groups of three or four. You will need to decide before you begin if they will share their answers to all of the questions within their group or move around to a new group every few questions. Both work well but give them at least three questions per group so that they gain a more complete picture of the person.

Have them take out a sheet of paper and write down the answers to the following questions:

- 1) Describe something that happened early in your childhood, before the age of 10, that helped shape the rest of your life (eg., divorce, move of family, etc.).
- 2) Describe a message you learned at an early age, before 10, that you carried for a long time or carry to this day.
- 3) Describe the last time you experienced three consecutive days of joy.
- 4) Describe your first love (note: don't help them here, "first love" is however they each individually define it so some may say a parent, a pet, and others may talk about their first romantic interest or even a food).
- 5) Discuss a social concern that is very important to you and why.
- 6) Describe a personal value that you hold true and try to live your life by.
- 7) Describe a personal challenge that you face in college or at this campus and where you go for support regarding this issue.

Then have them take turns sharing this information with their small group – give whatever time you deem necessary.

After sharing is done, stop and then have each individual take turns sharing their impressions of each member of the group. So you might have "David" be first and each member of the group would comment on one of the following about David to him. Note: these are all positive.

- a) something they admire about him/her
- b) something they like about him/her
- c) something that impresses them about the individual
- d) something they could identify with the individual about

Optional: You could then have groups briefly report back to large group about what this exercise was like.

This gets the group to understand many similarities they could have with other members, a framework from which to understand someone's beliefs etc., or even things they don't share but that are significant in how they experience the world. It's also nice to do this exercise throughout the first few weeks, doing a different group each time, so they can all learn more about each other.

