



THE BEST OF  
BROTHERHOOD BUILDING



## INTRODUCTION

These activities have been developed and compiled to help your organization become stronger and more unified.

The purpose of each of these activities is to build brotherhood and promote interaction among brothers. Each has an associated purpose: getting acquainted, self-disclosure, discussion, building trust, building rapport, developing respect, enhancing unity or discussing fraternal and personal values. The Concepts List page displays which stressed concepts correlate with each activity.

While all activities have definite purposes, try to think of ways to use more than one activity to accomplish a number of goals. For example, combine a “getting acquainted” activity with introducing yourself and others during a recruitment event. Explore creative ways to maximize participation.

These activities can be used for new member retreats, chapter retreats, chapter recruitment workshops, new member activities, Interfraternity Council retreats, pre-initiation activities, chapter pride week, post-initiation programs, or simply an inspirational beginning to a chapter meeting.

Each activity listing contains:

- Estimated amount of time you will need to complete the activity
- Resource materials needed
- Guided discussion questions

This resource is divided into two sections; Teambuilding and Brother Activities. In the Teambuilding section you will find especially challenging activities which require individuals to cooperate and act as a team. Activities in this section are more suitable for a retreat setting rather than a chapter meeting. The Brother Activities section includes a variety of activities that can be adapted and used in any setting.

\*If a source is not listed with the exercise/activity, it is unknown.

## STATEMENT ON HAZING

Hazing has no place in the fraternity experience. While executing these activities remember that you are obligated to follow your organization’s inter/national policies. When implemented correctly these activities undoubtedly provide a positive experience and an opportunity for growth.



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## TEAMBUILDING

These activities are designed to foster group cohesion, communication, collaboration, and teamship among participants.

**The following activities are divided into three levels:**

**Level 1: Require little or no spotting or assistance.**

**Level 2: Require spotting or assistance by a facilitator**

**Level 3: Require spotting or assistance by group members**

\*We recommend that a trained group dynamics facilitator lead Level 2 & 3 activities. Trained facilitators can help your group examine group dynamics, leadership traits and listening skills, as well as set the environment for self-disclosure. Outside facilitators help to objectively assist your group's growth. Recommended facilitators include your chapter advisor, Greek advisor, experienced alumnus, counseling/advising center counselors, residence hall director, or student activities advisor.

*“What would you attempt to do  
if you knew you could not fail...?”*  
– Unknown

### Teambuilding Activities

All Aboard	Order Matters
Blindfold Polygon	Raging River
Drop Shot	Sticky Situation
Electric Fence	Striker
Get Up and Move	Team Beam
Hoop Initiative	The Great Divide
Impulse	The Maze
Jump Rope Run	Toxic Waste
Knots	Traffic Jam
Magic Carpet	Trust Fall
Moon Ball	Trust Wave
Newspaper Shuffle	Warp Speed
	When The Chips Are Down



## All Aboard

### Level 2

15 minutes

**Materials:** box, tape or chalk to create a box

**The Task:** To move the group onto the box without touching the ground and to hold that position for a given period of time (count of 5, 10, etc.) depending on the size of the group, the size of the box or area and the challenge desired. If a group accomplishes the initiative with relative ease, you may want to have the group try a smaller box or area.

**Rules:**

- (1) Present the initiative and ask/answer questions.
- (2) Stress safety of members: put both feet down if group starts to fall, spotting, care if participants climb on someone's shoulders.
- (3) Stop the group if pushing/shoving occurs.
- (4) If group is unable to complete this initiative, ask group to identify the interfering behaviors, and ask group to modify the criteria for success. Reduce length of time group must be on the box or in the prescribed area, etc, move to larger box, etc.

**Points for Discussion:** How did the group plan? Did everyone participate? Did everyone listen? Was size a factor to consider during the activity? Was strength a factor to consider during the activity? Who led? Who was passive? What was learned regarding the impact of planning? Was everyone willing to share their own physical space with others? What was the change in level of comfort from the beginning to the end? Can you relate this activity back to the chapter setting?

## Blindfold Polygon

### Level 1

15 minutes

**Materials:** large rope, blindfolds

**The Task:** Members of a group hold a rope and standing blindfolded in a circle must use the rope to form a polygon prescribed by the activity leader. Examples: A square, a triangle, a right triangle, a parallelogram, a trapezoid.

**Rules:**

- (1) No member of the group may let go of the rope for more than five seconds at a time.
- (2) When the group feels that the figure has been correctly formed, they may remove their blindfolds.

**Points for Discussion:** Did the group devise a workable plan for coordinating the efforts of its members? How did the group handle decision making? Did a leader emerge within



the group? How did members of the group compensate for their inability to see? Would the assigned task have been harder or easier for an individual to perform without the assistance of other members of the group? Does this ever happen in the chapter?

**Variations:** (1) Coil the rope. Place it some distance away from the group and require the group to find it before proceeding with the main task. (2) Dispense with the rope and ask the group to form the required polygon while holding hands with each other.

## Drop Shot

**Level 2**  
**25 minutes**

**Materials:** measuring tape, a book to use as a landing pad, sheets of plain paper, flip chart pad to display scores, red and black markers

**Set Up:** Locate a place away from walls that will serve as a good drop site for the teams to release their creations. Mark a height of approximately eight feet by hanging tape from the ceiling or stringing it from wall to wall. Find a stepladder or sturdy chair for the droppers.

Draw a score sheet to keep track of the teams' performances.

**The Task:** Break participants into even teams of 6-8. Instruct participants to design an object to drop from eight feet high or higher. Ideally, the object will land on the book on the floor and stay on it.

If the object lands and stays on the book, the team will earn 20 points. If it misses the book, the team will lose 1 point for every inch the object lands away from the edge of the book.

The teams will have three scored drops. Teams will have five minutes to design, and then will take turns making the first drop. Teams will have five more minutes to make improvements to their design, and then make the second round of drops. It will be the same process for the last round.

Each small team will receive one sheet of paper to drop. They do not have to use all the paper, but may only drop one piece as opposed to dropping several pieces like confetti. If they want another sheet to change the design, return the previous resources and get a fresh sheet of paper.

Someone in each small team will be dropping the device. The entire device must be above the eight foot mark and it must free fall without assistance.

The facilitator is responsible for measuring and recording scores.

For safety, when a person steps up to drop the object, ask people to spot for the dropper so that there will not be any people falling to the ground during the activity.

**Points for Discussion:** How well did you do? What are some patterns you see? How did you draw upon creativity and innovation in yourself and others? How did teams



influence each other? What implications does this activity have for your chapter?

*Source: Raptor and Other Team Building Activities by Sam Sikes p. 76*

## Electric Fence

**Level 3**  
**30 minutes**

**Materials:** rope, this activity should be done outside, preferably in a wooded area where there are plenty of trees

**The Task:** A rope should be tied between two trees about four feet high.

Ask the participants to imagine that this is an electric fence with a force field from the top of the rope to the ground. The objective of this exercise is to get the entire group from one side to the other.

The first person may not run and jump over the rope. He may not exit head first. The last person may not jump the fence, or otherwise exit under their power alone. Encourage group work.

When going over the rope, participants may NOT touch the rope, the connecting trees, nor break the plane under the rope. If members touch the rope or break the plane, they “lose” the use of the body part that touched the rope. So, for example, if someone accidentally hits the rope with his arm, he has to hold that arm across this body and cannot use it to help others over, or use it to help him get over the rope later.

The facilitators MUST emphasize the importance of spotting and personal safety.

Spotting rules:

- If they begin to step on the backs of others, remind them to not step directly on the spine or the neck of another participant. Instruct them to step on the shoulder and hips, if necessary.
- Only one participant will be moved at a time.
- The facilitator spots the first two participants over the fence, and then the groups are fully responsible for spotting. The facilitator will also spot the last participant out.
- The facilitator does not physically support the participants unless necessary in the instance of a fall.
- Spot until the person in transit is completely over the fence and on the ground.
- Be careful to spot the head and shoulder all the time.
- Do not let someone be a “step” for too long.
- Heads and shoulders must always be above the feet.

**Points for Discussion:** Was the group challenged by this exercise? Was



communication strained? Why? How did the group accept individual ideas? Who led or followed during this exercise? Why? What type of positive or negative reinforcement did you receive? What would you do differently in your next attempt? How would you work better as a team?

*Source: Western Illinois University, Horn's Lodge Teams Course*

## Get Up and Move

**Level 1**  
**15 minutes**

**Materials:** chairs for each member

**The Task:** Make a circle of chairs large enough for every person in the group except for one person. The person without a seat stands in the middle (preferably, the first person is the one giving the instructions so everyone understands the rules). The individual in the middle says, "Get up and move if..." and fills in the blank with a phrase of his choosing. For example, he may say, "Get up and move if you have a roommate that snores." Or "Get up and move if you got an A on a test this week."

After the person says his statement, everyone that can relate to the statement must get up and move to a different chair. If you don't relate to the statement, you remain in your seat. The person without a seat must stand in the middle and continue the exercise. This exercise is a good opportunity to learn unique traits of individuals. It is important to share with the members that this is a serious activity.

This can become quite competitive, remind everyone to respect his brother and protect their safety...no pushing or shoving.

*Source: Shantel Smith, Southeast Missouri State University*

## Impulse

**Level 1**  
**15 minutes**

**Materials:** none

**The Task:** Members of the group, holding hands and sitting in a circle, pass around a gesture initiated by the activity facilitator or a designated member of the group. The facilitator may send the gesture from right to left, left to right, or in both directions simultaneously. The group works to duplicate the gesture in succession accurately and efficiently until it comes back around to the leader. Examples: Leader gently squeezes





the hand of his or her neighbor; facilitator raises neighbor's arm and gently drops it; facilitator shakes neighbor's hand; facilitator pushes against neighbor's palm; facilitator drums fingers on the back of neighbor's hand.

**Rules:** Each member of the circle must wait until they have physically received the gesture before passing it on.

**Points for Discussion:** Did each impulse make it all the way around the circle? What happened when impulses crossed? What things made for easy transmission? What things hindered transmission? What lessons for effective communication can be drawn from this game? How can these lessons be applied to the chapter setting?

**Variations:** (1) Blindfold the group. (2) Pass around gestures without holding hands. (3) Pass around words instead of gestures.

## Jump Rope Run

**Level 2**  
15 minutes

**Materials:** one jump rope

**The Task:** The goal of this exercise is to have all participants jump in succession over the jump rope each time it hits the ground. Two facilitators rotate the jump rope and once the first person has jumped, at least one person must jump over the rope every time it hits the ground. If the rope does hit the ground without someone jumping over it or if the rope hits someone, the entire group must start over. Participants can jump only once.

**Points for Discussion:** How did you accomplish your goal? How challenging was it? What were some of the difficulties? What role did encouragement play in this activity? What role did practice play? For those at the end of the line, how did you feel when someone was successful? For those who had already jumped, how did you feel when someone was not successful? How can this situation apply to our fraternities and sororities?

## Knots

**Level 2**  
30 minutes

**Materials:** none

**The Task:** Break the chapter into smaller groups of 8-10. The objective of this activity is for individuals to examine communication and teamwork in a group setting.

There should be one observer for each group to listen to statements, watch for the natural leaders, watch the members who don't give input, and oversee the general group dynamic.



The small group should form a shoulder-to-shoulder circle. Each person puts their hands in and joins hands with two different people not adjacent to him. A person should link their right hand with another right hand, and their left with another left.

No one should make rash movements since everyone is connected.

When the group has their hands in a tangle, they need to figure out a way to get untangled without breaking grips. There are four possible solutions: a circle, two separate circles, two interlocking circles, or two circles with an overhand knot in it).

**Points for Discussion:** Was this challenging? Why/why not? What was most frustrating about this exercise? How did you approach the task? Act first, think second? The other way around? How do we approach problems in our chapter? Was everyone in the group heard? Who was the immediate leader? Did he continue to lead throughout the exercise? Were any good ideas lost? What did you learn from yourself as a result of this exercise?

*Source: The New Games Book, edited by Andrew Fluegelman, Doubleday and Company, Inc. Garden City, New York 1976*

## Magic Carpet

**Level 2**  
**30 minutes**

**Materials:** 4' x 5' piece of tarp or plastic cloth per 8-12 people.

**The Task:** Have all group members stand on the tarp/cloth. Their goal is to turn the tarp/cloth over without touching the ground surrounding it.

All participants must maintain contact with the tarp/cloth at all times. This eliminates the options of carrying participants on shoulders and other balance related concerns.

**Points for Discussion:** What was your role in regard to coming up with a solution? Were you active or passive? Who did the most work?

*Source: Teamwork & Teamplay by Jim Cain & Barry Jolliff p. 125*



## Moon Ball

**Level 1**  
**15 minutes**

**Materials:** beach ball

**The Task:** Members of the group work to keep a beach ball aloft for a specified number of hits. The activity facilitator may set the goal or the group may set its own goals. After each trial, the goal may be revised.

**Rules:**

- (1) No member of the group may touch the ball twice in succession.
- (2) Each round of play ends when the ball touches the ground.

**Points for Discussion:** Who pitched in? Who held back? Why? What sorts of hits made it easy for the group to keep the ball aloft? What hits made it hard? How did members of the group talk to each other? What kinds of comments helped the group effort? What comments hindered the group? Did a leader or a coach emerge from the group? Did everyone participate? Why or why not? Did the activity involve competition? What kind? When is competition seen in the chapter?

**Variations:** (1) Require members of the group to hit the ball in sequence, so that everyone must take a turn. (2) Give extra points for hits with the head, knees, feet, or elbows.

*Source: Quicksilver: Adventure Games, Initiative Problems, Trust Activities and A Guide to Effective Leadership by Karl Rhonke & Steve Butler p. 133*

## Newspaper Shuffle

**Level 1**  
**15 minutes**

**Materials:** one complete newspaper for each team of 5-8 people, a chair for each person, timer

**Set Up:** Before the participants arrive, the facilitator should get a Sunday newspaper for each group and remove the coupons and advertisements not printed on newsprint. Carefully rearrange the pages, even putting some of them upside down. Just before the instructions are given, ask the participants to gather seated in a circle of chairs so that the chairs almost touch each other. Place the rearranged newspaper on the floor in the middle of each circle.

**The Task:** Explain to the participants that the newspaper they see in the middle of the circle has been disorganized. Their job is to put it back in correct order as quickly as possible with all the pages arranged like they were before if left the newsstand. No one



can change or leave their seats. The facilitator should time the group, or give them a set amount of time to complete the activity.

**Points for Discussion:** What time, if any, was spent planning before you began the action? Who took charge? Who seemed to be a newspaper expert? How did you deal with the limited space for such a big task?

*Source: Raptor and Other Team Building Activities by Sam Sikes p. 151*

## Order Matters

**Level 1**  
**25 minutes**

**Materials:** none

**The Task:** Without talking, members of the group should arrange themselves in some kind of order, as prescribed by the activity leader.

**Examples:**

- (a) Alphabetically, by first name, middle name, or last name.
- (b) Numerically, by birthday.
- (c) Numerically, by telephone number.
- (d) Alphabetically, by street name.
- (e) Numerically, by numbers which the facilitator has secretly assigned.

**Points for Discussion:** What are the basic requirements of effective communication? What other means of communication can be substituted for speech? Do people pay closer attention to each other when they are deprived of the power to speak? How does this activity relate to the chapter setting?

**Variations:** (1) Before setting the task, invite participants to devise a method of communication that does not depend upon speech or hearing. (2) Require that participants perform the task blindfolded.

## Raging River

**Level 2**  
**25 minutes**

**Materials:** an assortment of short boards, cardboard, or carpet squares

**The Task:** Using an assortment of short boards, pieces of cardboard or carpet squares, which the group must transport themselves down the raging river. The number of boards is less than one to a participant.

**Rules:** Using the boards, pieces of cardboard or carpet squares, the group must transport themselves down the river until they reach the rescue barge. The boards will



hold as many members as necessary. The boards only move forward and must be carried onto the rescue barge. If any one touches the ground (river), the whole group must return to the starting point and begin again.

**Set Up:**

- (1) Present the scenario, the challenge and the rules.
- (2) Ask if there are questions and if everyone understands the challenge.
- (3) Present the safety considerations:
  - a. Participants must move from board to board without leaping or jumping.
  - b. Boards must not be tossed.
  - c. Group members must exercise safe care when they are passing boards from one to another along the line.

**Variations:** (1) Change the distance to be crossed. (2) Permit a greater number of contact points or a limited number of “brushes” with the ground.

**Points for Discussion:** How did the group compensate for differences in the physical abilities of its members? Did some members need help balancing on the boards? What did members sharing a board need to be willing to do for each other? What sorts of board placement made the crossing more difficult? Less difficult? How did the group treat members who stepped or fell off the boards and forced everyone to start all over again? Did everyone listen to each other? Who led? Who supported? Does this activity resemble anything that occurs in the chapter setting?

## Sticky Situation

**Level 1**  
**50 minutes**

**Materials:** 1 Full roll of masking tape, approximately 30 feet of rope

**The Task:** The facilitator first needs to make a boundary for the activity. Ask the team to stand in one group so they are close together, but still have some elbowroom. When they are in position, the facilitator will lay the boundary around their feet and tie the rope where the ends meet. This area defines their workspace while solving the problem.

Instruct the group to completely unroll the masking tape without the tape breaking, touching itself, or touching anything but skin. In other words, the tape cannot touch clothing, the floor, or any other non-person.

All the unrolling must take place with the tape inside the rope boundary.

At the end, all the tape will be unrolled and everyone will be stuck within the boundary.

The team may change the shape of the boundary.

**Points for Discussion:** What were some of your beliefs about this task before you started? How effectively did you plan? How did you decide what strategy to use? What were the most effective things you did? How did quality play a role in the activity?

*Source: Raptor and Other Team Building Activities by Sam Sikes p. 184*



## Striker

**Level 2**  
**45 minutes**

**Materials:** 20" diameter soft ball (nerf ball, beach ball)

**The Task:** Divide the chapter into two teams and ask the teams to separate by about ten yards.

Have the team with the oldest or youngest player elect to either receive or smack the ball. The team that delivers the ball (called a Smack-Off) initiates the action by having one player toss the ball aloft, allowing another player to hand-strike the descending ball so that it is hit toward the other team.

A score is achieved by hitting the ball over an end line (if playing outdoors) or making ball/wall contact at the end of the gym. After a goal is made, a member of the defending team is allowed to pick up the ball and, without interference, strike the ball toward the far wall. There is no time out after a score. Play is continuous.

**Rules:**

- (1) The ball cannot hit any part of the body except hands and arms.
- (2) Forceful contact is allowed.
- (3) There are no time outs, penalties, or whistles.
- (4) Contact with the ball is made only with an open hand, not fists.

*Source: Quicksilver: Adventure Games, Initiative Problems, Trust Activities and A Guide to Effective Leadership by Karl Rhonke & Steve Butler p. 133*

## Team Beam

**Level 2**  
**20 minutes**

**Materials:** four 12" x 5" x 5" concrete blocks, six(6) foot long 2" x 4' beams of wood. Place the wooden beam across the concrete blocks so the wood is secure.

**The Task:** Split the chapter into teams of 8-10. Then split each team in half and ask each half to stand on either end of the beam.

Instruct the group that the two sides must change places, without knocking anyone off the beam and without anyone touching the ground. If anyone does "fall" off the beam or loses their balance and touches the ground, the entire group must start over again.

**Points for Discussion:** How did this exercise go? Did you find out anything new about yourself and others? Do you like what you discovered? Why or why not? Did the team act as a team? Was there any competition between the two sides? Why or why not? Could the solution have been easier if the two sides communicated their plan before anyone acted? Is there value in competition? What would have happened if each group in the



team was instructed to the other side without regard for the other half? Would the result have been as successful? How does cooperation benefit everyone? Does this apply to our chapter? Does it apply to recruitment? To community relations? To Greek relations? Has our chapter been hurt or helped by inter-Greek competition?

## The Great Divide

**Level 1**  
**15 minutes**

**Materials:** none

**The Task:** Standing shoulder to shoulder together in a line, all members of the group must move across a space of indeterminate length while keeping their feet in contact with the feet of group members on either side of them. The facilitator will decide when the group has reached its destination.

**Rules:**

- (1) If at any point (even when some have already reached the destination) two members break apart at the feet, the entire group must return to the beginning.
- (2) Group members must maintain their original position in line throughout the activity.
- (3) Shoes may not be tied together.
- (4) Legs may not be tied together.

**Points for Discussion:** Did a leader emerge? How did the group arrive at an accepted method of moving forward? What helped and what hindered this process? What kinds of support did members give to each other? What kinds of things required special attention in order for the group to succeed? Did people listen to each other? Did people feel free to offer ideas and suggestions? Was it necessary that everyone be equally good at moving in this awkward fashion? How do these points relate to the chapter setting?

## The Maze

**Level 1**  
**25 minutes**

**Materials:** maze, tape or chalk to create maze

**The Task:** A grid is taped out on the floor 5 squares x 7 squares. The facilitator determines the pattern participants will have to follow in order to get from one side of the grid (or 'maze') to the other. However the facilitator will not share the pattern with participants. The group must then discover how to travel through the maze determined by the facilitator.



**Rules:**

- (1) One person at a time enters the maze and travels one square at a time until an error is made (does not step onto the correct square of the travel pattern). Then, another member of the group attempts to discover the pattern.
- (2) Once the pattern through the maze has been discovered, each member of the group, one at a time, must travel correctly through the maze. If an error is made, the whole group has to start again.
- (3) The other group members may give assistance to the person traveling through the maze. Options for assisting: Verbal or nonverbal.

**Points for Discussion:** How did members initially treat the challenge? What behaviors helped the group succeed? What paths do we follow in our chapter? Who has created these paths?

## Toxic Waste

**Level 1**  
**20 minutes**

**Materials:** two large coffee cans, bungee cord, ropes

**The Task:** Two large coffee cans are each centered in a rope circle approximately 6 feet across. A bungee cord circle, larger than the circumference of the cans, with 8-10 six-foot ropes attached is used by a group to carry the can of water or beans and pour the contents of the can into the second can. A group using the bungee cord with attached ropes must carry the can of water (dried beans if indoors) above the ground and without spilling the contents, pour the contents into the empty second can.

**Rules:**

- (1) Every member must hold on to a rope.
- (2) No one may step into the circle that surrounds the cans.
- (3) No one may touch either of the cans with their hands or feet.
- (4) If any of the contents of the can spill, the can is refilled and the group must start again.

**Points for Discussion:** How was a plan developed? What behaviors helped or hindered success? What did you learn about the roles of group members? What might the contents of the can represent in the fraternity?





## Traffic Jam

**Level 2**  
**20 minutes**

**Materials:** cement blocks, carpet squares, or pieces of wood

**The Task:** A series of cement blocks, carpet squares or pieces of wood are arranged in a half circle or a straight line. One block/square is needed for each group member and one extra in the center. The group is divided in half. Each of the two groups line up facing each other. Each participant is on a block leaving the center block empty. The groups change sides with each other ending up in the same order as they started from.

**Rules:**

- (1) Participants may only move forward.
- (2) Participants may move directly onto an empty block or may pass one person before landing on an empty block.

**Set Up:**

- (1) Tell the group they are in a traffic jam and need to figure out how to move according to the objective and rules for carrying out the initiative. Answer any questions from the group.
- (2) Divide the group into two groups.
- (3) Send each of the groups to an area some distance from each other to plan how they are going to solve the problem.
- (4) Have each group elect a spokesperson or a leader when either group has worked out a plan. The two leaders direct the groups in going through the initiative. They may participate or just direct the group.
- (5) If the group becomes frustrated and cannot come up with a solution, be prepared to assist them.

**Points for Discussion:** How was a plan developed? Did everyone participate? Did everyone listen? What type of impact did the plan have on the initiative? What was learned? What type of impact did leadership styles have on the group? What can be learned regarding leadership? How did the group handle frustration and/or what seems impossible? How does leadership impact how frustration is handled in the chapter setting?



## Trust Fall

**Level 3**  
**30 minutes**

**Materials:** A platform or stump ranging from 3 to 5 ½ feet above the ground from which an individual falls backward into the arms of spotters.

**The Task:** One person doing the falling (faller), with a minimum of eight catchers (spotters).

### Set Up:

- (1) Be sure the group has gone through a series of trust games or initiatives leading up to this initiative.
- (2) Only do this activity when a group is comfortable with each other and has worked well together.
- (3) Present the task. Review and have participants demonstrate the correct positions for catching the faller.
- (4) Make sure all jewelry, watches, cell phones, etc., are removed from all participants.
- (5) Check the spotters' positions, arms, hands, feet.
- (6) Explain that there are two ways a faller can be caught. If "faller" falls correctly, weight will be evenly distributed. If faller collapses, weight will be in one place, and spotters will break the fall. Faller and spotters may end up on the ground.
- (7) Stand by the side of the platform. It can be helpful to place one arm over the faller's shoes and one hand behind the heels of the faller until the faller is caught. This helps keep the faller from collapsing in the middle.
- (8) Have faller and spotters practice the communication commands.  
(See spotter and participant section.)

### Responsibilities of Spotters:

- (1) Clear understanding of what the activity entails from their standpoint as spotters and to buy into this experience.
- (2) Understanding of the strongest catching position:
  - a. Knees are bent.
  - b. Arms are extended and bent at the elbows with palms facing up.
  - c. Feet situated so that if a spotter is on the left side (facing the platform or stump), his/her right foot is extended in front of the left by 10 to 12 inches.
  - d. Feet are at shoulder width.
  - e. Arms alternate with the spotter opposite, and each spotter's fingertips extend to the opposite spotter's elbows.



- (3) Attention is focused on the faller at all times.
- (4) Upon catching a faller, spotters need to pay close attention to the faller until she/he is in an upright, standing position on the ground, and, if needed, the spotters should assist the faller to that position.
- (5) Spotters communicate with the fallers and let them know when they're ready.

**Responsibilities of Falling Person (Faller):**

- (1) Agree with the spotters on a series of commands by which fallers alert spotters of their intention to fall, and only fall when spotters give the all clear by saying "Fall."
- (2) Maintain a rigid position with head slightly back. Fallers draw their hands, fingers interlocked, into their chests in a firm grip, or use some alternate hand fixing system. Be sure that hands are locked close to chest.
- (3) Line up at the direction of a spotter and fall without going into a pike position.
- (4) Upon falling and being caught, fallers allow themselves to be raised to an upright position, keeping their knees slightly bent.

**Points for Discussion:** How was trust displayed in yourself, in others? Did you feel in control? Were you willing to not be in control? Did you confront or overcome any fears? Did anything help during this process? What specific lessons did you learn? Why is trust a crucial component of brotherhood?

\*This can be a powerful last initiative for a group.

## Trust Wave

**Level 3**  
**30 minutes**

**Materials:** none

**The Task:** Divide the chapter equally in two and form two straight lines with each player standing opposite someone from the other line. The lines should be just far enough apart so that when the brother's arms are fully extended, at shoulder height and in front of them, their hands reach to approximately the wrist of the person opposite. These players are called spotters.

The goal is for one brother, the runner, to start 10 yards from the group and walk, jog or run between the two lines of brothers. The brothers in the lines raise their arms just before the runner reaches them and lower them as soon as the runner has passed by.

Ask runners to attempt to maintain the same speed throughout their runs. Speeding up can become a problem.

**Safety:** The spotting lines need to be extremely aware and careful or the runner will get hit. Spotters need to carefully watch the runners and judge their speed.

*Source: Quicksilver: Adventure Games, Initiative Problems, Trust Activities and A Guide to Effective Leadership by Karl Rhonke & Steve Butler p. 234*



## Warp Speed

**Level 1**  
**10 minutes**

**Materials:** tennis ball or other soft throwable object

**The Task:** Members of the group establish an order for passing an object from one to another and then work to reduce the time it takes to make the circuit to an absolute minimum.

**Set-Up:** Using a tennis ball, a knotted bandanna, or a similar soft throwable object, ask the group to stand in a circle and toss an object from one to another until it returns to the person who began the process. Each group member in turn should toss the object to another person in the group not adjacent to them. Each person in the group should receive and toss the object only once during the circuit. Once this order of transmission has been established, the facilitator should invite the group to go for a time trial, passing the object from one to another in the order they have just established. At the conclusion of each attempt, the group should be invited to go for a better time. The group may do whatever they wish (moving in closer, rearranging the order in which they are standing, putting hands close together, etc.) to improve upon the time-so long as they keep the pre-established order. The facilitator should refrain from making suggestions. After several trials, the facilitator should invite the group to achieve warp speed: a complete circuit in less than one second.

**Points for Discussion:** Who contributed ideas for speeding up the process? Did everyone who had an idea feel comfortable sharing it with the group? Did every idea receive a fair trial? When did breakthroughs occur? Was anyone surprised at the ultimate time the group achieved? What does the success or failure of the attempt to achieve “warp speed” say about the power of the group to confront other challenges successfully? How do you handle successes and failures in the chapter setting?

## When The Chips Are Down

**Level 1**  
**25 minutes**

**Materials:** poker chips numbered 1-31, base (marker) to toss on ground, bucket or container for all the chips, timer

**The Task:** Make or define a starting line and ask the group to gather behind it. Set a bucket filled with chips 15-20 feet from the starting line. The Facilitator has a base ready to toss on the ground.

The object is to lay the numbered chips in ascending order as quickly as possible.



The number 1 chip must start on the same spot as the base, which the facilitator will toss when the first person crosses the start line.

This is a timed activity. The timer will start when the first person crosses the starting line and will stop when everyone has completed their objective and returned across the starting line.

When anyone picks up a chip or multiple chips, that same person must place the chips where they belong. For example: If one person grabs all the chips, they have to place all of them in order and in a straight line, but if they grab just one, they are only responsible for that one.

**Points for Discussion:** What roles did people fill in this activity? What changes did you make from the first attempt to the last? How might you best influence people to change when there is a pressure to act? What are some benefits of celebration during a repeated work process?

*Source: Raptor and Other Team Building Activities by Sam Sikes p. 195*



## BROTHER ACTIVITIES

These activities encompass the concepts of getting acquainted, self-disclosure, discussion, building trust, building rapport, developing respect, enhancing unity, and values & ethics among participants.

*“In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress”*  
– Booker T. Washington

### Brother Activities Desired Outcome

The following notations have been used to help select activities appropriate to the desired outcome:

- GA** Getting Acquainted      **R** Developing Respect
- SD** Self-Disclosure        **U** Enhancing Unity
- D** Discussion                **VE** Values & Ethics
- T** Building Trust              **O** Other
- BR** Building Rapport

**Click on an activity name to jump to that page**

Activity	GA	SD	D	T	BR	R	U	VE	O
<a href="#">Adding to the Fire</a>			■		■	■	■		
<a href="#">Awards Night</a>						■	■		
<a href="#">Baseball Team</a>		■	■			■	■		
<a href="#">Big Brother/Little Brother Program</a>									■
<a href="#">Biographers</a>	■	■				■	■		
<a href="#">Birthday Cards</a>					■	■	■		
<a href="#">Board of Directors</a>		■		■	■	■	■	■	
<a href="#">Brother of the Week</a>					■	■			
<a href="#">Building a Monument</a>					■		■		
<a href="#">Building My House</a>	■	■	■		■	■	■	■	
<a href="#">Bull's Eye</a>			■					■	
<a href="#">Campus Event (On-Going)</a>	■						■		
<a href="#">Carousels</a>	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
<a href="#">Chalk Talk</a>			■				■		
<a href="#">Chain Link</a>			■		■	■	■		
<a href="#">Chapter Connections</a>			■	■	■	■	■		
<a href="#">Chapter Possessions Inventory</a>			■			■	■	■	
<a href="#">Chapter Treasurers</a>			■			■			



Activity	GA	SD	D	T	BR	R	U	VE	O
Circle of Light					■	■	■		
Class Collage	■		■		■	■	■		
Cooking Class	■				■	■	■		
Crest Puzzle			■			■		■	
Cross the Line		■		■	■	■	■	■	
Dimensions of Trust				■					
Drawing the Perfect Member			■	■	■	■	■		
Eye Contact			■	■	■	■			
First Impressions	■		■						
Fraternity Jeopardy	■						■		
Fraternity Values			■					■	
Gavel Pass/Candle Pass			■						
Gift Exchange					■		■		
Goal Setting of the Stars			■	■	■		■		
High-Medium-Low Risk Cards		■	■		■		■	■	
History Challenge						■	■		
"I'm a Bigger Person than That"...			■	■	■	■	■	■	
Influences on the Individual: What / Who Make You Who You Are Today?								■	
Instant Composite	■								
Let Me In!			■		■	■	■		
Lock-In	■	■		■	■	■	■		
Mix the Cliques	■				■		■		
Number Groupings	■	■							
NIC Standards			■		■	■	■	■	
Pat on the Back	■								
People Bingo	■								
"Personal Coat of Arms"		■						■	
Personal Goal Setting		■						■	
Personal Scrolls					■	■	■		
Pin and Flag			■			■	■		
Privacy Circles		■	■	■			■	■	
Promises to Myself, Promises to My Chapter									■
Puzzle Pieces	■		■		■		■		
Reverse Candle Pass				■	■	■	■		
Roll Call Fun		■					■		
Run for Office			■			■			
Scholastic Challenge				■	■		■		
Senior Charge					■	■	■	■	
Senior Wills		■					■		
Taking a Chance				■					
The Brick					■		■		
The Fraternity Creed			■		■	■	■		
The Inter/National Fraternity			■		■				
The Line: Communication			■	■					
Three Significant Events		■	■	■	■	■			



Activity	GA	SD	D	T	BR	R	U	VE	O
Toss the Gavel			■		■		■		
Values Bag		■	■	■	■	■		■	
Values Scale		■	■			■		■	
Wall of Fame					■	■	■		
Want Ads			■	■				■	
Web of Brotherhood			■	■			■	■	
What Are We Looking for in a Brother?			■					■	
What Do We Expect?			■	■	■	■	■	■	
Where Will We Be			■				■		
Who Am I?							■		
Why Are You Involved?	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
Wouldn't It Be Great If...			■				■	■	
Write Your Own Ritual			■				■	■	
Year in Review			■				■		
You Always Wanted to Ask			■	■	■	■	■	■	

## Adding to the Fire

**60 minutes**

**Materials:** fire-starting materials, a stick of wood for each member

**The Task:** Seat members around a campfire. Give each member a stick of wood. Go around the circle. Each member should state what the fraternity means to him and add his stick to the fire as he states what he will contribute to perpetuate the fraternity,

Notice that the fire grows stronger when each member contributes his stick of wood. Comment on the symbolism of a roaring fire. When each member contributes his energy, the result is a powerful force. Yet the flames are not eternal; we must continually add fuel to the fire.

**Points for Discussion:** How can you take this energy home from the retreat and keep the fire burning so each member is motivated and happy to contribute?

\*This is a great activity to hold during a chapter retreat set in an outdoor environment. Make sure that it is conducted with proper attention paid to fire safety and applicable fire laws.

*Source: Delta Chi Pre-Initiation BRIEF*





## Awards Night

**30 minutes**

**Materials:** predetermined awards and recognition items

**The Task:** At the end of the term or during a special occasion, hold an awards ceremony. Honor members in a serious and humorous way.

For example, fun awards could include: “Brother Most Likely To Be Elected Fraternity National President,” “Most Originally Decorated Room,” “Best Dinner Time Conversationalist,” “Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum (best buddies),” “Most Likely to Become a Stand-up Comedian,” etc.

Tailor awards to fit the personality of your chapter and its members, and always keep awards in a positive light.

Other awards should recognize personal achievement (e.g. “Highest GPA,” “Campus-wide Leadership,” “Athlete of the Year,” etc.) and contribution to the chapter (e.g. “Best Role Model,” “Unsung Hero,” “Leader of the Year,” etc.).

## Baseball Team

**55 minutes**

**Materials:** marker, pencils, post-it notes, 2 sheets of poster paper

A well-functioning chapter is like a team. In fact, it can thought of very much like a baseball team. There are many players, each with different skills and abilities, and the team is only successful if there are good players at each position.

**The Task:** Draw two large baseball diamonds on two sheets of poster paper. Label one “present” and one “future.” Give each member a post-it note and ask him to write his name on it. On the “present” diamond, have the member place the post-it note on the position he feels symbolizes his participation on the chapter team. For example, the recruitment chairman may place himself at pitcher, because he is constantly “pitching” fraternity. Encourage members to be creative.

Ask members to share with the group why they put themselves in the position they did. Review the status of your “team.” Are you strong in pitching, but weak in fielding? Are the players well balanced, or are certain positions lacking? Do we have players consistently sitting on the bench? What might you need to do: hire free agents, recruit new members, bring in someone from the farm team? Now have members place themselves on the “future” diamond.

**Points for Discussion:** What is different between the “present” and “future” diamonds? Why? Plan a “spring training.” What needs to happen to prepare players for different positions?



## Big Brother/Little Brother Program

**Materials:** none

**The Task:** The Big Brother is a very important part of the new member education program. Regardless of what name your chapter uses for these brothers, the goals of the program are the same.

The relationship between a Big Brother and a Little Brother often lasts much longer than the orientation period. It becomes meaningful to them during both undergraduate and graduate years. The Big Brother should not only see that his Little Brother is initiated, but that he also enjoys a strong collegiate experience and receives his degree.

The brothers in the chapter who are not Big Brothers also have a very important responsibility. New member education is the concern of the entire chapter, not only the New Member Educator, his committee, and the Big Brothers. Every member should have an interest in every new member.

### **Selection Process:**

The selection process for Big Brothers should not be hasty or random. The Big Brother program and its full intent should be reviewed during the first week of the program. After a full understanding and a conscious decision, Big Brother selection should take place. Each new member should list his first three preferences for Big Brother. The New Member Educator and his committee will match the Big Brothers with Little Brothers using proper judgment. Prior to the Big Brother announcement, all members selected to be Big Brothers should be asked if they are willing to participate.

There are a number of criteria which should be taken into account in the selection process. These criteria should be reviewed with the new members prior to their listing of Big Brother preferences. These criteria should also be used by the New Member Educator and his committee during the matching process. Use the following as a guide in formulating your own list:

**Academics:** The same or similar majors or curriculums can be matched in order to help foster a relationship which will allow the Big Brother to assist the Little Brother in his studies. It is important to select Big Brothers who will have a positive influence academically on the new members. A minimum grade point average for Big Brothers should be established.

**Dependability:** Strong role models with the proper attitude should be selected for the Big Brother positions. Poor and negative attitudes have a strong possibility of being transferred to Little Brothers.

**Personality:** Big Brothers and Little Brothers should have complementing personalities. Communication, style, and sense of humor should be matched.

**Graduation date:** Members who are expecting to graduate in the coming few months should not be allowed to be Big Brothers as this would not allow for the proper amount of exposure to the Big Brother program.



**Interests:** Similar hobbies should be used as a criterion, as they can automatically stimulate a strong friendship.

**Hometown:** Brothers and new members from the same hometown or who are currently very good friends should not be matched. The Big Brother program is designed to create new friendships.

### **Responsibilities**

In order to make the Big Brother an effective part of the program, they must have specific responsibilities. They should be written and distributed to the Big Brothers for their reference and use. The following is a list of expectations and responsibilities which serve as a guide in helping you develop your own list.

#### **A Big Brother should...**

- Be in good standing with the chapter (have a zero account balance).
- Be at or above the all-men's grade point average.
- Attend all new member meetings with his Little Brother.
- Serve as a positive role model for his Little Brother.
- Have similar fraternal and personal interests.
- Monitor academic performance.
- Assist in the Little Brother's social adjustment.
- Establish a relationship with the parents of the Little Brother through letters and telephone calls.
- Act as a sounding board when needed.
- Give introduction and explanation of chapter customs.
- Hold weekly meetings with the Little Brother.
- Expect his Little Brother to perform the responsibilities listed below.
- Work in close cooperation with the new member educator.

#### **A Little Brother should...**

- Meet with his Big Brother at least once each week.
- Not select a best friend, but an ideal person to emulate.
- Demand continual involvement from his Big Brother.
- Discuss any difficulties and problems with his Big Brother.
- Use his Big Brother as a link for fraternal, academic, and social issues.
- Expect his Big Brother to perform the responsibilities listed above.

*Source: p. 33-34 The Fraternity of Phi Gamma Delta, Handbook for Pledge Education: A Fraternal Approach to Pledge Education*



## Biographers

60 minutes

**Materials:** newspapers, poster paper for each participant, scissors, tape

**The Task:** Divide the chapter into groups of 4-6 people. Have each member of the group spend a few minutes telling the others in his small group what he would like to see included in his biography.

Provide each group with a stack of newspapers and a roll of tape. Each brother receives a large sheet of blank paper and a pair of scissors. Instruct each group member to write his name at the top of the paper. Tape each blank sheet to a wall to allow easy and unrestricted access.

From the newspapers, each brother clips key words, phrases, or sentences which they feel describe and tell about other brothers in the group. Encourage each brother to select at least five clippings for each member in the group. Tape these clippings to the appropriate brother's paper.

If desired, brothers can add to sheets for members of other groups once they have completed working on those within their group.

Share the results. Combine two or more groups together and have brothers read from their own "biographies" and explain why each item relates to him.

*Source: Alpha Gamma Rho Brotherhood Manual*

## Birthday Cards

20 minutes

**Materials:** 8 ½ x 11 inch sheets of paper cut into fourths (each member should get 10 of these small sheets), envelope for each chapter member, pens

**The Task:** Distribute a blank envelope to each member and ask him to address it to himself. Collect the envelopes and tape them around the room.

Give each member 10 small sheets of paper. They are to write personal notes to 10 other members in the chapter. Each individual should tell that person why he is glad that his brother became a member of the fraternity.

To ensure that each individual gets a note, officers should divide up the chapter roster in advance and write notes from the executive council.

Ask members to put their notes in the appropriate envelopes. The activity coordinator should mail out these birthday notes to members on their birthdays.



## Board of Directors

**30 minutes**

**Materials:** drawing sheet and pen/pencil

**The Task:** Have everyone write down the names of people who have had a positive impact on them (i.e. family, friends, teacher, pastors, others). These are people who have had a significant part in shaping who they are.

Explain there are five traits that people often have (note: not always) who are on their Board of Directors. Discuss one trait at a time and have the group share person/people on their Boards who have that particular trait. (note: if objective is for people to gain a deeper understanding of themselves, then you may want for people to share in pairs/small groups. If the objective is for the group to gain a greater understanding of each other, then you will want people to share as a group...this will require more time.

Five Common Traits of People who Sit on Your Board of Directors:

- (1) Have high expectations of you
- (2) Have a one-to-one relationship with you
- (3) Have trusted you
- (4) You have a sense of responsibility to them. You don't want to let them down
- (5) Taught you something of importance

**Note:** These traits are the cornerstones of relationships people have which make an impact on others.

**Points for Discussion:** What are some of the characteristics you've acquired from these individuals? What types of individuals are the people who sit on your Board of Directors (i.e. parent, teachers, friend, boss...)? Are there any different or unusual types of people who have had an impact on you (i.e. bus driver, historical figures...)? Do these significant individuals have similar characteristics (i.e. more male or female, older or younger, people who you've worked for or people who work for you...)? Do these people know they're on your Board of Directors? This is a powerful thing to consider. They have given you a lot of time, faith in yourself. Have you recognized or thanked them? How many Board of Directors are you on? Are you establishing relationships with others to help them grow based on the five common traits? How do you think your Board of Directors will be different in five years? Ten years?



## Brother of the Week

5 minutes

**Materials:** poster paper, recognition items

Positive feedback and recognition is important. This brief activity offers good recognition of brothers who do more than their share to build a strong chapter.

**The Task:** Post a large poster-sized nomination form for “Brother of the Week” in a high-traffic area such as the dining room, mail room, or bulletin board on campus. Encourage brothers to nominate other brothers who during the week have gone above and beyond normal expectations in supporting the brotherhood and exemplifying fraternal values.

During the chapter meeting or another large brotherhood gathering, read the list of nominees, and have the brother making the nomination give a 45-second or less explanation of why the nominated brother deserves to be called “Brother of the Week.”

You may wish to have the brotherhood committee select the winner or have the brotherhood vote by applause. Designate a trusted chapter officer to be the applause meter. If the voting is close, hold a second runoff election.

Give the winning brother some sort of fun and inexpensive recognition. Perhaps he could wear a special “Brother of the Week” baseball cap and/or have someone else do his house duty for him that week

This activity should become a chapter ritual, done every week.

## Building a Monument

35 minutes

**Materials:** box of straight straws, box of straight pins, scissors (this set of supplies will be needed for each small group within the chapter)

**The Task:** Break the chapter into small groups of 8-10. Instruct the small groups to build an original structure/monument of their choosing. Predetermine one member in each small group who is blindfolded, two members who cannot use their right hands, two other members who cannot talk. Let the groups create their monuments for 20-30 minutes.

Ask each small group to share what their monuments are or represent to the entire chapter.

**Points for Discussion:** Who came up with the original idea? How was the idea communicated (voice, hands, illustration, non-verbals, etc.)? How did you approach the task? Were specific roles assigned to members with certain talents? What happened to those who lost the use of hands/eyes/voice? Did everyone participate in some way? Why/why not? Who were the architects and who were the construction workers? Could these individuals have reversed roles? Why or why not? Are you happy with the result? What could have improved or changed the result? Did those members who lost an ability



follow or lead? Why do you think this is so? Can and should we challenge this? Why or why not?

*Source: Adapted from "Pins and Straws: Leadership Styles," in Structured Experiences Vol. V, Pfeiffer & Jones, University Associate LaJolla, CA 1974*

## Building My House

**60 minutes**

**Materials:** blank sheets of paper, pens or pencils for each person

**The Task:** Ask each member to draw a simple house with a foundation, walls, roof, window, door, and chimney.

Instruct everyone to individually write down the following concepts or ideas:

- (1) In the foundation write the concepts or ideas by which you govern your life.
- (2) Along the walls write the methods by which you support and strengthen those ideas.
- (3) In the roof write a protective mechanism which you use.
- (4) In the window write something which you are proud of and want others to see.
- (5) In the door write an important part of you that you have borrowed from someone else and the name of the person from whom it was borrowed.
- (6) In the chimney write a form of release which you commonly use.

Ask members to get into small groups of 3-4 people and share the information that they wrote down. To discuss these issues as a group, construct a large drawing of a sample house that will represent your chapter. Now that each individual has considered the symbolism of each part of the house as it pertains to him, ask that the group think of their organizational values.

- (1) For the foundation, what are the concepts or ideas by which we as a chapter should govern our lives?
- (2) The walls represent the methods by which we should support and strengthen these ideas (chapter programming).
- (3) For the roof, what protective mechanisms do we use?
- (4) In the window, what are we proud of and what do we want others to see or know about us?
- (5) What are important parts of our chapter that have been handed down through the years to us? Who were our significant leaders?
- (6) What forms of release does our group have that we should write in our chimney?



## Bull's-Eye

15 minutes

**Materials:** worksheets for participants, markers, Post-it notes

**The Task:** Instruct the participants that they are going to assess their actions in relation to the fraternity's expectations they have discussed as a group.

Give participants the following instructions: "Draw a bull's-eye.

In the center, write what you think is the most important responsibility of membership.

In the concentric circles, write in the responsibilities in the circles in descending importance to you (i.e. the next most important would be in the second circle, the third in the next circle, etc.).

On the Post-It notes, write activities that you are doing. One activity per Post-It note. For example "attending meetings" would be on one, another might have "paid new member fee," etc.

Place the Post-It notes onto the Bull's Eye in relation to where/what expectations and responsibilities you are meeting.

\*Utilize this self-evaluation for a chapter assessment for members and personal reflection for each new member.

*Source: Delta Gamma Watchwords*

## On-Going Campus Event

**Materials:** none

**The Task:** Many enjoyable events are happening on every college campus all the time: Movie nights, guest speakers, dances, festivals held by other clubs and organizations, study skills seminars, career programs, etc.

Check your campus activity calendar and plan to attend one or more of these events as a chapter.

You will expose your members to new opportunities, make new friends, and enjoy a free or inexpensive activity. Participating in other campus events is also a great way to improve Greek image on campus and meet prospective members.

Since events are going on all the time, each brother can fit one or more of these activities into his schedule. Events are great even when only a small number of brothers attend. Perhaps they can go out for dessert and coffee afterwards.

Have brothers who attend the events give a brief summary of their experience to everyone at the following chapter meeting.

Create a visual chart of participation. Each member can put a mark next to his name after he participates in a campus event. This is a great way to demonstrate your chapter's involvement in supporting your campus.





## Carousels

**30 minutes**

**Materials:** none

**The Task:** All chapter members should make one large circle. Instruct members to count off by twos. Ask all ones to take one step inside the circle and face out, thus facing one of their brothers on the outside circle. This step should form two circles. Make sure each has a discussion partner.

Instruct the men that they will be given a topic that they will discuss with their partner for 60 seconds. Each partner should share during that time. Let them know that you as a facilitator will let them know when their time is up.

Ask all to stop talking when their time is up. Instruct the inside circle to move one person to their right. All members should now have a new discussion partner. Give them another topic. Continue through the following questions.

- Initially, what drew you to our fraternity?
- What is brotherhood?
- What is your favorite brotherhood building activity?
- I am most proud of this fraternity because...
- A brother is considering dropping out of school and the chapter. What would you say to him?
- What is trust?
- What do you enjoy most about the fraternity?
- Finish the sentence, I feel closest to my brothers when...
- I am most frustrated with our chapter when...
- The most important aspect of our fraternity is...

Take some time to discuss these topics in the large group.

## Chalk Talk

**45 minutes**

**Materials:** a variety of colors of sidewalk chalk

**The Task:** The chapter should be broken down into smaller groups of 10-12. All participants are given a piece of chalk. Draw a very large box on the sidewalk or parking lot (some groups have asked permission to use their local tennis court).

Many members will ask what they should draw; leave that up to the individual. The fewer instructions, the better. The group will come up with a unique, creative piece of art.

Inform the group that each person will be given the opportunity to add to the box, with a new person jumping in every 15 seconds or so. The facilitator starts. Go through the participants at least twice. If after the second round, the group has not yet drawn outside the box, the facilitator should do so. (Some groups will then draw just slightly outside the



box, others may go way outside the box.) If the group does not move far from the original box the facilitator should do something drastic like drawing a kite string from the box, this should lead all participants drawing on a larger scale.

Tell all to draw at the same time without the 15-second limit. Soon, a wonderfully large piece of art will have been created.

**Points for Discussion:** How did something like this happen? What is the importance of leaders who stretch themselves and “go beyond their creative limits.” How much can be done when we add to other’s work and build upon an existing structure or idea? What chapter examples can you think of?

## Chain Link

**30 minutes**

**Materials:** construction paper cut into 2 x 5 strips, pencils/pens, and transparent tape

**Task:** Distribute the 2 x 5 strips to each member. Ask each to write down his plans for future contributions to the fraternity.

Ask all members to stand in a circle. The chapter president should start with a short lecture about the value of the fraternity in the brother’s lives. He should then talk about the importance of each individual’s contribution to the fraternity in the form of discussion, attendance at meetings, serving on a committee, or serving as a chapter leader.

The president should then share what he wrote down on his slip of paper. When finished, he should tape the two ends of the paper together to form a round paper link. The members standing to his right should share his goals/contributions and then link his paper onto the president’s link. Continue throughout the room until every chapter member has had an opportunity to share.

The president should close the activity and discuss the value of keeping commitments, obtaining personal and group goals, and contributing as an active member throughout one’s undergraduate years. He should ask “What happens when just one person doesn’t follow through on his commitment?” He could use the analogy of a “weak link” in a strong chain. Close with a reminder that fraternity membership is a lifetime membership and ask each member to consider how he will contribute back to the fraternity after commencement.



## Chapter Connections

45 minutes

**Materials:** ball of yarn

**The Task:** Ask all members to stand in a circle. The facilitator should hold the ball of yarn in his hand and inform the group that he is going to share how he plans on contributing to the fraternity. When finished he is going to gently toss the ball of yarn to another person while still holding onto the end of the string. That person should then continue by expressing his goals or contributions, holding onto the string, and then tossing the ball to another brother. The yarn should be held tightly between members.

When the entire chapter has shared, you will have a large “web” of yarn in the circle. The facilitator should talk about the value of the contributions of each individual. If each person did not pull his own weight, and “dropped the ball,” the rest of the members need to pick of the slack for him. As an example call on 10 people to drop their hold on the yarn. The web will become slack illustrating the work that will need to be picked up by other brothers.

Close the discussion with a group brainstorming session on how the chapter can encourage everyone to follow-through on their commitments, ask for help and support from their brothers, and how they can all pull their own weight in the chapter.

## Chapter Possessions Inventory

45 minutes

**Materials:** Chapter Possessions Inventory Questions Sheets (one for each group), pens/pencils, paper

**The Task:** Divide the chapter into groups of 6 to 8 members each. Questions are read to the group one at a time, giving each group member the opportunity to respond to the questions in writing before going on to the next.

**Questions:**

- (1) If your chapter room, office area, and/or rituals closet were on fire and you only had time to save four of your chapter’s possessions, what four things would you save? Share with your group why you chose those four items.
- (2) If you could only save two things, which two would you save? Share with the group how you narrowed down your chapter’s possessions from four to two.
- (3) Was it easy or difficult for you to decide what four or two things you would save? Why do you think your decision was easy or difficult?
- (4) As you were deciding which possessions you would save, what were the thoughts that went through your mind? What values do the “saved possessions” represent to you?



(5) How did these possessions come to represent values to you? Do you have other possessions that represent values to you?

\*After all questions have been answered, have the group members discuss their answers.

*Source: Delta Gamma Watchwords*

## Chapter Treasures

**5 minutes**

**Materials:** facts from past minutes and chapter archives, poster board/handouts

**The Task:** Research, with the help of the director of archives, facts from your chapter's past. Items such as amount of dues, fun event themes, meeting discussions, names of those who assisted the group, accomplishments of the past, awards, etc. are fun to learn and know. Create a sheet or poster with these facts on it.

At the meeting share the facts and post them for participants to see. Ask if anyone else has information about the chapter history. Share the importance of where the chapter has been and how it relates to where it is going. Draw attention to the great accomplishments of the chapter to continue to build pride in the group.

*Source: Delta Gamma Watchwords*

## Circle of Light

**25 minutes**

**Materials:** candle for each member, large candle for center, fire extinguisher

**The Task:** Gather all chapter members into a large circle. Each member should be holding an unlit candle. A lit candle in the center of the circle provides the only illumination.

The facilitator walks around the circle and randomly taps people on the shoulder one at a time. Once tapped, the member will walk to the middle of the circle, take the lit candle and walk up to the man of his choice. As he lights that brother's candle, he tells that brother why he is glad to have him as part of the chapter. He might remind the brother of some special experience they have shared together such as a significant intramural sports victory, a late night conversation, working together to plan a successful chapter activity, etc.

Once finished, he returns the lit candle to the center, and returns to his place in the circle. If he has not yet been spoken to, his candle remains unlit. Once a brother's candle is lit, other brothers may not speak to him. Continue the activity until all members have had a chance to speak and have been spoken to.

*Source: Delta Chi Pre-Initiation BRIEF*



## Class Collage

**60 minutes**

**Materials:** newsprint pad, colored markers, old magazines, newspapers, comics, scissors, glue

**The Task:** Divide the chapter into four classes: Freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors. Instruct the groups to create a collage that best represents how their class fits into the chapter. Things to consider: How do we, as a group, benefit this chapter? What are our contributions? Give the classes 30 minutes to pull together their art.

After 30 minutes, ask everyone to come together again so each class can share their artwork with the entire chapter. Hold a discussion on how membership may mean something different to individuals as they grow older and more experienced or the value of equal contributions of members of every class.

## Cooking Class

**Materials:** cooking utensils, food, instructor, recipe ingredients

**The Task:** Students learn many things in college. All too often though, cooking isn't one of them. Arrange a cooking class for your members. They will learn a practical skill, have fun learning together, and make good food for others to eat.

If you have a chapter house and cook, the job is easy. Ask him or her to help you prepare a menu and lead the lesson. If you do not have these resources immediately available, ask a parent, alumnus, or other people in the community to assist with the project.

Sit down to eat the meal you prepare. This becomes the ideal time to conduct an etiquette program. Make sure members understand the rules of proper eating so they will be better prepared for job interviews, fraternity banquets, dates, and other social occasions.



## Crest Puzzle

10 minutes

**Materials:** crest symbols definition, elements of crest puzzle pieces, backboard for putting it together

**The Task:** Make the crest a puzzle by cutting out elements from card/poster board. Add other objects and symbols as pieces to add to the choices in making the puzzle.

Ask the participants to put the puzzle together.

**Points for Discussion:** Ask participants what each piece of puzzle symbolizes on the crest.

**Variations:** Make several sets of puzzles and split participants into teams. Time them on putting the puzzle together and providing meanings for symbols.

*Source: Delta Gamma Watchwords*

## Cross the Line

25 minutes

**Materials:** none

**The Task:** Facilitator begins by saying that the next activity will allow us the chance to get to know each other a little better. It will give us the opportunity to explore differences and commonalities we share with each other as well as learn a bit about each other's experiences and talents. The facilitator then reads the following instructions:

"This exercise is fairly simple. I will ask that all of you gather on one side of the room/line and face towards its center. I will call out specific statements and ask that all of those to whom they apply walk to the other side of the room/line. For example, I might state that anyone who wears contact lenses cross the line. If this describes you and you feel comfortable acknowledging it, you would walk to the other side (demonstrate). Once there you would turn and face the group you just left and not anyone else who has crossed the line with you. Then return back to the original starting place. After a few seconds, I will make a new statement. Remember, there is no pressure to cross the line if you don't feel comfortable doing so. YOU will need to make that decision.

There are two very important ground rules to this activity:

The first involves listening. Let's have silence throughout the exercise – no talking, snickering, giggling, non-verbal messages, etc.

Second, if after the session you would like to talk with a particular individual about something you learned about them, we encourage you to follow up with that person..."

Facilitator begins by asking questions from the following list. Determine in advance which questions to ask.



- Anyone who has visited another country...cross the line/room.
  - Anyone who prefers day to night...
  - Anyone who has never flown...
  - Anyone who spent part of his/her time growing up outside of the US...
  - Anyone who is the oldest in the family...
  - Anyone who is the youngest in the family...
  - Anyone who is an only child...
  - Anyone who is adopted...
  - Anyone who is multi-lingual...
  - Anyone who received a 3.5 GPA or higher this past term...
  - Anyone who is politically active...
  - Anyone who would consider him/herself to be religious...
  - Anyone who considers him/herself to be a person of color...
  - Anyone who feels he/she knows little about his/her cultural heritage...
  - Anyone who is a first generation college student...
  - Anyone who plans to pursue an advanced degree after college...
  - Anyone who didn't cross the line during the activity but should have...
- Do not feel limited to these choices, be creative.

Invite participants to make any reasonable statements they choose.

Facilitator invites participants to huddle closer and have a seat.

Facilitator then explains that our commonalities provide us comfort and safety with each other. Our differences give us opportunities for growth and to learn from others. We should take advantage of all that everyone here has to offer this week. Our experiences help us to understand each other and what is important to us.

## Dimensions of Trust

**30 minutes**

**Materials:** chalkboard/chalk, newsprint/markers, masking tape, pens/pencils

**The Task:** The facilitator begins by asking the members to think about what the word "trust" means.

The facilitator then asks the brothers to brainstorm those actions or personal characteristics that they feel build or promote trust. The facilitator writes down all answers.

It should be pointed out to the brothers that the rules of brainstorming are that no one may comment on another's idea, no idea is too crazy for inclusion, and that all are encouraged to offer their ideas. This should take about 10 minutes.

Then the facilitator asks the members to brainstorm specific actions and characteristics that can help them build trust in one another. He writes down their answers. This should be about 10 minutes.



The group then spends 5 minutes discussing each list, specifically if the items listed are reasonable and how best to include them in one's life.

**Closure:** The facilitator asks the group to consider the importance of incorporating the ideas they have discussed into their relationships with each other and with other people.

*Source; Alpha Gamma Rho, The Brotherhood Program, Bonding Activities B-16*

## Drawing the Perfect Member

**40 minutes**

**Materials:** paper and markers for each group

This activity is great for introducing a number of important discussions with chapter members. Use it to discuss the type of person you are seeking in your membership recruitment effort or to create a common understanding of expectations for all members.

**The Task:** Divide the chapter in groups of 6 or less. Ask them to use their artistic skills to draw the perfect fraternity member.

Have the small groups share their art work with the other groups.

Once the sharing and explanation is complete, discuss the drawings. You may want to ask: Where can we recruit members like this into our organizations? What is he looking for in a fraternity experience? How can we demonstrate this to him?

Or you can ask: How can we encourage all of our brothers to be like this perfect member? Who already has many of these qualities? What other qualities does our membership need to work to improve?

## Eye Contact

**25 minutes**

**Materials:** none

**The Task:** Instruct the group that this activity is designed to look at nonverbal communication; therefore, it is to be conducted entirely without audible communication.

Divide the group into two. Instruct each group without letting the other hear.

Instructions for first group: "As soon as the activity begins, you are to remain silent-make no audible sounds. We will be learning about nonverbal communication. Your task is to communicate with the other participants in the activity. Eye-to-eye contact is especially important to communicate non-verbally. You should make significant efforts to look directly into the eyes of everyone with whom you communicate. At the end of the activity we will discuss what insights we have about nonverbal communication."

Instructions for second group: "As soon as the activity begins, you are to remain silent-make no audible sounds. We will be learning about nonverbal communication. Your task





is to communicate with the other participants in the activity. Eye-to-eye contact is often an important substitute for nonverbal communication. However, in this exercise you should actively avoid looking for other participants directly in the eye. At the end of the activity, we will discuss what insights we have about nonverbal communication.”

Have participants from both groups circulate and communicate nonverbally. Encourage a lot of intermixing of the group frequently reminding the group to circulate.

**Points for Discussion:** What did you learn about nonverbal communication? What was easier to communicate than you thought it would be? Why? What was harder to communicate? Why? Is this also true of communicating verbally?

What was the role of eye-contact? How did you feel when you were communicating with someone who had been instructed differently regarding eye contact?

Were any communications misunderstood? What real-life examples do you have of misunderstandings of nonverbal communication?

Discuss the importance of nonverbal communication in your membership recruitment efforts.

## First Impressions

35 minutes

**Materials:** paper, pens/pencils

**The Task:** Break the chapter into small groups of 8-12. Each member should make a list of the other members of the group. They should then write down a short description of their first impression of each member. The sheets should be kept confidential until the end of the exercise. The participants should read back over their list to see how their first impressions differ from their lasting impressions.

The expected outcome of this exercise is for members to learn the value of “you can’t judge a book by its cover,” and that if you give yourself the chance to get to know someone more deeply, you may find out you really like them, share something in common with them, or at least better understand them.

**Points for Discussion:** Whose first impressions vary from how they now view other members of the chapter? Why do you think that is? Do you think this is something that happens often? How can we use this information during recruitment? How can we get to know prospective members better? What are others’ first impressions of our chapter? What may be some consequences if people always went by their first impressions?

*Source: Ann Zimmerman, Regional Training Institute in 1987 Youth to Youth Conference Training Manual, p. 22.*



## Fraternity Jeopardy

**30 minutes**

**Materials:** Q&A cards with fraternity history, ritual, traditions; poster board made up like a Jeopardy board (topics across the top, \$ amounts down the columns)

**The Task:** Divide participants into teams or have individuals participate. One member serves as the game show host and asks questions of the participants. Keep track of scores or point totals. This will take some preparation-get questions and answers from your fraternity history (e.g. In what year was the fraternity founded? Name the first founder to graduate.) Make sure to get questions from the local chapter history and traditions as well. If using “Jeopardy” format, make sure that answers are stated in the form of a question: “What is 1874, Alex?”

Or you can make up your own fraternity game show based on other popular TV favorites.

## Fraternity Values

**50 minutes**

**Materials:** copies for each small group of:

- Your fraternity’s philosophy or mission statement
- Creed
- Chapter bylaws and standing rules, any other fraternity documents that might contain the stated values of your fraternity

**The Task:** In small groups, address the following questions:

- Based on your reading of the documents, what are the values of the fraternity? Where did you find these stated? Which ones are implied?
- How do the values of the fraternity-both explicitly stated and implied-coincide with your personal key values? How do they conflict?
- If the values of the fraternity conflict with your own personal values, why did you join?

**Points for Discussion:** Have a spokesperson from each small group share the results of that group’s conversation with the entire chapter.

*Source: Delta Gamma Watchwords*



## Gavel Pass/Candle Pass

**60 minutes**

**Materials:** chapter gavel or large drip less candle

**The Task:** Gather the membership in a circle. The president begins the activity by sharing why he values his membership in the fraternity. When finished, he passes the gavel to the next member. Whoever holds the gavel has the floor. No one can interrupt him.

Chapters have used this activity to air grievances, publicly praise their brothers one at a time, thank individuals, and close chapter meetings.

## Gift Exchange

**Materials:** inexpensive gifts, slips of paper

This is a traditional holiday time favorite in the work place and in many chapters. Do not limit yourself to traditional gift-giving holidays, though. Gift exchanges can add spirit and excitement to the chapter when held on arbitrarily selected holidays, such as President's Day, Labor Day, St. Patrick's Day, or whenever.

**The Task:** Place a slip with the name of each member in a hat. Have members draw a name from a hat and keep it secret. Give them a week to purchase a gift for the person whose name they drew. Set an inexpensive limit to the amount sent on the gift-no more than \$5. Or test the creativity of you brothers and create a rule which say they must make the gift they give. Provide gift wrap, scissors and tape for the gifts, and schedule a party to exchange gifts. As an alternate activity, have members draw names from the hat then take the other person to lunch on campus during the following week. This is a great way to have randomly selected brothers spend time together.

*Source: Alpha Sigma Phi 50 Positive Pledging Activities*

## Goal Setting of the Stars

**60 minutes**

**Materials:** gold stars, pad of newsprint, pens

**The Task:** Conduct brief discussion on the nature of goals and the importance of setting them.

Brainstorm goal ideas for the upcoming term. Put 3-4 goals on each sheet of newsprint and leave room between each one. Place the goals around the room when completed.

Give each member five gold stars. Have members circulate around the room and place a star next to the top five goals they think the chapter should strive to achieve.

After tallying up the votes, discuss the top five goals as selected by the group. For each



goal, determine what specific actions need to be taken to accomplish the goal. Ask for volunteers to commit to each action. Every member should be encouraged to commit to at least one action. Be sure to include a completion date.

**Follow-up Activity:** Give a brief report on the progress of the goals at each chapter meeting following the activity. Have the actions been completed on time? If not, choose a new completion date. Make sure members follow through on their commitments.

*Source: Micaela Kovach, Chapter Consultant, Sigma Kappa*

## High-Medium-Low Risk Cards

45 minutes

**Materials:** 3 x 5 index cards

**The Task:** Take the following questions and write each question down on a 3 x 5 index card. Separate cards in high, medium, and low risk categories. Have one set (one set equals all cards) for each discussion group of 8-12 people.

In each small group put cards in their respective three piles. Each individual takes a turn and selects one card from any level of risk at which he is willing to share. He then reads the question or statement on the card and answers it in front of his small group. Have each member of the small group continue until all have shared.

### Low Risk:

- Name a place from which you see a spectacular display of nature.
- What's the name of the place where you spent the three happiest days of your life?
- Where do you most often go when you want to be alone?
- Tell when you had some type of adventure that was out of the ordinary.
- Name the group where you felt happiest, most integrated, most accepted.
- What activities do you do well?
- Where do you feel most at home?
- What is the greatest success in your life?
- What media events have influenced you?
- Who is your best friend?
- What is your favorite food?
- How do you relax?
- What is your favorite book?
- Who is your favorite author?
- Who is your favorite singer?
- What is your favorite childhood memory?
- What is your greatest pet peeve?

### Medium Risk:

- Who is someone, whether living or dead, fictitious or real, met or unmet, that you really respect or admire?
- Tell a time when you felt you made a very important decision.



- Who are the three most influential people in your life?
- What are three words you would most like said about you?
- What are five values you hold highest?
- What are your political party beliefs?
- Who are important political figures to you?
- Who are teachers/counselors/coaches that had a significant influence on your life in your grade school years?
- Who are teachers/counselors/coaches that had a significant influence on your life in your high school years?
- What is your favorite quote/inspirational message?
- What skill do you wish you had?
- What is your most significant volunteer experience?
- Who is the one individual who convinced you to join the fraternity?
- How did you choose your career path?
- What is one thing you do really well?
- If you were by a river and saw a child fall in what would you do?

**High Risk:**

- Who is the person in your life, who brings you happiness or joy, makes you smile, almost every time you see him/her?
- Name the first person with whom you ever fell in love.
- Name three women (outside your immediate family) that you love (use your own definition of love.)
- Name three men (outside your immediate family) that you love (use your own definition of love).
- Tell about your experience in confronting someone on inappropriate behavior or language.
- What would you do if you had one year left to live?
- During what year did you experience the greatest amount of personal growth; that is, what year was the most significant in terms of your development?
- What is the most challenging thing you've had to do?
- Who do you love in the chapter?
- If you knew a brother was blatantly cheating in class what would you do?
- What is your greatest fear?
- For what contributions to the chapter would you like to be remembered?
- What is your most embarrassing moment?
- How would you most like to be remembered?
- What makes you most frustrated about the fraternity?
- What is your greatest regret?
- Name one time you experienced a great deal of peer pressure.
- If you could do anything over again, how would you do it differently?
- How have you boosted someone's self-esteem?
- If you feel a brother is developing a serious drinking problem, how do you help him?

*Source: Cari Cohn, California State University, Fullerton*



## History Challenge

**Materials:** awards, old newspapers and yearbooks

This is a great activity if there are gaps in your chapter's history. Work with the chapter historian to coordinate the instructions and format for this exercise. Since it takes place over the course of a few weeks, constant reminders, encouragement, and coaching will be necessary. You may want to ask for a temporary faculty advisor from the history department.

Divide the chapter into teams which represent a wide range of years and chapter experience (mix the youngest members with the seniors, etc.)

Challenge each team to research a specific period of the fraternity's history. Give them at least 3 weeks to do this (ideally the activity will take place over the course of an entire term). Suggest that they contact the following resources: inter/national fraternity historian, campus historian, history professor (for contextual information), alumni, campus library, local and campus newspapers, and whatever else they may find.

Old yearbooks from the library, alumni office, or campus archives are ideal sources of written information and photographs. The best information source is personal interviews with alumni. Not only is this a good way to accomplish the goal of the activity, but it can improve alumni relations. Provide the teams with lists of alumni from their period and encourage them to call.

Ask each team to create four pages for the scrapbook and prepare a 5 minute presentation about their period in the chapter history. You may want to have all of the presentations made at once during a special "history" dinner and celebration with alumni and other guests of the chapter (ideal for a chapter's Founder's Day). Or, you can have one presentation per week in your regular chapter meeting.

Award prizes to teams in different categories: (e.g., best overall, most interesting, best scrapbook pages, best presentation, best trivia fact, etc.).

## "I'm a Bigger Person than That..."

**45 minutes**

**Materials:** copy of poem for presenters, your fraternity's policy on hazing

**The Task:** Share the definition of hazing that is stated in the fraternity policy. Lead discussion on:

- What constitutes hazing? Why?
- What does hazing have to do with the Fraternity, the chapter, the individual?
- Why would one want to be hazed or haze another? Why is that contrary to our values as a fraternal organization?

Educate members on whom to contact if hazing is witnessed: The president, chapter advisor, Greek Advisor, etc.



Read poem to group.

I was away from home,

but I knew that my \_\_\_\_\_ was behind me.

I was told many lies that tested my faith,

but I knew that my \_\_\_\_\_ was behind me.

I was blindfolded,

but I knew that my \_\_\_\_\_ was behind me.

I was fed raw food,

but I knew that my \_\_\_\_\_ was behind me.

I slept on cold floors,

but I knew that my \_\_\_\_\_ was behind me.

I was mentally tortured,

but I knew that my \_\_\_\_\_ was behind me.

I was kidnapped-taken from one place to another,

but I knew that my \_\_\_\_\_ was behind me.

I was awakened in the middle of the night and told to stand in a dark room,

but I knew that my \_\_\_\_\_ was behind me.

I was deprived of my personal freedom and growth,

but I knew that my \_\_\_\_\_ was behind me.

I was told that I wasn't worthy to live,

but I knew that my \_\_\_\_\_ was behind me.

I was scared for my life,

but I knew that my \_\_\_\_\_ was behind me.

Why?

Why me?

Why this?

For what reason?

Did I hurt someone?

Did I commit a crime?

Do they know why they are doing it?

Have they been lied to?

Blindfolded?

Tortured?

Kidnapped?

Exhausted?

Disturbed?



Scared to death?

Sick?

Alone?

Does my feeling these things make them feel better? Why?

All I know is that my trust and my faith in my \_\_\_\_\_ will not allow me to do these things to others.

It is not our belief, not our purpose, not our way.

My freedoms are precious.

My human rights are paramount.

My belief is strong.

My pledge sincere.

My responsibilities are great.

My retribution unnecessary.

I'm a BIGGER person than that.

The only solution is to turn on the light for them.

Open the door.

Extend my hand to meet theirs.

Offer them my support.

Haven't I earned the right to be free?

And isn't freedom more precious and strong and human when I share it with my \_\_\_\_\_ ?

Whose words are these?

A citizen of our country held hostage in a hostile land?

-OR-

A new member going through pre-initiation hazing?

Using the word COUNTRY in the blanks, would the hostage have drawn strength and meaning for her life?

Using the word BROTHER in the blanks, would the member/new member have been supported in her conviction as to the value of the Fraternity-or wondered at the contradiction?

Adapted from David R. Thomas - Northwestern '69

**Points for Discussion:**

Encourage participants to ask themselves the following questions when faced with a potential hazing situation.

- (1) Will this activity make me a better person or brother?
- (2) Would I want my parents or a university official to witness this action?
- (3) Would I be willing to go to court to defend the merit of this activity?
- (4) Why don't I videotape hazing activities and use it as a promotional tool during recruiting?
- (5) What am I joining, a small new member class or an International Fraternity?
- (6) When transfer students affiliate is the level of acceptance the same for them?
- (7) Where is hazing stated in our Fraternity's mission?





### **Variations:**

Ask the local Greek Advisor to facilitate the group discussion, focusing particularly on the impact of hazing on the Greek community, campus officials, etc. Ask someone who has suffered from hazing practices to speak about the negative feelings caused by hazing. Local alumni or the Greek Advisor may be good resources. Invite another group (men's or women's) to do the presentation with you. Setting the tone more in a Greek community ay help to indicate the importance of the problem.

*Source: Delta Gamma Watchwords*

## **Influences on the Individual:**

### **What/Who Made You Who You Are Today?**

**30 minutes**

**Materials:** activity worksheet

**The Task:** Let individuals write down their personal influences (parents, grandparents, friends, neighbors, peers, etc.) in the appropriate boxes on the following sheet. Have each member share from more than one area.

**Points for Discussion:** Was one easier to fill out than others? Why? What major media events have influenced you? How? How do politics play into your decision making? Do you have a balance of influence in your life? Which is the strongest area of influence? Why?

*Source: Scott Carter. Advisor to Fraternities, University of California, Los Angeles*

## **Instant Composite**

**Materials:** photographs from student directories, wallets, or the help of an instant camera

**The Task:** Gather photographs from all members. Make an instant composite with full names and perhaps members' hometowns. Recruitment merely offers members the opportunity to meet, make friends, and expand your membership. Forgetting a new member's name sends an unwanted message. This activity will help initiates and new members remember names and faces.

*Source: Ron Richard, Former Director of Chapter Services, Phi Kappa Psi; Joel Goldman, Former Assistant Executive Director, Sigma Alpha Mu*



<p><b>Who is your family?</b></p>	<p><b>What do you value most?</b></p>	<p><b>What influence has religion and/or spirituality had on you?</b></p>
<p><b>Who is one of your mentors and why?</b></p>	<p><b>YOU!</b> <b>People and things that influence you.</b></p>	<p><b>What is your most important possession?</b></p>
<p><b>What is your most significant accomplishment to date?</b></p>	<p><b>What is one thing that you would regret not accomplishing in the coming year?</b></p>	<p><b>What is the most significant act of Courage you have witnessed?</b></p>



## Let Me In!

**30 minutes**

**Materials:** none

**The Task:** Ask one member to volunteer. Instruct the rest of the chapter members to form a circle and put their arms around each other, shoulder to shoulder. Instruct the single volunteer to try to use any method possible to get into the circle.

Ensure that the member does not hurt himself or other chapter members. This exercise usually results in the single volunteer trying to push and shove members and attempt to tear apart the bonded arms.

After a few minutes ask everyone to take a seat. Allow the volunteer to stand up for a few moments. Ask the volunteer how he felt trying to get into the circle (expect answers like tired, frustrated, angry). Then ask the member, "Why didn't you just ask your brothers to let you in?" Ask volunteer, "Why did you immediately assume you had to fight to get in the circle?"

**Points for Discussion:** How does this activity relate to our chapter? How does this activity relate to our Greek community? Let's look at the leadership positions in the chapter, do you think it is difficult to get to those top positions? Why, why not? Do you think we have cliques in this chapter? How would this activity relate to cliques? How do we emphasize chapter unity?

*Source: Alpha Gamma Rho, Pre-Initiation Activities*

## Lock-In

**Materials:** sleeping bags, soda, snacks

Lock-ins can take place at a chapter house, lodge, hotel, university, gym or other recreational facilities. The important aspect of a lock in is to remove the group from the world for a short period of time to concentrate on communication, improve relations among all members, set goals, plans and ideas, but most importantly to appreciate the brotherhood while being away from scholastic, parental, societal, and other pressures.

Perhaps you could contact the local gym or YMCA to see if the chapter can rent the facility after hours to have the lock-in. This should provide a quiet space that might also offer the brothers use of great equipment and the opportunity to prepare structured activities for brothers in a teambuilding atmosphere (for example, volleyball, swimming relays, skits, etc.) You can also create a light enjoyable schedule of some of the other activities in this book.

Bring sleeping bags and camp out anywhere inside the structure. Be sure not to bring stereos, cards, games, alcohol, a TV, videogames or any other distraction. The whole focus is to be with your brothers without the hustle and bustle, noise and other diversions which often interfere with enhancing unity.



## Mix the Cliques

10 minutes

**Materials:** none

**The Task:**

- Create groups by alphabet, first letter of first or last name.
- Create groups by major, college, or school the students fall under (i.e. business majors vs. engineering majors).
- Break into groups of in house/out house brothers.
- Create teams by class years: Seniors, juniors, sophomores, freshmen.
- Mix by hometown or geographical areas.
- Group by lottery or random.
- Create groups by birth month.

These activities can be used as methods of mixing different groups of brothers in preparation for different chapter activities or brotherhood building exercises. The purpose of these activities is to intentionally select groups that mix members from different cliques.

*Source: Theta Xi, New Member Manual*

## Number Groupings

5 minutes

**Materials:** none

This is a fun activity to get people moving and mingling. It is also a good energizer and a way to separate groups into smaller teams for later activities.

The facilitator quickly shouts out the size of groups to form and a similar characteristic (e.g., “form groups of 4 people who have the same birthdate). Other topics could include same first name, hometown, major, etc. Participants quickly move to form a group of this size. Once in a group, participants should introduce each other (or have them share a fact about themselves), and then raise their hand to signify that they have completed the activity.

Keep the pace moving quickly.

## NIC Standards

90 minutes

**Materials:** colored markers, newsprint pad, NIC Standards DVD from the NIC

**The Task:** The North-American Interfraternity Conference has passed a set of standards that will propel fraternities to be who we say we are. These standards call for fraternity and campus leadership to create changes in today’s fraternity and asks each member to live to the highest standards of fraternity membership.



Begin the activity by explaining the standards and their purpose.

- Support Open Expansion
- All Fraternities Insured
- Academic Success
- Minimum GPA's
- Specified New Member Program Length
- No Little Sisters
- Effective Risk Management Policies
- Alcohol Free Recruitment Activities
- Alcohol Free New Member Programs
- Ritual
- Educational Programming
- Support Open Recruitment
- Faculty Advisors
- Leadership Development
- Financial Management and Assistance

Show the NIC Standards DVD.

On individual sheets of newsprint write each standard and hang them around the room. Instruct members to mill around the room and when a chapter/campus programming idea comes to mind that fits one of the standards, write it on the newsprint. (i.e. Minimum GPA's; programming ideas: add a minimum GPA requirement to the chapter bylaws and implement a scholarship program). After everyone has had time to write on the paper you will have a room full of great ideas.

## Pat on the Back

**20 minutes**

**Materials:** 8 ½ x 5 ½ inch sheets of paper, pens for each member, tape

**The Task:** Tape the half sheets of paper on each chapter member's back. Members have 20 minutes to write personal thanks or something that you learned on the slips of paper. Continue the activity until people can not write any more in the space provided. Let the members read their sheets. Ask members to keep this sheet of paper and pull it out then they are having a tough time or bad day.

## People Bingo

**20 minutes**

**Materials:** pencils, pre-printed bingo sheets. Bingo sheets should be 8 ½ x 11 inch sheets of paper with 25 squares. Each square identifies something about the people in the chapter. (interesting facts about members should be written in the spaces (i.e. I have a pet, I played varsity sports in high school, I want to enter politics, I have a sister in a sorority, etc.)



**The Task:** Distribute pencils and bingo sheets and state the rules. Members should mingle with other members. Members should seek out fellow chapter members and if one of the items listed pertains to them, ask them to sign their names in the appropriate space on your bingo sheet. No participant may sign their name to more than two blank spots. Sheets should be retained by the members to remind them of others' traits. Be creative when creating your bingo sheet.

## “Personal Coat of Arms”

**75 minutes**

**Materials:** pencils, blank sheets of paper

**The Task:** Distribute blank sheets of paper for each member. Ask each brother to draw his own personal coat of arms. It is up to his own creativity, imagination, and artistic skills to come up with his personal rendition. The drawing should include symbols which represent some personal values, how the fraternity come into his life, and significant influences in his life. An open motto should accompany his picture. Each brother should take a turn and describe his coat of arms and symbols to the entire group.

**Points for Discussion:** What are significant things you learned about others as a result of this exercise? Was this difficult? Why? What types of symbols did people use? Did anyone use non-fraternity symbols? Did that surprise you? Why/why not? What were some similarities and differences seen in each person's coat of arms?

## Personal Goal Setting

**45 minutes**

**Materials:** blank copy of the Personal Goal Setting sheets for each member, pens, pencils, index cards, envelopes (each member receives one of each)

**The Task:** Facilitator will distribute a copy of the Personal Goal Setting sheets to each member.

Allot time for completion of the sheets.

Facilitator should divide the chapter into groups of five to six members and allow them to discuss goals and goal setting among themselves.

Ask each member to put their name on the outside of the envelope. On the index card, ask each member to rewrite the information they gave in question #7 and seal the envelope.

The facilitator should collect the envelopes and keep them in the chapter files until the beginning of the next term.

At that time cards should be distributed to each member so that they can review their goals and make adjustments as needed.



**Personal Goal Setting Questions:**

(1) What do I want to accomplish?

- Education/Career Goals
- Family/Social Goals
- Fraternity Goals
- Moral/Religious/Philanthropic Goals
- Other Goals

(2) What are my present priorities? (Priorities are those areas of my current lifestyle to which I am giving most of my time.)

Remember, goals should be:

Specific

Measurable

Acceptable

Realistic

Truthful

(3) What are my values? (Values are those standards I hold above all others. I believe in them strongly and would defend them.)

(4) Which of my present priorities are in line with my values?

(5) Some of my goals are “long term.” This means they represent a large part of my life or many years of my time. What are my long-term goals?

(6) Some of my goals are “short term.” This means they may be accomplished within the next few hours, days, months or within a single year of my life. What are my short-term goals?

(7) I have also defined my priorities and judged them against my personal values. Where should I spend my time?

\*This activity is best used annually at a chapter retreat

*Source: Delta Gamma Watchwords*



## Personal Scrolls

50 minutes

**Materials:** newsprint pad, pens, tape

**The Task:** Write the names of each participant at the top of a piece of newsprint. The pieces of paper are then hung on the walls and everyone has a chance to wander around the room and write positive comments or notes to that particular person on each sheet of paper. When everyone finishes, the scrolls are rolled and handed to each member to take home and read.

*Source: "Enhancing Self-Esteem Through Greek Membership," AFA Resource Development Program, December, 1990*

## Pin and Flag

30 minutes

**Materials:** fraternity flag, one active badge

**The Task:** The room should be dimly lit by candles. All new and initiated members hold onto the edges of the flag with a fraternity badge in the center. The flag should be held strong and taut (representing a strong chapter). The facilitator should share the analogy of the flag and chapter. The facilitator states some of the problems and challenges that the fraternity is facing. For example:

- Have you missed chapter meetings?
- Have you skipped class?
- Do you maintain your room?
- Have you damaged the house?
- Have you pushed chapter officers to break the rules?
- Have you missed a bill payment?
- Have you missed a recruitment event?
- Have you missed any philanthropic events?
- Etc.

If a member can relate to the statement he must let go of the flag. The facilitator should discuss how each area hurts the chapter after each statement. (For example; Have you missed a recruitment event? If all members do not attend recruitment events the prospective members will think that the membership is not invested in the future of the chapter. A successful recruitment is obtained by a committed and organized chapter, not just a committed and organized recruitment committee.)

With each statement members will let go and the flag will develop ripples and sag. The facilitator should discuss the value of each and every member of the chapter and how each person has to contribute to his full ability to make the chapter strong. Each member should share how he is going to keep the fraternity going strong.

*Source: Adapted from Delta Chi BRIEF, Pre-Initiation*





## Privacy Circles

30 minutes

**Materials:** paper and pens for each member

**The Task:** Have each participant draw five concentric circles on a piece of paper, writing in them respectively: intimates, brothers, chapter officers, family members, advisors. Read some of the statements below or others which depict common situations which occur in fraternal life. Have members write a key word from the statement in the circle of people they would tell first.

- You observe a brother fighting with his girlfriend. Although he doesn't hit her, he is verbally abusive. It's not the first time you've seen this outbursts.
- Your parent won \$25,000 in the lottery.
- The treasurer of your chapter is delinquent in paying bills. You find a statement from the bank and it doesn't appear that deposits have been made, but dues have been collected. You don't know the treasurer well but have heard rumors that he has a drug habit.
- Your grades are slipping. It doesn't appear that you will reach your goal of getting into the College of Business. You've decided to switch to an easier program.
- You have just been elected Student Body President.
- You are feeling overwhelmed, stressed out, and/or depressed.
- A brother tells you he thinks he has an alcohol/drug problem.
- You get the top grade in a difficult course.
- You have two job offers and are uncertain of the choice to make.
- While walking home one night, you observe another chapter conducting what appears to be a serious and potentially dangerous hazing activity.
- Someone you have been wanting to date for weeks, but are too shy to approach, asks you on a date.

Have members share their answers with each other in groups of no more than five. Then discuss as a large group patterns of self-disclosure. What things are we comfortable sharing with others? What do we not share with anyone? Who do we find ourselves approaching often? Why? Who can we approach more?

*Adapted From: How to Program without Alcohol by Floyd B. Hoelting*

## Promises to Myself, Promises to My Chapter

10 minutes

**Materials:** papers, pens/pencils, envelopes for each person, stamps for each envelope

**The Task:** At the end of an intense brotherhood building exercise or chapter retreat



distribute paper and writing utensils. Have the members write a letter to themselves. Give them a specific topic to focus on such as:

- What I learned about brotherhood at this retreat and what I will do to enhance brotherhood in the future.
- What I will commit to the fraternity/
- Promises to myself; what will I do to become a contributing chapter member?

Ask the members to write a self-stamped envelope. Ask members to enclose the letters in their envelopes. Collect the envelopes and mail the letters back to members in one month to remind them of their promises and commitments to the chapter.

After the members receive their letters in a month hold another discussion on the experience with the members as a large group. The goal is to allow the group to experience and reflect upon personal thoughts and feelings a month later. This exercise also allows members to challenge one another by asking “Who followed through on their commitments? Who is still working on their promises?”

## Puzzle Pieces

**60 minutes**

**Materials:** one poster board with a drawing of your fraternity coat of arm. Cut up the drawing into 8-10 unusual puzzle piece shapes.

**The Task:** Hide the puzzle pieces inside and outside of the facility. Do not hide inside individual's rooms. During an all-chapter house cleaning inform the members that large puzzle pieces are hidden inside and outside. While the chapter members are cleaning they are to look for the hidden pieces.

When all pieces have been collected and assembled (and the property is clean) gather the chapter together and discuss how a clean and attractive property develops pride in an organization. Ask each member to share (in gavel pass form) how he thinks the chapter could develop pride in each member.

Close the activity with a fraternity brotherhood song or an inspirational message.

## Reverse Candle Pass

**60 minutes**

**Materials:** chapter gavel or large drip less candle

**The Task:** Depending on the size of the chapter, you might want to break the group into smaller groups of 10-12. This is an intense sharing exercise that will require a great deal of time. The traditional gavel pass involves the passing of a gavel and each member speaking his mind. With a Reverse Candle/Gavel Pass, the person that holds the candle/gavel does not speak. When a brother gets the gavel/candle, 11-12 others tell him how



much they value his membership in the fraternity or what they appreciate most about him. Allow each individual to share for 2-3 minutes. When all have spoken to the members holding the gavel/candle he passes it to the next participant. Continue until all members have been “appreciated.”

## Roll Call Fun

**10 minutes**

**Materials:** none

**The Task:** Rather than just having brothers respond “HERE” at your next chapter meeting, ask them to respond by answering a question of your choice. Possibilities include:

- “In one sentence explain why you joined this chapter?”
- “Who is your role model in the chapter?”
- “What person, living or dead, do you admire the most?”
- “Who is your favorite cartoon/TV character? Explain why in one sentence.”
- “If you could do one thing to improve the chapter, what would it be?”
- “What is your favorite fraternity memory from this academic year?”

Be creative and make up your own questions. Try: favorite pizza topping, favorite music group, author or book.

Since the objective is intended to build upon the sense of brotherhood in the chapter make sure questions are positive and relate to the fraternity or disclose an important personal fact about each person.

## Run for Office

**45 minutes**

**Materials:** pad and pencil for each member

**The Task:** After giving each member a pad and pencil, the activity facilitator explains that in this exercise each brother is running for chapter president.

The facilitator then asks the members to list their qualifications for office, basing their comments upon their self-perceptions, so that their campaign manager can begin to prepare their campaign.

The facilitator asks a volunteer to assume the role of this own campaign manager, and read his list of qualifications to the group.

The facilitator seeks volunteers until all have read their lists.

The group then discusses how, in general terms the members presented themselves;



how their self-perception matches or doesn't match what others think of them. Make sure this is an affirming exercise; only positive feedback and constructive comments should be shared.

The group then discusses their perceptions of what makes a good chapter president, or chapter leader.

*Source: Alpha Gamma Rho, the Brotherhood Program, Bonding Activities, B-20*

## Scholastic Challenge

**Materials:** awards

**The Task:** This is a semester-long activity which uses the competitive spirit to bring out the best in members and apply it to a worthy goal: scholarship. Work in conjunction with the scholarship committee to get even more ideas, and create an exciting program for the chapter.

Divide the chapters into "academic teams" of 4-6 members. Pick a method of selection which mixes "cliques" within the chapter (e.g., random selection, combining different majors, different academic years, mix brothers who live in different areas).

Challenge the teams to an academic competition. Announce that at the end of the semester awards will be given for: most improved GPA, every team where each member gets a least one "A," highest overall GPA, team which logged the most study hours, most team spirit, every team who had every member attend a study skills workshop, and any other creative awards which you create. Since the activity will be ongoing throughout the semester, keep the visibility of the challenge high. Give bonus points for every "A" or "B" on a midterm or paper, and post the tally in a visible area.

Challenge each team to promote scholarship during one week of the term (by posting study skills ideas, sponsoring a study night, or any creative idea that is developed). Give awards, and extra points, to the team who does the best job.

The possibilities are endless. Get creative, brainstorm ideas with many brothers and your faculty advisor and other professors.

Hold an awards ceremony early the next term after grades are available. Don't forget to invite advisors, professors, parents, and other guests. Make the awards fun, useful, and inexpensive. Ask parents, alumni, and friends of the chapter to donate awards.

## Senior Charge

**75 minutes**

**Materials:** a room with a fireplace or a small bonfire

**The Task:** Before the chapter gathers, all seniors should write a personal letter to the chapter thanking them for the experience, what he has learned, what he values as a member of the fraternity, etc.



All seniors take a turn and read their letter to the chapter. When each has finished reading he should throw his letter into the fire symbolizing the end of his undergraduate membership in the fraternity. Make sure seniors make a copy of their letter, one to keep and one to throw into the fire.

One senior should serve as a closing spokesperson to give a positive charge to the membership. The closure should be inspiring and thought provoking. (For example a topic might be “What do you want your fraternity to be like when you leave?” The continuing fire could represent the continuation of the chapter, each senior has contributed to the fire but now moves on and will be an active alumni member of the fraternity. If your fraternity has an induction into an alumni club or alumni membership, this could be a good activity to have prior to the induction. Alumni members could be invited back for this activity to talk about how they are still involved with the fraternity.

## Senior Wills

60 minutes

**Materials:** written senior wills

**The Task:** Prior to one of the final chapter meetings or brotherhood events, have all seniors or graduating members create a senior will. (“I Joe Brother, being of sound mind and body, will the following possessions to my brothers...”) Members will usually will both serious items (...my dedication and commitment to our chapter to...) as well as frivolous (my lucky gym shorts, my cheesy recruitment smile, etc.)

Have chapter members sit in a circle and ask the seniors to share their wills with the group. Some members may bring a physical item to illustrate the things they are willing away (for example, the lucky gym shorts).

*Source: Krista Mathias, Graduate Counselor, Sigma Kappa*

## Taking a Chance

30 minutes

**Materials:** none

**The Task:** The facilitator begins by saying “I need volunteers to take part in an exercise that is potentially high risk for participants. Would anyone like to volunteer?”

If anyone asks questions, the facilitator simply responds with “Just trust me.” (Most likely you will receive few, if any, volunteers.)

The facilitator then waits for several moments and then says “You have just completed the exercise.”

If any brother did volunteer, the facilitator then asks him to explain his reasons for offering himself as a participant in what was stated to be a high risk activity.



**Closure:** The facilitator concludes with a group discussion of risk taking and trust.

**Points for Discussion:** Why is risk taking and trust important in a fraternity? What are the potential problems with blind faith rather than trust?

*Source: Alpha Gamma Rho, The Brotherhood Program, Bonding Activities B-14.*

## The Brick

60 minutes

**Materials:** one brick, painted with fraternity symbols, Greek letters, motto, founding date, etc.

**The Task:** At one of the first meetings, the new member class is shown the painted brick. The chapter president or new member educator tells everyone that throughout the orientation period, they should be looking for his particular brick. It could be anywhere on campus, in the fraternity house, in the student center, etc. The brick will be at eye level and it can't be missed.

Through the orientation period the initiates should casually ask if they've found the brick yet (don't hound them, for in reality, the brick is never physically hidden anywhere).

During one evening of pre-initiation week, the officers of the fraternity assemble the new member class and ask if they've found the fraternity brick. The answer will be "no". The new members should be instructed to go into a room (preferably a basement room if available) where 4-5 full length mirrors are placed on the wall. The lights should be dimmed or the room should be lit with candles. The new members should be instructed to stand as a group facing the mirrors, thereby facing themselves.

**Chapter officers and initiates stand on the sides and in the back of the new member class. President (of New Member Educator), with brick in hand says:**

"Since the group was unable to find the brick I wanted to bring the brick to you. The reason you couldn't find it physically is because it was never really hidden. The brick is really a symbol of our brotherhood."

"I told you that it is at eye level. When you speak with your brothers you will always look him straight in the eye. You may not always see things eye to eye but you should be man enough to confront each other and air things out face to face."

"I also told you the brick could be found anywhere. Brotherhood is not confined to the walls of the fraternity house. The house is merely a building. A fraternity is built in friendships and our common purpose of: (adapt to your fraternity creed)."

"This brick is also a symbol of our fraternity unity. The brick is made of mortar, stone, and water. And, like the brick, we are a fraternity of brothers with unique backgrounds, values, and experiences."



“As you gaze into the mirrors you can see that the new member class is not a single unit. You are part of a greater whole. You will always have initiated brothers and alumni at your sides for support.”

**The president continues with:**

“Each of you has helped to build the fraternity in his own way. This brick will also symbolize the foundation you will help establish for future members of the fraternity. What will you contribute to this fraternity?”

**Each brother and new member then passes the brick and tells:**

- (1) Contributions he, as an individual, can make to the fraternity
- (2) What the fraternity means to him
- (3) Whatever is on his mind

The brick is then ceremonially placed in the room as part of the wall or floor (or adapt to your particular chapter situation).

*Source: Michael Arthur, former Educational and Leadership Consultant, Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity, Colorado State University, 1989*

## The Fraternity Creed

**45 minutes**

**Materials:** framed fraternity creed

**The Task:** Gather all members in a room where everyone can sit together. Introduce the activity by reciting the fraternity creed as a group. Talk about the history of the creed; who wrote it, when was it written, where was it written, why the words were chosen.

Pass the creed around the room. As it comes to each member he should share with the group what significance the creed has to him.

Close the activity by explaining that a creed is a fundamental statement of beliefs. Ask each member to consider his own personal statement of beliefs. Are they consistent with the fraternity's beliefs?

## The Inter/National Fraternity

**90 minutes**

**Materials:** one large map of the United States and Canada, straight pins

**The Task:** This activity is a good reminder for older members and a good learning tool for new members. Display the map in a visible area. For each chapter in your own inter/national organization, cut out a small pennant and write down the Greek chapter letters and/or school name. Both new and initiated members should read through the fraternity's chapter roster and pin a pennant where the school is located.



Conduct an educational program on your inter/national organization; history, founding principles, national philanthropy, national officers, headquarters staff, services offered to chapters, etc.

Conclude the program singing a national song, or using the national fraternity grip to symbolize being a part of a larger whole.

## The Line: Communication

40 minutes

**Materials:** chalkboard and chalk or newsprint pad and pens

**The Task (a):** Ask one reasonable and confident member to leave the room for a few minutes. Explain to the group that the purpose of this activity is to try to convince that person of something that is not true.

Draw two parallel lines on the chalk board or newsprint pad, making sure that one is slightly-but noticeably longer than the other. Designate seven or eight members to use whatever reasonable tactics they can think of to persuade the person outside that the lines are the same length. Depending on the group, you might want to set some limits on “reasonable tactics.” Pick three or four members of the group to observe what happens when the person comes in and the persuading begins.

Ask the person outside to come in. Explain that while he was out of the room, the group began discussing the length of the two lines. Ask the single member to compare the lines in terms of length. Once the member announces that one line is longer, let the persuaders begin. Make sure that the member who is the object of the pressure does not feel overly put down or threatened. Call the pressure off at an appropriate point and ask the observers to report on what they saw.

**Points for Discussion (a):** Allow the student being pressured to share his feeling about the pressure. Let those who were doing the pressuring tell how they felt about their role. How does this activity represent situations in the chapter? Could members of the group go overboard on the “persuading”...leading to harassment? How do you think hazing gets started?

**The Task (b):** Develop a definition of peer pressure

**Points for Discussion (b):** Can/does peer pressure influence a person’s decision about friends? Alcohol/drugs? Activities? Sexuality? Nutrition and exercise? What are some examples of peer pressure they have seen or experienced in the chapter? Ask members to share in the small groups their ideas about ways to deal effectively with peer pressure. What kinds of situations are the most difficult to deal with? How can peer pressure influence you to do things you might not want to do? How can we use positive peer pressure in the chapter?

*Source: Leadership Skills You Never Outgrow, IV Leadership Project Book IV, Cooperative Extension Service, College of Agriculture, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, p. 48*





## Three Significant Events

**25 minutes**

**Materials:** none

**The Task:** The group facilitator should set aside time to prepare members for this self-disclosure activity. Each participant will share with the group the three most significant events in his life that shapes who he is, how his values have been molded, and how he makes decisions. All participants should sit comfortably in a room where everyone can see each other. Give all the participants some “quiet time” to reflect on their experiences and past events in their lives. One at a time each member should share his personal events. There should be no critique or questions asked of any member during each storytelling. After the member is finished, the next member should begin.

**Points for Discussion:** Why did we ask each of you to tell your personal stories? How did this exercise help you learn more about your brothers? Did each of you feel comfortable sharing with this group? Why/why not? Did this exercise help you to understand one another better? How can our chapter develop a better sense of trust and respect? What do you appreciate most about our brotherhood?

## Toss the Gavel

**20 minutes**

**Materials:** soft object suitable for tossing around the room

This activity is an alternative meeting/discussion format which is ideal for interactive conversations within the brotherhood. It can be used to debate a complex or heated issue when standard parliamentary procedure may be too limiting and difficult to practice.

Set a strict time limit for the conversation. No more than twenty minutes is suggested. Similar to a standard “pass the gavel” explain that whoever has the object is the only one who speaks. When he is done speaking, he chooses who will get it next. You may want to choose a softer object (stuffed animal, nerf ball, etc.) than a gavel so speakers can toss it across the room.

The moderator reserves the right to catch the gavel and pass it to another participant if it seems as if 2 or 3 brothers are dominating the conversation. Surprisingly, this is rarely necessary since brothers will want to debate those with alternative viewpoints. The moderator should also refrain from talking, unless the ball has been tossed to him.



## Values Bags

60 minutes

**Materials:** a brown paper bag filled with the following suggested items: pencil, penny, fraternity badge, watch, paper clips, scissors, beer bottle cap, soda bottle cap, and other household item.

**The Task:** Break the chapter into small groups of 10-12. Each group is given a bag filled with the various items. Empty the contents of the bag on a level surface so each small group member can see all items.

All participants should have a pencil and paper with which to write.

Participants apply some meaning to each of the items in the bag. What does each piece symbolize to you? (i.e. a pencil could represent scholarship, artistic skills, finances, etc. This is a good opportunity to stress creative thinking.)

When everyone is finished writing down their responses ask each member to share his top three prioritized values based on the activity.

**Points for Discussion:** What was the object everyone put as their top choice?

How did you rank the rest of the objects? Is it consistent for each member of the group? In our chapter? How does this exercise help us to better understand others' needs, desires, values, and priorities? Were you surprised by anyone's ranking? Whose? Why? Why not? How can we take what we learned about each other today and use it for the future?

## Values Scale

60 minutes

**Materials:** newsprint pad, markers, masking tape

**The Task:** Introduce the activity by informing the participants that they will be doing a values clarification exercise which will challenge their ethical decision making (or their personal scales of right and wrong) and will force them to justify their decisions.

Define values: "Priorities or rankings that an individual establishes for his norms and beliefs." (For example a personal value may be "It is important to get a good education." Or "It is important to treat others with kindness and respect.")

Write the following statements on separate sheets of flip chart paper:

- (1) Strongly agree
- (2) Agree
- (3) Disagree
- (4) Strongly disagree

Tape these sheets on the wall around the room. They should remain in the order of strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree.



Inform the group that you, as the activity leader, will read a statement. Each individual will need to make a personal decision and then move to the statement (agree-disagree) that best describes his feelings. After each member chooses his feeling of agreement call on one person in each category to tell why he disagrees, agrees, etc.

Statements:

- It's important that our fraternity ritual is memorized and not read.
- It's important to incorporate our fraternity ideals in my daily life.
- It's okay to cheat off a test of a fraternity brother if I didn't prepare.
- It's okay to pull pranks on members who get engaged (lavaliered, or pinned).
- It's okay to pay my fraternity dues a little late.
- It's okay to buy drinks for a fraternity brother on his 21st birthday.
- It's important that we keep our fraternity property clean and maintained.
- It's important to look out for the welfare of our members and others.
- It's important to confront members who don't abide by our fraternity expectations.

When all statements have been discussed, gather the chapter into a large seated group. Discuss what members are feeling, and how they reacted to the differences in opinion. Generate discussion on your own fraternity's expectation of members.

## Wall of Fame

### Done Monthly

**Materials:** blank sheets of paper

**The Task:** Each month, focus on the accomplishments and contributions of your chapter members. Some chapters have a fraternity "brag board" consisting of cork board with announcements on it. This activity is similar in nature but uses an entire wall so the achievements are noticed.

To promote campus involvement, ask each member to get a snapshot of himself and paste it on a blank sheet of paper and write down all of the campus activities that he is involved in. Tape all of these sheets on the wall. Allow members time to read over the sheets and see how brothers divide their time in various campus activities. Younger members will find brothers involved in a variety of campus organizations and, if interested, can find a good contact person to ask questions about a particular activity or organization. This is a good way to promote involvement in other organizations and to recognize brothers who volunteer their time to different leadership positions and campus groups.

If desired, each month could have a different focus; academics, campus and community service, Interfraternal activities, sports, etc.



## Want Ads

40 minutes

**Materials:** markers and large paper for each group

**The Task:** Divide the chapter into small groups. Challenge each small group to write a “want ad” for a new member in 50 words or less. Have them write the ad on a large piece of paper and post it on the wall.

Ask all participants to circulate around the room and silently read the ads.

**Points for Discussion:** Which ad best communicates what we are seeking in a new member? Why? Would current brothers respond to this ad?

Did anything surprise you? What was left out? Was it difficult to communicate these ideas in words? In an advertisement? Why?

Would an advertisement really attract you to join a fraternity? Did advertising influence your decision to join? What did influence your decision to join?

How can we communicate the ideas we expressed in our ad in a more effective way?

## Web of Brotherhood

40 minutes

**Materials:** ball of string, fraternity symbols (badge, coat of arms, etc.), pillow, scissors

**The Task:** Ask participants to sit in a circle.

Have the first participant hold one end of the string tightly. As he does have him explain what the fraternity/brotherhood means to him and one thing that he is going to do to contribute to perpetuate the brotherhood.

When he is finished have him toss the ball of string to the opposite side of the circle, still holding tightly to one end. Have the person who catches the string wrap it around his finger and explain what the fraternity/brotherhood means to him and what he plans to contribute. When the second person is complete, have him pass the ball of string immediately to his right.

Alternate how the string is passed: first across the circle, then to the right, then back across the circle until every member has tied the string around his finger.

Once complete, have the members pull the strings tight to create the “web of brotherhood.” The facilitator places a pillow in the center of the web and puts the fraternity symbols (badge, coat of arms, etc.) on the pillow.

Then the facilitator gives hypothetical examples of times when the fraternity principles were not upheld (e.g. inappropriate behavior at a party, poor scholarship, etc.). As each example is stated, cut one of the strings. Soon the web will become weak, and the pillow will fall to the ground.

When this happens, have a discussion about the importance of upholding fraternity principles.



## What Are We Looking For in a Brother?

**35 minutes**

**Materials:** paper, pens/pencils, newsprint pad, markers

**The Task:** Distribute paper and writing utensils. As a large group, members should brainstorm a list of 10 qualities they want in a friend. The facilitator writes the 10 qualities down on the newsprint so the entire chapter can see the list. This should take about 10 minutes.

The members should then list those 10 qualities on their own paper in their own order of importance, the most important (number 1) to the least important (number 10). The group should then share their lists with each other in small groups of 8-12.

**Points for Discussion:** Why did you order the qualities as you did? Are these the same qualities we keep in mind during recruitment? Is that sometimes forgotten? What do you have to offer your friends? What does the chapter have to offer prospective members? Are we good to our members? Do we take our friendships for granted? How do we keep friendship in our minds at all times, not just during recruitment?

*Source: Adapted from Unknown, shared in 1987 Youth to Youth Conference Training Manual, p. 43.*

## What Do We Expect?

**60 minutes**

**Materials:** markers, poster paper

This activity examines what we expect from our brothers. It is a good exercise for reminding brothers of their commitment to the chapter and renewing energy and spirit. To be successful, remember to focus on future expectations. Do not complain about what members should have done in the past.

**The Task:** Open with a reading from your ritual and/or pledge/associate member ceremony. Remind your members of the oath they have already taken. Announce that for the next hour you will examine what that oath means. Discuss what the chapter members expect from their brothers and ask the brothers to hold themselves accountable. Remind them to discuss both behavior and more specific concerns (e.g., “I expect brothers to behave like gentlemen at social functions,” or “I expect brothers to attend all chapter meetings.”)

Divide members into small groups of no more than 8. Have the groups list what they expect from members of the chapter. Tell them to evaluate their expectations by the following questions: Are these expectations reasonable considering the other time commitments of our members? Are these expectations clear? Would I be willing to live up to these expectations? Would I be willing to confront a brother who is not living up to these expectations?



Each group should present their expectations to the group. A facilitator records those expectations on which everyone agrees.

If there is a disagreement, two representatives of each group meet with the facilitator to work out a compromise. When complete, the expectations are read to the whole group. Each member is asked to commit to meeting these expectations.

Conduct a large group conversation. How can we hold members accountable to these expectations? What should we do when members are not meeting these expectations?

## Where Will We Be?

**20 minutes**

**Materials:** newsprint pad, pens

**The Task:** Have the members of your chapter get in a relaxed position, close their eyes and envision what their organization/chapter house will look like 10 years from now. The facilitator can prompt responses by injecting the following questions:

- What physical changes do you “see”?
- What types of members do you “see”?
- What programs are being sponsored?
- Are there any activities or programs missing?

After 5 minutes of this introspection time ask members to share what they “saw” and record them on the newsprint paper. After these observations are recorded, ask the group what implications they may have on what we are doing today. This is a good exercise to do before a chapter retreat or goal setting session.

*Source: Jim Miner, Western Illinois University*

## Who Am I?

**20 minutes**

**Materials:** index cards

This is a quick activity to kick off a brotherhood retreat or as a fun interlude between more serious events.

**The Task:** Have each brother write his own name on an index card. Collect the cards and shuffle them. Randomly tape them to the backs of each brother so that no one knows whose name is on his back. Have each brother show the others his back and then call upon them for “clues” to see if he can guess who he is.

Keep the group interacting with others. Allow only questions which can be answered “yes” or “no.” When a brother receives a “no” answer, he must move to another brother: Or, allow only one clue per brother.



## Why Are You Involved?

45 minutes

**Materials:** none

This is a good activity to remind brothers of the reason behind their commitment to the chapter and to examine why each brother makes an important contribution to the chapter even though their level of involvement may differ.

**The Task:** Instruct brothers that they will be pairing up and asking each other the question, “Why are you as involved as you are in the fraternity?”

One facilitator should be the timer of the event to keep the pace moving. Give brothers 15 seconds to find a partner and 45 seconds to state the answer. After 45 seconds yell “move” to instruct them to find another pair. Keep announcing “switch” and “move” at a regular pace until about half of the brothers have had the opportunity to interact.

**Points for Discussion:** What interesting things were learned about each other? Are people involved to different degrees? Is this okay?

Are you satisfied with your level of involvement? If no, what are you going to do about it? How can your brothers support you?

## Wouldn't It Be Great If...

25 minutes

**Materials:** none

This is a good beginning for a goal-setting session, or a unique way to close a chapter meeting or new member activity by planting seeds of action for the coming weeks.

**The Task:** Assemble the brothers in a circle. Make a statement regarding the chapter or campus which begins with, “Wouldn't it be great if...” Complete the statement. Continue to the right, having each brother complete a statement which begins “Wouldn't it be great if...” Continue for three rounds so each brother makes three statements. Vary the instructions slightly for each round.

The first round statements should be realistic and attainable things that your members can make happen (e.g., “Wouldn't it be great if we recruit 10 more men than last year.”)

The second round statements should be very challenging but still humanly possible to attain (e.g., “Wouldn't it be great if every member had a 3.2 or better GPA.”)

The final round statements should be whimsical and fun (e.g., “Wouldn't it be great if every member of the chapter had superhero athletic abilities, and we won every intramural game we played?”).



Discuss some of the things the brothers suggested. How can we make some of these happen? Did the whimsical suggestions give anyone else some creative ideas? How challenging are some of these? Can we attain them if we put our minds to it?

Commit to accomplishing one of the great things suggested as a result of the exercise or transition into a more complete goal-setting and action-planning exercise.

## Write Your Own Ritual

**60 minutes**

**Materials:** ritual manual

Since the beginning of fraternities, rituals have been an integral part of the fraternity experience. They bind members together under a common commitment and give each member high ideals and values to strive for in daily life. They also act as a symbolic rite of passage; an important ceremony marking the acceptance into a select group of people across the country.

**The Task:** Divide the chapter into small group of no more than 8. Pay careful attention to separate members in a way that breaks up any cliques.

Challenge each group to develop a ritual for the fraternity; a ritual for today with modern language, values, and ideas. They should consider: What values do we want to be the cornerstone of our ritual? What other thoughts and ideas do we want to communicate? What is the oath to which each member should pledge? What should the open motto be? Should ritual be secret? Why or why not?

Once the basic values and ideals have been determined, the group should outline the ritual ceremony. How will it be staged? Will it have different scenes? What props and symbols are necessary?

Each small group should present its ritual to the large group. Have a brief discussion about what was common in the rituals? Was anything particularly exciting, new, or innovative?

Reassemble into small groups. Give each small group a copy of the fraternity's ritual. Have them compare the one they created to the fraternity's. Discuss the similarities and differences. After reading the fraternity's ritual, is there anything the group would like to add? How does the time in which each ritual was written reflect the values? The staging? What process do you think the founders went through in developing the original fraternity ritual.

This is a great opportunity to invite a knowledgeable alumnus or member who is familiar with the ritual to participate.





## Year in Review

**Materials:** 10-12 sheets of blank newsprint, markers

**The Task:** Have a chapter leader briefly talk about the accomplishments of the chapter in the preceding year, and remind members to review the activities and remember all that the fraternity has accomplished.

To do this, have members reconstruct a calendar in reverse. Instead of setting a calendar, they will receive the events and highlights of the past year. Start with August or September and continue through the school year and summer. List events recalled on each month's page.

Make sure to include more than just the social events: Alumni and service projects, chapter programs, accomplishments of individual members, and any awards or recognition should be included.

The calendar could be posted for reference to assist in membership recruitment. Reviewing the previous year can help members with recruitment conversation, instill pride in the chapter, and serve as a motivator to strive for greater accomplishments in the future.

## You Always Wanted to Ask

**50 minutes**

**Materials:** index cards, pen/pencil for each participant

Brothers often have questions about the fraternity which they may be afraid to ask. This activity allows them to air their questions anonymously and can be a good catalyst for a group that is not discussing different issues. It is a good exercise to use in a retreat or mid-semester chapter meeting, after initial activities have built a sense of brotherhood yet discussion seems to be stagnating.

**The Task:** Have each brother write down a question about the chapter that he has always wanted to ask on an index card. Collect all of the index cards and shuffle them. Have the brothers sit in a circle.

Begin by reading the top card aloud. Answer the question. You may wish to allow a couple of minutes for a brother with a different response to give his answer. Do not debate the question or its answer, though.

Place that question on the bottom of the stack and pass it to your left. Have that brother read the topic card aloud and answer the question. Continue around the circle until every brother has read and answered a question.



## CLOSINGS & FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

**Key Words:** Have everyone involved in the activity brainstorm a list of key words that describes their experience.

**Verbal Gift Giving:** Pick a person in your group and state a positive characteristic, attribute or trait about that person.

**Web of Appreciation:** Using a ball of string, construct a web of appreciation. Hang onto the end of the string and toss the ball to someone else in the group. State something you appreciate about that person. The receiving person does the same until everyone in the group has become part of the web. The resulting web symbolizes the connectedness of the group, the available support, and the trust factor.

Use a pair of sharp scissors to eventually cut the connecting strings, symbolizing that we must all return to our own lives, but that what was once connected can become so again. Cutting the string can be a very poignant moment, a sad but realistic commentary of our changing lives.

**Slam Dunk:** Set a stack of blank sheets (all the same color) on a table, and also provide pens for those who don't have one. Ask the workshop participants to take a few sheets and to candidly share on paper something that occurred during the day that was either meaningful, or perhaps could have been improved. No one is to verbally identify their response. Then scrunch up the pieces of paper and shoot/place them (your choice) into a mid-floor receptacle (plastic milk carton, clean wastebasket).

After shaking up the basket, volunteers then remove a crumpled sheet and read aloud the wrinkly words. Some of the offered ideas and opinions will inevitably lead to discussions about interfacing and earlier occurrences that might have been difficult or inconvenient to bring up at the time. The idea behind this suggestion box format is to provide an anonymous and positive means of sharing sensitive ideas or feelings.

*Source: Quicksilver: Adventure Games, Initiative Problems, Trust Activities and A Guide to Effective Leadership by Karl Rhonke & Steve Butler p. 262, 268*



## FACILITATION GUIDE

### Facilitation is...

- making things easier. It includes...
- Creating connections of shared information and experience.
- Helping participants get good information and affirmation.
- Providing focus and direction.
- Appropriately challenging and questioning participants.

### An effective facilitator is...

- Natural and genuine.
- Interested in others.
- Using his/her experiences.
- Clear and non-judgmental.
- Flexible and able to adapt to different situations.
- One who avoids making promises.
- One who focuses on others, not on him/herself.

### Effective Facilitation Tools

#### Communication

- Listening
- Questioning
- Restating

#### Observation

- Reading Non-verbals
- Flexibility
- Empathy
- Timing

#### Content Depth/Breadth

- Information
- Personal Experience
- Referral Skills



## Facilitator Competencies

The facilitator will exhibit skills in communicating by:

- Expressing ideas clearly and accurately.
- Showing a lively interest in the subject.
- Thinking well on his/her feet.
- Showing a sense of humor with a sense of seriousness.

The facilitator will regulate his/her remarks to:

- Calling the group's attention to particularly helpful statements.
- Rephrasing participants' ideas to clarify and reinforce.
- Avoiding expressing personal opinions.
- Summarizing at appropriate times.

The facilitator encourages group participation by:

- Seeing that participation is distributed evenly among members.
- Maintaining eye contact with the entire group.
- Being alert to nonverbal cues of interest and boredom.

The facilitator creates an accepting atmosphere by:

- Insisting that group members respect each other's opinions.
- Showing an interest in the opinions of all members.
- Accepting and supporting minority views.
- Encouraging freedom to express feelings without threat of reproach.

The facilitator shows skills in guiding the discussion by:

- Providing "meat" for the discussion without monopolizing the discussion.
- Providing examples and facts to emphasize points.
- Listening critically for puzzling aspects that are giving the group trouble.
- Directing the discussion away from inappropriate remarks.

The facilitator will encourage students to evaluate themselves by:

- Encouraging students to question the validity of their arguments or reasoning.
- Helping students examine materials and their method of arriving at conclusions.

The facilitator demonstrates skills in summarizing by:

- Having students summarize main points.
- Encouraging students to explain how their ideas/opinions have changed.
- Encouraging students to predict how the discussion could affect future behavior.

*“True leadership lies in guiding others to success.  
In ensuring that everyone is performing at their best,  
doing the work they are pledged to do  
and doing it well. “*

*– Bill Owens*