



SWEET STORIES

This is . . . An activity in which participants share a story about themselves based on the color of the candy they have in their hands.

The purpose is . . . Participants learn more about each other and learn to trust each other a little more.

Use this when . . .

- One or more individuals are new to the group.
- Individuals do not know each other very well.
- The group members know each other very well (see variation below).

Materials you'll need . . .

- A large bag of M&Ms[®], Skittles[®], or other colored candy pieces.

Here's how . . .

1. Have each participant take one candy.
2. Do not let them eat it yet!
3. Let participants take turns sharing with the group a story based on the following code:
 - Blue candy: A time at work when you felt very proud.
 - Green candy: A boss you respected and why.
 - Yellow candy: A reason you are proud to belong to this organization.
 - Brown candy: An embarrassing moment at work.
 - Orange candy: A time at work when you failed (and what you learned).

- Purple candy: A funny thing that happened to you at work.
 - Red candy: A time at work when you were scared.
4. Now participants can eat the candy.

Ask these questions . . .

- Why is it important for us to learn about each other at work?
- How difficult (or easy) was it to share information about yourself with others?
- How can we learn more about each other back on the job?

Tips for success . . .

- Other categories can be used that relate more closely to the workload, organization, or special project.
- The stories do not have to be “the most” anything—the most embarrassing, the most funny, and so forth. Take that pressure away. Allow participants to relate the kind of story they are comfortable sharing with the group.
- If you use a candy other than M&Ms®, be sure to adjust the color coding to match the colors of what you use.
- This activity can be repeated. Just ask for different stories! Or start every meeting with one person telling a story. Over time you will hear from everyone.
- Limit the length of stories so no one monopolizes the time.
- Post the story color code so participants can easily match their candy to the story they need to tell.

Try these variations . . .

- Divide larger groups (more than 12 participants) into smaller teams to share their stories with each other.

- Remove the words “at work” for each color, and get to know each other better personally.
- Divide the group into small groups of three to five participants. Give them several minutes to share their stories from one color. Select the best story from the team, and share with the larger group.
- Use only two categories. Toss a coin to determine which story to tell.
- For the group that knows each other very well, have them tell the stories about each other rather than about themselves.
- Get to know each other on a personal level along lines such as these: one thing you learned from your parents, why you like your favorite movie, a description of your kitchen at home, a story about pets you have (or have had), and so forth.

For virtual teams . . .

This activity works well for virtual teams.

1. At Step 1, tell participants to have a bag of candies with them. Then select one randomly.
2. Each variation listed can work for a virtual team.