



Morning Meeting

Games & Activities

| | |
|---|----|
| A Warm Wind Blows..... | 13 |
| A What?..... | 13 |
| Alibi..... | 19 |
| Alphabet Story..... | 15 |
| Aroostasha..... | 16 |
| Aunt Minerva..... | 15 |
| Beach ball math..... | 51 |
| Beach ball vocabulary..... | 51 |
| Beach ball vocabulary (ELL) | 51 |
| Bingo..... | 52 |
| Blob Tag..... | 20 |
| Bombardment..... | 21 |
| Boppity Bop Bop Bop..... | 49 |
| Buzz..... | 50 |
| Captain's Coming..... | 18 |
| Capture the Flag..... | 17 |
| Categories..... | 5 |
| Category Circle..... | 52 |
| Category Snap..... | 53 |
| Category Tag..... | 10 |
| Caught Red-Handed..... | 6 |
| Chain Reaction..... | 14 |
| Clapping Names..... | 37 |
| Colored Dot Game..... | 50 |
| Continuous Kickball..... | 47 |
| Cooper Says..... | 38 |
| Coseeki..... | 50 |
| Coseeki/ Follow the Leader..... | 40 |
| Description..... | 40 |
| Description: A Variation on Twenty Questions..... | 41 |
| Don't Make Me Laugh..... | 38 |
| Elbow Tag..... | 12 |

| | |
|---------------------------------|----|
| Electricity..... | 12 |
| Encore..... | 46 |
| Everybody Up..... | 39 |
| Extended Name Tags..... | 45 |
| Fact or Fiction..... | 48 |
| Famous Pairs..... | 48 |
| Find a Place..... | 3 |
| Fish Gobbler..... | 44 |
| Follow the Leader..... | 2 |
| Follow the Sound..... | 42 |
| Four (or Five) Songs..... | 4 |
| Four Corners..... | 43 |
| Freeze Game..... | 4 |
| Fruit Game..... | 7 |
| Gesture Name Game..... | 5 |
| Giants, Wizards, and Elves..... | 2 |
| Grandmother's Trunk..... | 3 |
| Group Charades..... | 55 |
| Group Juggling..... | 2 |
| Guess the Number..... | 36 |
| Guess the Word..... | 37 |
| Hands Up for '07..... | 54 |
| Hospital Tag..... | 48 |
| Hot and Cold..... | 55 |
| Hot Potato..... | 22 |
| Human Camera..... | 6 |
| Human Protractor..... | 1 |
| I See..... | 33 |
| Improv..... | 1 |
| Inchworm..... | 41 |
| Incorporations..... | 1 |
| Jelly Roll..... | 7 |

| | |
|--------------------------------|----|
| Kick and Catch..... | 8 |
| Kick the Can..... | 10 |
| Knots..... | 20 |
| Lean-To..... | 36 |
| Line in a Snake..... | 41 |
| Magic Box..... | 25 |
| Match-Up..... | 33 |
| Memory Name Game..... | 34 |
| Mirror Image..... | 19 |
| Mother May I? | 8 |
| My Bonny..... | 30 |
| Naming Challenge..... | 11 |
| Nonverbal Birthday Lines..... | 12 |
| Nonverbal Birthday Lineup..... | 3 |
| Occupation Pantomime..... | 52 |
| Octopus..... | 49 |
| Oliver Twist..... | 30 |
| One-to-Ten Math Game..... | 31 |
| One Thing You Like to Do..... | 55 |
| Pantomime This Object..... | 53 |
| Pass a Sound..... | 22 |
| Pass the Mask..... | 23 |
| Patterns..... | 27 |
| Pica Ferme Nada..... | 32 |
| Platform..... | 44 |
| Pop..... | 25 |
| Popcorn Name Game..... | 16 |
| Ra-de-o (Radio) | 28 |
| Ra-di-o..... | 24 |
| Rainstorm..... | 39 |
| Red Light, Green Light..... | 21 |
| Safe Tagging..... | 45 |

| | |
|-------------------------------|----|
| Say It, Sing It..... | 9 |
| Scavenger Hunt..... | 42 |
| Silly Soccer..... | 46 |
| Simon Says..... | 43 |
| Smaug's Jewels..... | 35 |
| Sparkle..... | 31 |
| Telegraph..... | 20 |
| Telephone..... | 23 |
| The Cold Wind Blows..... | 14 |
| Three Question Interview..... | 26 |
| Toilet Tag..... | 11 |
| What Are You Doing? | 38 |
| What Did I Do? | 29 |
| Who Has It? | 34 |
| Zip, Zap, Pop..... | 35 |
| Zoom..... | 29 |

Games and Activities taken from:
http://www.originsonline.org/res_classroom.php

Human Protractor

Everyone stands in a circle, hands touching toes. Tell children that they are going to straighten up gradually, keeping their arms straight out in front of their bodies. At the same time, they'll be counting to twenty, so that by twenty their hands are reaching towards the sky. Children will need to remember where their hands are at different numbers. Then you can call out numbers between one and twenty, and the group assumes the position for each number. When children are familiar with the activity, they love being the leader.

Improv

Two students go to the center of the circle and start acting out a simple scene, such as eating at a restaurant, doing homework together at school, etc. At any point, someone from the circle can call out "freeze". The two people freeze while the person who called out goes into the center and takes the place of one of the actors by putting his/her body in the exact same position. The two in the center now act out a different scene that makes sense for the positions that they are starting in.

Incorporations

In this activity, students will form and reform groups as quickly as possible. The leader hits a gong or rings a bell and then gives directions for forming groups, such as "Get into groups of three". The leader hits the gong again and gives a different direction: "Get into groups where everyone is wearing something the same color". The activity moves very quickly.

Group Juggling (middle, upper)

The children gather in a circle. One child holds a soft sponge ball or Hackey Sack. He throws it to a second child, who throws it to the third. The ball is passed to each child in the group, until the last child throws it back to the first child. This child starts the "group juggle" all over again. After a few rounds, add another ball to the group and then a third. It can get quite challenging. Remember, that each child always throws each and every ball to the same person she threw to in the first round.

Follow the Leader

The teacher, or a designated class "leader", performs a series of motions, goes on a walk to explore some area of the school (such as around the boundaries of the play yard or through the halls of the school), or simply makes different faces or hand motions. The children imitate and "follow" the leader.

Giants, Wizards and Elves (middle, upper)

"Giants, Wizards and Elves" is a variation on "Rock, Paper, Scissors" but is much more active. There are two teams and a playing field about forty feet long with a marked centerline. Each team agrees on a posture representing a giant, a wizard and an elf and shows these postures to the other team. Each team huddles and decides which creature it will be. Teams come to the centerline and, at the count of three, assume the chosen posture and say the creature's name. Wizard's fool giants, giants beat elves; elves trick wizards. Whoever loses has to run back to their safety, which is about twenty feet away from the centerline,

before the other team catches them. Those caught become part of the other team.

Grandmother's Trunk

The teacher begins by saying, "I am going on a trip, and I need to pack my grandmother's trunk." The first child then says what he/she will pack in the trunk. For example, "I am going on a trip, and I am taking a bike." Each child in the group then adds one item to the trunk, after repeating in order what is already packed in the trunk. "I am going on a trip and I am taking my bike, my sneakers, my Yankee's hat, and my toothbrush," and so on, until all the children have had a turn.

Find a Place

All the children silently think of a place in the room. As the teacher counts from one to five, each student walks to the place that he/she thought of. The teacher counts from one to five again and each student walks to a new place before the teacher reaches five. Then students return to their first place, hopping on one foot, while the teacher counts to five. Students next return to their second place, hopping on one foot while the teacher counts to five. The class can continue varying the movements - for example, skipping, walking backwards, jumping like a frog, etc. Older children can do this activity using three or four places.

Nonverbal Birthday Lineup

Challenge the children to line up according to their month and day of birth, without any talking.

Four (or Five) Songs

Before the activity begins, write the names of songs on cards, one song to a card. Each student will need a card. Choose the number of songs based on the number of students in class that day and on the size groups you want students to end up in. For example, if you have twenty-four students and you want them to end up in groups of three, you'll choose eight songs and write each song on three cards. Be sure to pick songs that everyone is likely to know.

To begin the activity, distribute the cards. Students then mill around, humming the song that's written on their card. When they meet up with other students humming that song, they form a small group. The activity could end with each group singing a verse of their song.

Freeze Game (primary, middle, upper)

Teachers use the "Freeze Game" to give children practice on freezing when a bell or other signal is sounded. The teacher invites the children to chat and move around the room. He/She then raises a hand, or rings a bell to signal that children should freeze. The teacher then counts to see how long it takes all the children to stop their bodies, look at him/her and be quiet. The class is challenged to lower their time or perhaps break a previous record.

Gesture Name Game

Children stand in a circle. Each child says his/her name while making a gesture for each syllable in the name. For example, Jill Bishop might clap her hands for "Jill" and snap the fingers of first the right hand and then the left hand for "Bishop". The group then repeats her name and her gestures. The activity continues around the circle.

Categories

Choose (or have a student choose) a category such as rivers, state capitals or cars. Working in small groups, students have a limited amount of time to brainstorm as many examples as they can for the names category. For example, if the category is rivers, students might come up with "Mississippi, Rio Grande, Nile, Ohio, etc." Someone in the group should write down the answers and some should be the spokesperson.

When the time is up, ring a bell or use some other prearranged signal to stop the action. Children form a circle. The spokesperson for each group says how many items is on his/her group's list. The spokesperson for the group with the longest list then reads his/her group's list. Other groups check off any of the first group's items that appear on their lists. Then other groups can read the additional items that weren't on the first group's list.

To vary the activity or add challenge, students could guess what items are left after the first group reads their list or they could play a version of Twenty Questions.

Human Camera (middle, upper)

One partner is led blindfolded by the other to a spot. The leading partner focuses the blindfolded partner on a particular scene, such as flower or landscape and then *briefly* removes the blindfold so the partner can view the picture ("take the photo"). The blindfold is then replaced. Each partner may take several photos. At the end of each round, partners discuss the experience and share their impressions of the pictures taken.

Caught Red-Handed

For this activity, you'll need two or three (or more) small objects that can be easily passed around the circle, behind children's backs. One person stands in the middle of the circle and closes his/her eyes for a moment. Children who are in the circle begin to pass the objects behind their backs, as sneakily as possible. They also pretend to pass objects so that at all times students are either passing an object or faking a pass. The person in the middle opens his/her eyes and tries to figure out where the objects are in the circle. The person has three guesses, which should be made quickly.

Variation: Place a ring on a string that is long enough to go all the way around the inside of the circle. Children hold the string with both hands and pass the ring or pretend to pass the ring to each other while the child in the middle tries to guess who has the ring.

Fruit Game

Each person in the circle names a piece of fruit, with no repeats. Then, covering teeth with lips, one child says his/her own fruit followed by another child's fruit - for example, "apple, mango". The child who initially named "mango" goes next, attempting to say "mango" plus the name of yet another child's fruit without showing any teeth, and so on. It is very difficult for children not to laugh and show their teeth in this activity. Students who do show their teeth simply stop saying anything and just watch the action, which is almost as much fun. The activity has no definitive end; you may want to start with a time limit so that it doesn't go on too long. In addition, to being a lot of fun, this activity reinforces listening skills.

Jelly Roll (upper)

The object of "Jelly Roll" is to transport the entire group over an area covered with an imaginary poisonous jelly substance using only four large industrial paper tubes, which may touch the jelly and a two-inch by ten-inch by twelve-foot board, which may not touch the jelly.

Solving this problem will require a high level of communication and cooperation - not to mention creativity! Make sure you step in to freeze the action and regroup the children if the behavior and/or frustration levels appear counterproductive or harmful.

Kick and Catch (middle, upper)

"Kick and Catch" is a simple, fast, game that kids love. You need a space divided in two, two teams, and a kickball. Team one kicks to team two. If team two catches the ball before it hits the ground, team two gets a point. Team two then kicks to team one if team one catches, they get a point. Simple, fun and quick. One important thing to pay attention to in this game is that the same children don't try to make every catch.

Mother May I? (primary)

"Mother May I?" is a traditional game which most teachers will know from their own childhoods. One child or the teacher is the mother; all the other children line up facing the mother. There is a distance between the mother and the line of children. The point of the game is to be the first to tag the mother.

Children can move only when the mother tells them to, and even when she does tell them to move, they must respond with "Mother may I?" before taking the first step. For example, the mother might say, "You may all take two giant steps forward." The group would then call out, "Mother may I?" The mother responds, "Yes!" and the group takes two giant steps toward the mother. If any child forgets in her/his excitement to ask "Mother may I?" before taking the two steps, he/she must go back two giant steps.

Memory Name Game (middle, upper)

The "Memory Name Game" is very similar to "Grandmother's Trunk" but is used to help children learn each other's name. The teacher asks a circle of children a simple question, such as "What is your favorite book?" or "What is your favorite food?" The children respond by stating their names and their favorite books or foods. For example, the first child might say, "My name is Jay and my favorite book is *The Table Where Rich People Sit*". The second child would then say "Jay's favorite book is *The Table Where Rich People Sit*. I'm Laurie and my favorite book is *The Little Prince*". On it goes around the circle with children repeating everyone's name and everyone's book. If a child doesn't remember someone's name or favorite book or food, she simply asks the child to repeat it.

Say It, Sing It

This musical game gives children a quick break during the morning meeting and teaches letter recognition and oral language skills at the same time.

1. Write each letter of the alphabet on an index card. Write "Sing the ABCs!" on a couple of additional cards. (For younger children, include a graphic on these cards, such as music notes.) Shuffle and stack the cards.
2. Gather children in a circle. Take the first card from the stack, hold it up and say the letter (the sound, too, if children are ready). If you select a "Sing the ABCs!" card, everyone sings the alphabet song together.

3. Pass the stack of cards to the child next to you, and have that child repeat the process. Each time the ABC card is selected, everyone joins in on the singing.

Kick the Can (primary, middle)

The person who is "it" stand by a tin can in the center of the playing area and counts to ten while everyone else scatters to find hiding places. The object is for someone to kick the can before being spotted by "it".

When the child who is "it" spots a player, she yells, "I see Jay behind the sandbox one, two, three." "It" must finish this whole sentence before the player gets to the can to kick it. If "it" finishes this call, the player goes to jail (a tree or a step works fine). If the player kicks the can, then that player becomes "it" next.

The following rules about jail are helpful: players need to be touching jail at all times or they can be accused of escaping; prisoners get five chances to escape for each game; when catching an escaping prisoner "it" only has to call, "I see you, Sam"; if a prisoner escapes successfully, he has to go to a new hiding place.

Category Tag (primary, middle)

Taggers are all children who fit into a particular category. For example, the teacher announces a category such as "everyone with a hat on is it." Off go the "hats" chasing the "nonhats." If tagged, the nonhats must sit down to show they are caught. The game continues until all are caught. The game goes quicker and works better if there are clear boundaries.

The teacher then starts a new game with a new category, such as "everybody who is wearing jeans."

Category Snap (middle, upper)

The group sits in a circle in such a way that members can slap their own knees. A category, such as fruits, is chosen. The leader starts the rhythm which is some combination of a knee slap and hand clap that ends with a right-hand finger snap, and then a left-hand finger snap.

The leader begins by announcing the category on the right-hand finger snap (fruits) and naming one of the elements (bananas) with the left-hand finger snap. The next person in line is doing the rhythm with everybody else but must be ready to name the leader's fruit with the right-hand snap and then a new element in the same category with the left-hand snap. The play continues as so around the circle. Once an element has been named it cannot be used again. Try colors, states, basketball figures, singers, multiples of three, presidents, whatever.

Toilet Tag (primary, middle)

When a child is tagged in this game, he freezes in a squatting position, like the shape of a toilet, keeping one arm extended into the air until someone unfreezes him by gently pushing his arm down to "flush the toilet."

Naming Challenge (primary, middle, upper)

The class is challenged to name everyone in the room, the unit, or even the whole school. This challenge may be issued to individual children or to groups of children who will act as a team. There must be times set aside to hear everyone's name and to practice

attaching names to faces before the child or the team attempts to name everyone.

Elbow Tag (primary, middle, upper)

In this tag game variation, after a child is tagged, he links an elbow with the tagger, and the two set off chasing together. When the next child is tagged, she too links an elbow, and the three of them set off on the chase. This continues until the last child is tagged. As always with a tag game, it is important to set the boundaries of the game before it begins. A variation is for the group to break into two tagging groups once it has become eight people long.

Electricity (primary, middle, upper)

"Electricity" is a nonverbal form of Telephone." Children gather in a circle holding hands. One child sends a nonverbal "pulse" around the circle. This pulse passes from child to child until it returns to the first sender. *How long does it take? Can you beat your record? Can you beat the record from last year?*

The pulse can also be a nonverbal pattern: three little squeezes and a big one, or two big squeezes and one little one, or whatever. *Does the last child receive the pattern that the first child sent?*

Nonverbal Birthday Lines (middle, upper)

This is a group challenge: *Can all the children in the room line up from youngest to oldest without speaking?* It definitely can be done, but is not easy. The children could warm up for this challenge by first lining up by height or by first name in alphabetical order without speaking.

A Warm Wind Blows

Move chairs into a circle. The number of chairs should be one less than the number of participants. Participants sit in the chairs and one person stands in the middle of the circle. S/he says "A warm wind blows for anyone who _____," filling in the blank with a category such as "has a dog." Everyone who fits that category comes into the center of the circle and then quickly finds a new place to sit. The one person who doesn't find a seat now stands in the center of the circle and says "A warm wind blows for anyone who _____," naming a new category. The activity continues for several rounds.

This lively activity is a great way for children to learn about each other and to see what they have in common with classmates. Encourage students to name categories that relate to interests, hobbies, and family rather than clothing or appearance. You could brainstorm a list of categories before beginning the activity.

A What?

This activity requires two small objects such as balls or beanbags. The first person hands one of the objects to the next person in the circle and says, "This is a _____," filling in the blank—for example, "This is a potato." The receiver says, "A what?" The first person replies, "A potato." The receiver says, "Oh, a potato," then passes the object to person number three, repeating "This is a potato," and so on.

After the "potato" gets started around the circle, begin passing the second ball in the opposite direction, giving it a different name. "This is an eggplant." "A what?" "An eggplant and so on.

When the items meet in the middle, things can get pretty chaotic. The goal is to pass both items completely around the circle. You can also make up nonsense names for the items.

Chain Reaction (primary, middle)

This is a group discussion technique which ensures that every child speaks and that every child is heard. The children are gathered in a circle; the teacher asks a question or solicits a comment. Child one turns to child two and replies to the question. Child two turns to child three and replies to the question. This continues on and on, around the circle, until everyone has spoken and everyone is heard.

The Cold Wind Blows (primary, middle, upper)

This activity is a great way for children to learn about each other and to see what they have in common with classmates. Every person, except for one, needs to have a clearly marked spot in the circle (a chair, a book on the floor, ect.). One person starts in the middle and makes a statement such as "The cold wind blows for anyone who loves cats." Everyone who loves cats walks into the middle of the circle and then quickly finds a new spot in which to sit around the circle. There are two rules for finding a new spot: you can't go back to the same spot, and you can't go to the spot immediately to the left or right of your old spot. One person will end up without a spot and will stay in the middle to make the next statement: "The cold wind blows for anyone who plays the piano," or "likes to play soccer," or "has an older brother," etc.

It's important to stress that players name categories related to people's interest and background and not just to their clothing or appearance. It may be helpful, especially with younger children,

to brainstorm a list of possible statements before the game begins.

Aunt Minerva

The child who begins the activity decides on a category such as "hot" but does not tell anyone else. Instead s/he gives several examples to demonstrate the category by telling things that Aunt Minerva likes and doesn't like. For examples, if the category is "hot," s/he might say, "Aunt Minerva likes Florida but doesn't like Alaska. Aunt Minerva likes heavy down quilts but doesn't like thin sheets. Aunt Minerva likes soup but doesn't like ice cream." The other players try to figure out the category. When they know the category, they give an example of something Aunt Minerva likes and doesn't like. The child who began the activity acknowledges whether the guesser is right or not about what Aunt Minerva likes and doesn't like. The leader keeps giving examples and listening to others' guesses until many of the children have the category.

To keep this activity from feeling frustrating, end one round and begin another before there are only a handful of children still guessing.

Alphabet Story

The first person in the circle starts to tell a story with a sentence beginning with the letter "A"; Aunt Helen came to my house the other day," for example. The next person in the circle continues, adding a sentence that begins with "B": "Buddy, her terrier, came with her." The class continues through the alphabet until everyone has added to the story.

Aroostasha

Students stand in a circle with their hands clasped in front of them, fingers interlaced.

Begin the activity by demonstrating the chant and body movements. To do this, chant "Aroostasha, aroostasha, aroostasha-sha" while moving your clasped hands from the right side of your body to the left and pulsing your hands up and down to the beat. Then do the chant while moving your hands back to the right side of your body, pulsing to the beat as you go. Have your class repeat the chant and body movements after you.

Call out "thumbs up," then chant and do the above movement with hands clasped and thumbs up. Call out "thumbs up, wrists together." Do the chant and movement with hands clasped, thumbs up, and wrists together. Call out "thumbs up, wrists together, elbows in." Do the chant and movement with hands clasped, thumbs up, wrists together, and elbows in. By now your class should be able to do the movements as soon as you call out the instruction without first having to see you demonstrate.

Keep going in this manner, adding one body position at a time.

For example, you can add:

- Knees together
- Toes in
- Bottom out
- Tongue out (Ever try to say "Aroostasha" with your tongue out?)

Popcorn Name Game (primary, middle)

The "Popcorn Name Game" is a circle activity to help children learn each other's names. Children go around the circle, popping up like popcorn, saying their names, "Hi! I'm Jeff, and sitting back down. Children should pop in order, and only one child pops at a time.

Capture the flag (middle, upper)

"Capture the Flag" is a strategy game that can include many children. The play area is divided into two sections with lots of room for running. The children are split evenly into two teams, and each team is sent to one side of the play yard.

Each team has a flag (a handkerchief or piece of cloth) put in a designated spot and a jail that starts in designated spot at the end of the play yard. Each team then chooses a guard to watch over its flag and over its jail (in very large games in a very large space, often there will be two guards—one for the jail and one for the flag).

Objective: To capture the other team's flag and bring it back without being tagged by the other team.

Capturing the flag: Children cross over the middle boundary line to try to grab the other team's flag. If the opposing team tags them, they have to join the jail line, which moves out from the jail point toward the middle boundary line. The children in the jail must hold hands, and each new jail member joins the line at the back. Children venture across the line often without getting the flag. If they are not tagged before they get back across the middle boundary line into their home territory, they are safe.

Points: When a team successfully captures the flag that team receives a point; then both teams change sides and appoint new guards.

Guards: The guard is the only one who may stand back by the jail and flag. The guard must stand five giant steps away from both. Others may chase to the back line but may not stay there. It helps to change guards often and not wait for points to change.

Jail: A child can be rescued from jail by a member from her team who reaches the jail line and touches someone in it before being tagged by the opposing team. The rescuer takes the first person at the front of the line. They must walk hand-in-hand, and they are now

safe to cross over the middle boundary line to their home territory. If the would-be rescuer gets tagged before reaching the jail line, then he must join the end of the line.

Captain's Coming (primary, middle)

"Captain's Coming" is played on a rectangular field, perhaps fifty feet long and thirty feet wide. The boundaries should be clearly stated, but they could be as rough as "in line with those trees over there."

This game has a number of commands called out at random by the "Captain," the teacher. There is a specific action applied to each command, and the last person or the last few people to perform the act are "out."

However, the trick for the Captain is to give some of the slower and younger children an advantage by calling out a series of commands before the person who is last is identified. For instance, the Captain might call "Land," requiring everyone to run toward the designated land on the far left of the field. Just before they reach the destination (with the older and faster children far in front), the Captain calls "Sea," and everyone must turn to run in the opposite direction toward the sea, which is on the far right side of the field. Now, the children who were slower to get to the land will have a head start on their trip to the sea.

Commands:

Land: Run to one end of the rectangle.

Sea: Run to the other end of the rectangle.

Port: Run to one side of the rectangle.

Starboard: Run to the other side of the rectangle.

Captain's Coming: Line up in the middle of the rectangle and face the Captain in a saluting position.

Man Overboard: Run to either side of the rectangle and look over the edge.

Abandon Ship: Piggyback with a partner.

Scrub the Decks: Pretend to be scrubbing the decks.

Alibi

Choose one student to be the detective. S/he leaves the room. While the detective is out, the group decides on a crime that has been committed, and then chooses a student to be the guilty party and a student to be the spokesperson. The detective comes back into the room and joins the circle. The spokesperson tells the detective what crime has occurred. Now the detective asks each player in the circle for his/her alibi—"Where were you at the time of the crime?" Going around the circle in order, each player gives a brief, one-sentence alibi. The detective listens carefully and then asks for the alibis again. Going around the circle in the same order as before, each player must give the exact same alibi using the exact same words except for the child who was chosen as the guilty party. The guilty party changes his/her alibi just slightly. For example, the first time perhaps the guilty one says, "I was the doctor's." And the second time the guilty one says, "I was at the dentist's." The detective gets three attempts to guess who the guilty person is and then a new detective is chosen.

Mirror Image (middle, upper)

The teacher asks pairs of children to stand face-to-face. One child in each pair is the designated "mirror." This child observes his/her partner very closely and tries to imitate the partner's movements simultaneously, as though the partner were looking in a mirror.

Knots (middle, upper)

Begin with a circle of eight to ten children who “knot themselves” by grasping right and left hands with random other hands in the circle. All hands must have another hand to hold. The children must then figure out how to unknot them-selves without letting go of each other’s hands.

Blob Tag (primary, middle)

One person is chosen to be the tagger—the “blob.” When someone is tagged, that person joins hands with the tagger and the blob grows. The blob grows bigger as more people are caught, and continues growing until everyone is one big blob. A variation is that the blob splits into two blobs once it becomes eight people long.

Telegraph

Children stand in a circle, hold hands, and close their eyes. The first child (or the teacher) chooses a nonverbal message, such as three quick, gentle hand squeezes, and sends it to the next child. That child sends the message to the next student, and so on around the circle. After the message goes around the circle, the last child explains verbally what it was. The message can also be sent in both directions until on child receives it from both sides.

Bombardment (middle, upper)

You'll need two teams and a bounded playing field, which is divided in half by a rope, for this outdoor game. Three or more balls are placed on this rope. There is a back boundary marked at each end of the field.

At the start of the game, players run for the balls on the centerline and throw them, trying to hit opposing team members from the shoulders down. From the time the balls are in play, anyone may throw a ball if he/she can reach it from his/her half of the field. If a player is hit, she moves to the area behind the back boundary of the opposing team. If a player throws a ball that an opposing player catches in the air, then the player who threw the ball must count himself hit and move to the area behind the back boundary of the opposing team.

Any balls that can be reached from the back area may be thrown at the opposing team from the rear. The game ends when all the players of one team are behind the back boundary of the other team.

Red Light, Green Light (primary)

This is another old, traditional game. All children line up across the playground facing the "traffic light" (a teacher or a child chosen for this role). The point of the game is to be the first child to tag the "traffic light." The game begins when the traffic light yells "green light" and spins around so his back is to all the other children. The children run toward the traffic light. The traffic light then yells "red light" and spins around. Anyone whom

the traffic light sees moving is caught and must return to the starting line. The game ends when someone tags the traffic light. The tagger then becomes the traffic light, and a new game begins.

Hot and Cold (primary)

While a volunteer leaves sight of the group, another child chooses a place to hide an object. When the volunteer returns, she begins to search the room for the object while the class gives feedback. If the seeker is close to the object, they should "hot!" and if far away, they should "cold!" Gradations such as warm, lukewarm, and cool may be used as well. This continues until the seeker finds the object. It is good to have enough time for two or three seekers to find an object.

Hot Potato (primary, middle, upper)

A hot potato (a ball, a Hackey Sack) is passed quickly around the circle from one child to the next until a potato caller (who is outside the circle and facing the other way) calls out "Hot Potato!" The child with the potato in his hands at this time joins a separate "potato-callers" circle and chooses a number.

The potato is passed again while the potato-callers count softly to the chosen number. When the callers reach the number, they call out "Hot Potato!" in unison. The game continues in this manner until the last child has switched to the potato-callers circle, and all the other children have had a chance to select a "hot-potato" number.

Pass a Sound

This is a variation of Pass the mask. The first person makes a sound and passes it to the second person, who first imitates and

then gradually changes the sound. The second person then passes the new sound to the third person, and so on around the circle.

Telephone

Children sit in a circle. The first child (or the teacher) whispers a simple message into a neighbor's ear. For example, "I like chocolate." That child then whispers the message into the next child's ear, and so on around the circle. The last child in the circle says the message out loud, and everyone notices whether or not the message changed. (It usually does.)

If you'd like to use this activity to practice good listening and speaking skills, then follow the first round with a discussion. Ask children what helps them to hear a message correctly. Write answers on chart paper or the board. Then send a new message around, reminding students to use good communication skills so that the message doesn't get garbled. If the message is still garbled, then you can try a third round in which children check with each other to be sure they heard the message correctly.

Pass the Mask

The person who begins the activity makes a face, then "passes" that expression on to the next person in the circle. That person first imitates, then changes the first expression and passes the new expression on to the next person, and so on around the circle.

Ra-di-o (middle, upper)

The class forms a circle, with room to form another circle on the outside as the game progresses. Each syllable of the word "Ra-di-o" has a specific arm and hand gesture that goes with it and that determines where the action will be sent next.

One person starts by saying "ra" and puts either her left hand or her right hand above her head, pointing to the person on either the left or right side of her. That person says the next syllable, "di," and puts either his left or his right hand under his chin, pointing to the person on either his left or his right side. The next person says the last syllable, "o," and points to anyone in the circle, who then starts the action all over again by saying "Ra."

The object of the game is to listen, be aware, and think about which action and syllable is needed, and not to make a mistake. If a player does make a mistake, she goes out of the inner circle and begins to form the circle of "hecklers" who are on the outside of the circle. The hecklers have a very important job. They are to use words and sounds to try to distract the other players so that they cannot concentrate on the actions of the game.

Hecklers may not stand in front of players or use their arms or hands to obstruct the players. Instead they may talk incessantly in a player's ear; they may sing at the top of their lungs; they may tell jokes or stories, etc. Pretty soon, most players are on the outside heckling, and there are very few on the inside trying to pass the action. The game can be ended before it gets down to the last player.

Pop

Choose (or have a student choose) a number - for example, five. Going around the circle, the children count "one, two, three, ..." until they get to five. The fifth child in the circle pops up and says "Pop." The counting then starts over. This goes around and around, with the counting skipping over the children who have already popped, until everyone in the circle is standing. Variations include popping for even number, odd number, multiples of certain numbers, etc.

Magic Box

Place an imaginary magic box in the center of the circle. The first child goes to the box and takes out an imaginary item. Then use that imaginary item to pantomime and activity. When a child in the circle thinks s/he knows what the activity is, that child silently goes to the center and joins in. The originator says whether the guess is correct or not. Then those two children sit down and another child takes something out of the box, and the process continues.

Three Question Interview

Each child in the circle should have pencil and paper. Have children pair up with a child they don't know very well. The children in the pairs interview each other, asking three simple questions, such as "What is a movie that you like?" or "What do you like to do after school?" The person asking the questions can jot down his/her partner's responses. When both people have had a chance to ask three questions, they find other partners and repeat the process.

After fifteen to twenty minutes, or when each person has had a chance to interview several others, everyone returns to the large circle. Go around the circle. Each child says his/her name, and then you say, "What do people know about _____?" People who interviewed that child share what they learned. Allow time for each person to have a turn.

Variation: This variation works well early in the year, particularly if there are second language learners in the class. Each child interviews a partner and then introduces the partner to the group, using the following fill-in-the-blanks statements:

"This is my friend _____ and his/her favorite activity to do is _____."

You can substitute the following for favorite activity:

- Favorite book
- Favorite food
- Something the child is good at

Patterns

Allow plenty of time for modeling and for doing this activity. One person goes out of the room. The rest of the group decides on a pattern for how they will answer questions. For example, they might decide that everyone will answer for the person to the left, that everyone will answer for one person in the circle, or that everyone will answer for the person who is asking the questions. Once the pattern is set, the child returns to the room and begins to ask individual yes-or-no questions in an effort to figure out the pattern. The child might ask a question like "Are you wearing sneakers?" If the pattern is that everyone will answer for Claire, and Claire is wearing sneakers, then anyone asked that question will say "yes." If a group member does not know the answer to a question, he/she must venture a guess anyway. For example, if everyone is answering for Claire and the questioner asks, "Do you have a brother?" there will be some people who do not know whether Claire has a brother. If the answer is incorrect, anyone in the group who knows the true answer calls out "Pattern!" The questioner should ask questions that he/she already knows the answer to, should ask questions rapidly, and should ask as many people as possible. The job of the questioner can be very challenging, so you may want to have two people working together as questioners. This is a good activity to save until later in the year when students know each other well.

Ra-de-o (Radio)

The class forms a circle with room to form another circle on the outside as the activity progresses. Each syllable of the word "Ra-de-o" has a specific arm and hand gesture that goes with it and determines where the action will be sent next. One person starts by saying "Ra" and puts either the left or right hand above the head, pointing to the person on either the immediate left or right. That person says the next syllable, "de," and puts either the left or right hand under the chin, pointing to the person on either the immediate left or right. The next person says the last syllable, "o," and points to anyone in the circle, who then starts the action all over again by saying "Ra."

Any player who makes a mistake comes out of the inner circle and begins to form the circle of "hecklers" on the outside of the inner circle. The hecklers' job is to use words and sounds to try to distract the other players. Hecklers may not stand in front of players or use their arms or hands to obstruct the players.

Instead, they may talk incessantly in a player's ear; they may sing at the top of their lungs; they may tell jokes or stories, etc.

Pretty soon most players will be on the outside heckling, and only a few will be on the inside trying to pass the actions. The activity can end before it gets down to one last player.

What Did I Do?

One child stands in the middle of the circle. The rest of the children look closely at the child. That child then leaves the circle and, without being seen by the group, changes one thing about his/her appearance. For example, the child might tuck in a shirt, roll up pant legs, unbutton a sweater, etc. The child then returns to the circle, and others try to guess what has been changed. You can vary the amount of time allowed for observation and/or the number of things changes (to two or three things). You can also have children change some things in an area of the classroom rather than something about themselves. Or you can have children do this activity in pairs, with one partner changing something and the other guessing what has changed. The important thing is that this remains a fun activity that reinforces close observation and does not become competitive.

Zoom

The person who begins the activity says "Zoom!" and turns his/her head quickly to a neighbor on either the right or left. That person passes the zoom to the next person and so on around the circle. You can challenge the group to go faster and use a stopwatch to time them.

Variation: Explain that the word "Eek!" stops the zoom and makes it reverse direction. For the next round, allow one Eek! and then in subsequent rounds increase the number of Eeks! allowed. Remind children that the goal is to get the Zoom passed all the way around the circle. If only a few children have had a chance to

say Eek! you can end the activity by having everyone say Eek! together.

My Bonny

Everyone sings the song "My Bonny Lies Over the Ocean."
Whenever words beginning with a "b" are sung, children alternate between sitting and standing.

For example: "My Bonny (stand) lies over the ocean. My Bonny (sit) lies over the sea..."

The words to the song are:

My Bonnie lies over the ocean.

My Bonny lies over the sea.

My Bonny lies over the ocean,

So bring back my Bonny to me.

Bring back,

Bring back,

Oh bring back my Bonny to me, to me.

Bring back,

Bring back,

Oh bring back my Bonny to me.

Oliver Twist

The whole group chants the following song and does the accompanying movements. Begin slowly, then speed up until children are all laughing as they try to keep up.

Oliver twist, twist, twist (hands on hips and twist body)

Can't do this, this, this (tap right foot and shake forefinger of right hand)

Touch his head, head head (touch head with hands)

Touch his nose, nose, nose (touch nose with hands)

Touch his ears, ears, ears (touch ears with hands)

Touch his toes, toes, toes (touch toes)

One-to-Ten Math Game

This activity begins like Human Protractor (page 189): Students stand in a circle touching their toes. To a slow count of ten, they straighten up until they are standing with hands reaching for the sky. Let student know that they need to remember where their hands are at each number. Once the group is all upright, the leader calls out a math problem whose answer is a number between one and ten - for example, "ten minus two." The rest of the group responds "eight" and assumes that position. You can use whatever range of numbers is the most appropriate for the group.

Sparkle

Students stand in a circle. Announce (or have a student announce) a spelling word, such as "energy." The first student in the circle repeats the word. The next student uses the word in a sentence. The following students spell the word, one letter per student. When the word has been correctly spelled, the next student in line waves his/her hands in the air and says "Sparkle!" and then sits down. A new word begins and follows the same sequence.

If a student makes a mistake in spelling, for example, he/she puts an extra "n" in "energy," the next student in the circle can say "check." If that student does not catch the mistake, others in the circle can say "check." (If no students catch the mistake, you need to step in and say "check.") The student who made the mistake can then either correct the mistake or ask for help from

the group (a "life-line"). Once the mistake has been corrected, the activity proceeds.

Pica Ferme Nada

This is a cooperative strategy activity. A person starts the activity by thinking of a number with an agreed upon number of digits (the number of digits is based on the age and skill level of the children playing). The person writes that number on a piece of paper, which is put aside until the end of the activity. Next, the leader, using chart paper or the chalkboard, writes a blank for each digit of the number: for a three-digit number, for example. The object of the activity is for the rest of the class to work together to figure out the number by suggesting other three-digit numbers. Each time a number is suggested, the leader responds with information about whether the numerals in the suggested number are in the "mystery" number and whether they are in the right digit place. The information is provided in the following format:

- Pica (P) means the numeral is in the mystery number but is not in the correct place.
- Ferme (F) means the numeral and place are correct.
- Nada (N) means the numeral is not in the mystery number at all.

For example, if the mystery number is 386 and someone suggested 365, the leader would write down "365" - F P N." Then the next person in the circle would suggest a number based on this information. Any child who wants to pass may do so.

The activity continues in this fashion until someone is ready to name the number. When naming the number, the child must also explain the thinking that solved the mystery.

To help build a cooperative spirit, the rules allow children to ask for strategic thinking help before suggesting a number. Other children may also offer strategic thinking help even if it's not asked for. However, the guesser is not obliged to ask for or accept such help.

The more challenging way to do this activity is for the leader to write the Pica, Ferme, and Nada symbols with no direct relationship to the placement of the numerals in the suggested number. For example, if the mystery number is 386 and a student suggests 365, the leader might

write "N F P." If another student suggests 357, the leader might write "N F N." The random placement of the symbols makes the strategic thinking more challenging and fun.

I See

Begin the activity by saying "I see!" The class responds, "What do you see?" You then describe something, such as "I see bubbles floating in the air." The students act out that idea until you again say "I see." All the students stop again and respond, "What do you see?" The activity continues with you or a student leader suggesting other ideas. Choose movements that suit your students. Older children will probably not want to be "bees buzzing around," but they may enjoy pretending to be rock-and-roll stars or star athletes. Try calling out movements that move from the very slow to the very active and back to the slow again to end the activity.

Match-Up

Before doing this activity, print a short nursery rhyme, poem, or song on a sheet of paper. Make a few copies of the page and cut them into strips, with one line on each strip. You'll need enough strips that each child can get one strip.

To begin the activity, distribute the strips of paper. The first child stands and reads from his/her strip. Other children who have the same line raise their hands and these children form a small group. Continue until every line of the poem/song has been read. After the children have formed groups, do a complete reading of the poem, starting with the group who has the first line.

Memory Name Game

Ask a simple question, such as "What is your favorite color?" Each child in the circle says his/her name, answers the question, and then repeats what each preceding person said. For example, the first child might say, "Patricia, red." The second child would say, "Tim, orange; Patricia, red." The third child would say, "Nancy, blue; Tim, orange; Patricia, red." It's important to keep the question simple and the answers brief. Younger students can just repeat what the person immediately preceding them said. This is a great activity for reinforcing listening skills and for learning names.

Who Has It?

This is a good activity for second language learners since it repeats a simple sentence structure and allows them to practice vocabulary words within a category.

Distribute several toy animals around the circle. Not every student will have a toy. Students who have toys hold them in their laps where the toys are visible to everyone. The leader begins the activity by choosing anyone in the circle and asking a simple question, which will be repeated in the same format throughout the activity. "Maria, who has the rabbit?" Maria then looks around the circle and answers, "Brian has the rabbit." Brian tosses the rabbit to Maria who says, "I have the rabbit." Everyone who has an animal now passes it to the person sitting to the right. The person sitting next to the leader chooses someone and asks, "Brenda, who has the dog?" and the activity continues

until each person in the circle has asked the question and each person has held at least one animal.

Zip, Zap, Pop

One student in the circle begins by placing his/her hand on top of the head, fingers pointing either right or left and says, "Zip."

The person who receives the zip can either continue the zip on the next person in the circle, or can place hand under chin, pointing back toward the initiator, and say "Zap," or can point to someone across the circle and say "Pop." And the activity continues from there.

Variation one: One student stands in the center of the circle, points to someone in the circle and says "Zip." People on either side of the person who got "zipped" point to each other and say "Zap." The trick is that they need to say "Zap" before the person in the middle says "Pop."

Variation two: One person ("it") stands in the center of the circle, points to someone in the circle, and says either "Zip," "Zap," or "Pop" and then counts quickly to eight. If "it" said "Zip," the person pointed to must say the name of the person to his/her right before "it" reaches eight; if the word was "Zap," the person must name the person to the left; if the word was "Pop," the person must say his/her own name. If the person doesn't say the appropriate name before "it" reaches eight, that person becomes "it."

Smaug's Jewels (middle, upper)

One person is chosen as Smaug, a deadly dragon who stands guard over her jewels (a handkerchief or a piece of cloth). Everyone else forms a circle around Smaug and tries to steal the jewels

without being tagged. Smaug can range as far from her jewels as she dares. If Smaug tags someone, that person is instantly frozen in place until the end of the game (games usually last about a minute).

Guess the Number

Think of a number and write it down on a piece of paper that you hide. Let students know that you've chosen a number between one and _____ choosing a number range that appropriately challenges the group, give their age and skill level. Going around the circle, students take turns asking a yes-or-no question to try to determine the number. If a student does not have a question, s/he may "pass" A student who thinks s/he knows the number may take a guess. If the guess is incorrect, the questioning continues. If it's correct, the teacher may choose another number or pick a child to choose a number. To emphasize the cooperative nature of this activity, be sure that the child who correctly guesses the number is not the next one to choose a number. The ultimate goal of this activity is to see how many numbers the group can figure out within a certain period of time.

Encourage students to think of questions that will give them information about the number, rather than questions that just eliminate one number. Instead of asking if it's the number after fourteen, for example, students might ask if it's a two-digit number, whether it's larger than ten, or if it has a five in it.

This activity helps children develop questioning skills and listening skills.

Lean-To (middle, upper)

In this group challenge, everyone gathers in a circle and counts off by twos. The children hold hands in the circle and the "ones" slowly lean toward the center of the circle while the "twos" slowly

lean back. Once this is accomplished, ask the "ones" to lean slowly back while the "twos" lean forward. It takes practice.

Guess the Word

Give students a list of words, grouped by kind---for example, nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. You choose a word from the list and write it down on a sheet of paper that you hide. Going around the circle, students ask questions that first narrow the possibilities to the kind of word and then to the correct word. Students may pass if they want to. A student who thinks s/he knows the word may take a guess. If the guess is incorrect, the questioning continues. If the guess is correct, another word is chosen and another round of the activity begins. As with the activity *Guess the Number*, be sure that the child who correctly guesses the word is not the one to choose a new word.

Clapping Names

In this activity, children will clap out the number of syllables in each child's first name while they chant the name. You can begin with your own name, chanting the name and clapping once for each syllable. Then either go around the room or ask children to volunteer to be next. You can vary the activity by having children clap out last names or self-chosen nicknames.

This is a good activity to do at the beginning of the year when children are learning each other's names. It is also a good activity to do if a new child joins the group later in the year.

Cooper Says

The leader is "Cooper." Cooper gives the group instructions. Group members follow the instructions only if the instructions are preceded by "Cooper says..." For example, if the leader says, "Cooper says touch your toes," group members touch their toes. However, if the leader says, "Touch your toes," group members stand still. Keep the activity moving quickly. You can increase the difficulty by challenging the group to follow ten directions correctly.

This activity is similar to "Simon Says," except that no one is ever "out."

What Are You Doing?

In this activity, one person goes to the center of the circle and mimes some simple action such as brushing one's hair. The next person in the circle approaches the hair-brusher and asks, "What are you doing?" The hair brusher responds by saying something completely different, such as "I'm washing the floor," The person who asked now pretends that s/he is washing the floor. The next person from the circle then comes to ask the floor-washer, "What are you doing?" This goes on until everyone in the circle has had a chance to mime an action.

Don't Make Me Laugh

Two students stand in the center of the circle. One student's job is to stay silent and straight-faced. The other student's job

is to make the first student laugh, using funny facial expressions and gestures. Students participate in this activity on a volunteer basis.

Rainstorm

Begin the activity by making motions and noises that sound like a rainstorm. The children imitate you, continuing to make that motion/sound until you change to a different one. The rainstorm motions and noises are:

- a) Raise both hands in the air with palms out, wriggle the fingers, and at the same time, make a soft whooshing noise with the mouth.
- b) Rub the palms of the hand together repeatedly.
- c) Click the fingers.
- d) Clap hands on thighs, alternating the left hand and the right hand.
- e) Clap hands on floor or, if playing outside, stomp feet.
- f) Loudly clap hands together.

A storm that builds from soft to hard rain to thunder and lightning and back again will take the pattern a→b→c→d→e→f→e→d→c→b→a.

Variation: Begin the activity with a rainstorm motion, then pass the motion by turning to the person immediately to the left and making eye contact. That person passes the motion to the left and so on around the room. When the motion reaches you again, begin to pass the next motion. Each student continues to make the old motion until a neighbor passes along a new one.

Everybody Up (middle, upper)

Begin with two kids sitting on the ground, hands clasped, feet touching. Their job is to work together to raise themselves from sitting to standing. When twosomes succeed, students work in threesomes, foursomes and occasionally even higher numbers.

Coseeki / Follow the Leader

One player leaves the group and stands where s/he cannot see the group. The group chooses a leader who does a movement, such as tapping his/her toe, which the others follow. The leader changes the movement regularly and the others follow the leader's movement. The hidden player returns, stands in the middle of the circle, watches the movements, and tries to guess who the leader is.

Variations:

- Send more than one player away and have them confer.
- Limit the guesses.
- Have two leaders, who take turns starting new movements.
- Use movements that make no sound.

Description

In this activity, three students describe an object in the room while the rest of the class tries to guess the object. You can choose the object or you can let the three children choose. The object needs to be fairly complex and be visible to everyone else, such as the classroom bulletin board, and the three children need to give different descriptions. Give the three children time to meet and decide what each will say. When they return to the group, they give their descriptions and the rest of the group tries to identify the object.

Children need to listen carefully, concentrating on what is being said. They also need to focus on the details of a complex

object. This activity might generate a discussion about how there are several ways to see things. It can also lead into a creative writing exercise.

Description: A variation on Twenty Questions

This activity is similar to Twenty Questions. The group sits in a circle. The child who is "it" gets a card with a word written on it taped to his/her back. The word names a person, place or thing, the word can be related to the subjects the class is studying, such as fish, mountains, rivers, capitals, and books. The child can ask the class up to ten yes-or-no questions to try and determine what is written on his/her back. To increase the difficulty, the group can agree ahead of time that certain questions or type of questions are not allowed. Each time a question is asked, the class responds with thumbs up to indicate "yes" or thumbs down to indicate "no." The child can make a guess at any time with a maximum of three guesses. After twenty questions, the child can ask for clues from the class before making a final guess.

Line in a Snake (primary)

"Line in a Snake" is a fun way to travel through the school, go to the cafeteria, or explore the boundaries of the play yard. It is a traveling form of "Follow the Leader." The body of the snake always follows the head of the snake, wherever the snake goes. The children, with practice, learn to follow a designated leader. It is always best for the teacher to be at the end of the line so he has a clear view of what is happening.

Inchworm (middle, upper)

"Inchworm" is a close relative of "Everyone Up," described earlier. In this game, children are challenged to work with a partner to move across a given space while their feet and their hands are attached.

Zoom (primary, middle)

Children simply pass the word "zoom" around the circle one at a time. The child who begins it turns to her neighbor and says "zoom." Once the zoom is "received," the next person turns and passes it on. The first challenge is for everyone to pass the zoom flawlessly and smoothly around the circle. It might take a few tries! Once that is mastered, children enjoy timing themselves to see how quickly they can pass the zoom completely around once, then twice.

For more of a challenge, the word "eek" can be introduced to stop the "zoom" and reverse its direction. Whenever "eek" is said by the receiving child, "zoom" stops, reverses direction, and heads off the other way.

Scavenger Hunt (primary, middle, upper)

You can create a scavenger hunt almost anywhere. In a scavenger hunt, a series of clues are given to the children. The children are expected to "hunt" for the answers.

You start the hunt with a single clue. When you find the answer to that clue, you also find the next clue. Each answer leads you to the next clue until you have completed the hunt. The first individual or team that finds all the answers is the winner. Scavenger hunts can be used to explore the classroom, the school, or the playground.

Follow the Sound (primary, middle)

Sounds are passed around the circle. Each child mimics the sound passed from the previous child, then creates a new sound to pass to the next child in the circle.

Simon Says (primary, middle)

The teacher or a designated class "leader" performs a series of motions, goes on a moon walk or simply makes the different faces. If the leader precedes his action by saying "Simon says," then the children are to copy the action. If the leader does not say "Simon says," the children are to remain still. If a child moves to copy an action that was not preceded by "Simon says," then, traditionally, the child sits down until a new game starts. If you do not wish to play a game where children are eliminated, simply start a second game and have children move between games. Instead of being eliminated, a child simply moves to the other game.

Four Corners (middle, upper)

The group is divided into four teams. Each team retreats to its "corner" of a large square playing area. Each team is given colored flags (scraps of cloth) to tuck into their belts—no tying. Each team has a different color flag, and all members of a team have the same color flag.

At a signal, everybody heads for the diagonally opposite corner of the square. On the way there, anyone may grab anyone's flag. Once your flag is captured, your feet are frozen---you can't move. However, you are allowed to grab another's flag if she should venture too close. You are safe when you reach the diagonally opposite corner.

The game continues going from diagonal corner to diagonal corner on signal until the teacher decides it is time to stop. The team with the most members remaining at large (they still have their flags tucked in) is the winner.

Fish Gobbler (primary)

In this indoor or outdoor game, all you need is an area big enough for all the children to spread out with ample room to maneuver. When the caller (known as the fish gobbler) shouts "ship" all the children (the fish) run toward the wall (or marked boundary) to which he points. On the shout "shore," they quickly change directions and run towards the opposite wall (or marked boundary). On the signal "fish gobbler," the kids quickly drop to the floor on their stomachs and link arms, legs or bodies together with one or more classmates. The fish gobbler moves around the room or playing field with arms outstretched swimming towards the other players but not touching any of them. The children are all "safe" as long as they are physically linked with someone else. Once the fish gobbler sees that everyone is linked to someone else, the signal "rescue" is called. At this moment, all the children jump to their feet, join hands, and yell "Yea!" raising their hands over their heads.

Various other calls could be added, such as "sardines" (everyone runs to a central point to make the tightest group possible by either lying on the floor or forming a massive standing hug); "fisherman all" (everyone sits on someone else's knee or knees); "crabs" (everyone backs up to a partner, bends over, and reaches under his own legs to hold hands); "fishnet" (let the kids use their imaginations and decide how to make one).

Platform (middle, upper)

This is a group challenge in which the group attempts to get everyone in the class on a three-foot by three-foot platform or space. The effort is timed. If not done in twenty minutes, stop and debrief. Ask the children to talk about what is working and what isn't working. Then try it again on another day.

Safe Tagging (primary, middle, upper)

There are many terrific tag games. All of them, however, depend on the children's ability to be safe "taggers."

What does it mean to tag someone safely? Can you tackle someone? Can you dive at someone? These notions must be explored and defined with children before tag games are embarked upon. Discussions of what it means to tag safely should go along with the introduction of "tagger's choice."

"Tagger's choice" is a rule that simply states if the tagger says you were tagged, then you were tagged. In tag games, arguments frequently flare up around whether or not a child was tagged. These conflicts can be held to a minimum if the tagger is always the one who "calls" the tag.

Extended Name Tags (middle, upper)

Extended name tags are simply larger than usual name tags and include pieces of information about a person along with the person's name. Students are asked to draw a symbol or write a word representing something about themselves in each corner of the name tag. Here are some examples of topics for the corner:

- Your favorite place on earth
- Someone who taught you something
- A time you remember spending three great days in a row
- Something you love to do

Silly Soccer (middle, upper)

Soccer is a very simple and enjoyable sport for children. Almost every child loves to run and kick and try and score a goal. The trouble is that the faster and stronger children usually dominate. To solve this problem, try "Silly Soccer."

"Silly Soccer" uses the same basic idea of soccer in that competing teams attempt to score a goal by kicking a ball. However, in this version, there are three goals and no traditional soccer rules. The field is in the shape of a triangle, with a cone placed at each of the three points of the triangle. These cones serve as the goals as each team attempts to defend its own cone, without the use of an official goalie, while also trying to kick the ball so that it touches the other teams' cones. A team scores when a ball is kicked touches another team's cones.

With three teams and three goals, the game can get quite silly and most players will quickly give up trying to keep track of the score. A ball that is lopsided and rolls in unpredictable ways make the game even more fun.

Encore

This is a fun and quick activity that calls for teamwork. Children divide up into several teams based on where they are sitting in the circle. The teacher calls out a word or topic (examples: rain, dancing, rivers, farm animals, etc.), and within five minutes (or

less) each team tries to come up with as many songs as it can that use that topic or word.

Before doing this activity, take some time to think about songs that relate to different words, just to ensure that you don't pick a word that's impossible to match to a song.

Continuous Kickball (middle, upper)

The field is set up like a regular kickball field but with only a home plate, a first base, and a pitcher's mound.

- An orange cone sits at home plate.
- A catcher stands behind home plate.
- The remainder of the outfield is like a regular kickball outfield.

There are two teams. One team is lined up behind the home plate, and the other team has a player near first, a player as a catcher, and a player as a pitcher, while the rest of the players are out in the field. The pitcher's job is to try to roll the ball and hit the cone at home plate. The first player in line on the team that's up tries to kick the ball before it hits the cone at home plate.

If the kicker kicks the ball, she runs to first base, runs around it, and runs back to home plate. The object is to try to get back to home plate before the pitcher has another chance to roll the ball toward the cone and hit it.

- If the pitcher hits the cone, no matter when, the kicker is out.
- If the pitcher misses the cone when the kicker is running back to home plate, the kicker continues to run around home plate, out to first base, and then back, until the pitcher hits the cone. The catcher retrieves the ball when the pitcher misses the cone.

- If the kicker kicks a fly ball that is caught in the air, the kicker is out.
- When a team is up at "bat," the team gets three outs, and then the teams exchange roles on the field.
- Each inning a new student takes the pitcher's position.
- The ball always goes to the pitcher from the outfield. It is never thrown at the kicker or to the bases.

Famous Pairs

Make a list of famous pairs of people, such as Lewis and Clark, Abbott and Costello. You could brainstorm a list with the class. Write these names on cards, one name to a card, and then tape a card to each student's back. Students mill around, asking each other questions to determine what name is on their back. Then they find the person who has their partner's name.

Fact or Fiction

A student tells three things about him/herself -- two facts and one fiction. For example, the student might say, "I've been to France, I play the tuba. I've got three cats." Going around the circle, everyone makes a guess about which claim is fiction. The student then says which student's guesses correctly, and someone else takes a turn.

Hospital Tag (primary, middle)

One or two people are "it," and another person is designated as the "doctor." When players are tagged by and "it," they continue to run around but must put their hand over the place where they were tagged (their wound). When someone has been tagged for the third time, he/she drops to the ground and calls "doctor,

doctor." The doctor gently touches the person, which heals his/her wounds, allowing him/her to play again.

Octopus (primary, middle)

In this tag game, one child is the "octopus" -- the octopus with long and dangerous arms. He is also the tagger. He attempts to tag another. When he does, that child is frozen, but she can wave her arms like the tentacles of an octopus, helping to tag others until all are octopuses. This game must be played with clear boundaries on all sides so that the untagged children are forced to move through out the frozen octopuses.

Boppity Bop Bop Bop

Before doing this activity, decide with the students on movements for several three-person and one-person scenes. For example, a three-person scene might be called "elephant." The middle person waves and arm up and down like a snout, and the other two people use opposite arms to make ears. Another three-person scene is "cowboy," in which the middle person circles an imaginary lariat and yells "Yahoo!" and the two side people tap their knees like a galloping horse. A one-person scene is "Elvis," in which the person swivels his/her hips like Elvis.

One student ("it") stands in the middle of the circle. S/he points to someone in the circle and names a "scene." If s/he names a three-person scene, the person pointed to and the people to either side must do the prearranged movements before "it"

says "Boppity bop bop bop." If "it" names a one- person scene, everyone must do the movements before "it" says the phrase.

Anyone who doesn't complete the movement before "it" completes the phrase, moves to the center of the circle and becomes "it." If several people don't complete the movement, they all come to the center of the circle. They decide together what the next scene will be, point, and chant "Bobbity bop bop bop."

Buzz

Going around the circle, students count from one to a hundred. Whenever a student comes to a number that contains a seven or it a multiple of seven, s/he says "Buzz" instead of that number. For example, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, buzz, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, buzz, 15, 16, buzz, etc. Move quickly. If someone makes a mistake or pauses too long, s/he skips a turn.

Variation: Play "Fizz" which is the same activity except that the number is five instead of seven. This makes the activity easier for younger children. Or try "Fixx-Buss": 1, 2, 3, 4, Fizz, 6, Buzz, . . .

Colored Dot Game (middle, upper)

"Colored Dot" is a good ice-breaking activity for the beginning of the school year. Children come into the room. The teacher places a colored dot (one of four to six possible colors) on each child's forehead. The child has not seen what color her dot is. Each child then has to find classmates with the same colored dot without speaking.

Coseeki (primary, middle, upper)

"Coseeki" is a good game for developing observation skills. A child volunteers to be "it" and leaves the circle. While he is gone, a leader is chosen. This leader will lead the other children in a series of motions - a hand clap, a foot stomp, a head nod. The children sitting with the leader in the circle must watch the leader closely, out of the corners of their eyes, and repeat her motions. The child who volunteered to go out of the room now stands in the middle of the circle and tries to guess who is leading the group.

Beach Ball Vocabulary for ELL

Please picture stickers on each panel of a beach ball. The student who catches the ball looks at the stickers under or near her/his hands. S/he needs to name one of the items and then use that word in a sentence.

Beach Ball Vocabulary

Instead of numbers, write vocabulary words on each panel of a beach ball. The student who catches the ball needs to define one of the words near where his/her hands are and use it correctly in a sentence.

Beach Ball Math

Before doing the activity, write a number on each panel of a beach ball. Be sure to include the small circles at the top and bottom.

Begin this activity by choosing (or having a student choose) a math function, such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division and then tossing the ball to someone else in the circle.

The person who catches the ball looks at the number beneath her/his hands. These numbers become an equation that the child tries to solve using the designated function. For example, if the function is multiplication and the student's hands cover a three and a seven, the student then needs to multiply three times seven and gives the correct answer. The student can ask for help if needed. Once the equation is solved, the student tosses the ball to someone else in the group.

BINGO

Begin by creating "Bingo" cards on sheets of 8 1/2 x 11 papers. Each square on the card will contain a fact that could apply to several students in the class. For example, "has a cat," "Favorite color is blue," "Has more than three siblings," "Speaks a language other than English," etc. Students can suggest facts or help you create the cards. \par

Give each student a card. Students then mingle and try to find classmates who match the various facts. When a match is found, the student who has been identified signs that square. For example, when Shawna finds out that Juan has a dog, Juan signs that square on Shawna's card. Each student can only sign one square per card. The goal is to fill the card.

Category Circle

Children stand or sit in a circle. One child goes into the center with a ball (Nerf ball, beanbag, anything easy to catch and pass). The child turns around three times, stops, and tosses the ball to someone standing across from him/her. The child who catches the ball names a category and immediately starts passing the ball to the person on the right who continues passing the ball. The child in the center tries to name as many items in the category as

possible before the ball is passed all the way around to the child who started the category. Another child can be assigned to count how many items in the category are named.

Occupation Pantomime

Children take turns pantomiming an occupation, such as house painter, while other guesses what the occupation is.

Category Snap

The group sits in a circle. The leader starts a rhythm using a sequence of knee slap, hand clap, right-hand finger snap, left-hand finger snap. The leader then announces a category, such as fruits, on the right-hand finger snap and names an example, such as apples, with the left-hand finger snap. The next person in the circle must be ready to name the leader's fruit with the right-hand finger snap and then a new example in that same category with the left-hand finger snap: Knee slap, hand clap, "apples, apricots." The play continues around the circle. Once an item has been named it cannot be used again.

Variation: The category is announced before the activity begins. Each person chooses and says out loud an item that belongs in that category. Once an item has been named, it can't be used again. The leader begins by identifying his/her own item with the right-hand finger snap and then names another player's item with the left-hand finger snap. That player then names her/his item followed by another player's item and so on. This variation sends the action jumping around the circle and demands that children not only listen but also remember what other player's said.

Pantomime This Object

Choose a real object, such as a broom, and use it to pantomime something else: a guitar, a horse, a violin, etc. The group guesses what the object is that you're pantomiming. Then pass the object around the circle. Any child who wants can pantomime something with it while the group guesses what the object is.

Hands Up for '08 (change for correct year)

Name a category and choose a child to begin the activity. (Once children are familiar with this activity, they can name the category and start the round.) The whole group begins the following chant, filling in the name of the category in the fourth line. The last line names the child who is beginning the activity. Going around the circle, each child then quickly names an item in the category. If a child misses by repeating or taking more than a few seconds, the activity starts over again with the chant, naming the child who is next in the circle. The object is to get all the way around the circle without a miss.

Hands up / / (silent beats)

For '08 / / (silent beats)

Gonna' name (clap, clap)

Some _____ (clap, clap) (A category is names, such as rivers, states, animals, etc.)

One apiece (clap, clap)

No repeats (clap, clap)

No hesitation (clap, clap)

No duplication (clap, clap)

Starting with (clap, clap)

_____ (Fill in with child's name, and child says something that fits in the category.)

Hot and Cold

Select an object to hide. Choose one child to be the "seeker" and send that child out of the room. Hide the object in a place that is difficult enough to provide a challenge but not so difficult that the search becomes frustration. The group can help you choose a hiding place. Invite the seeker back into the room. The seeker begins looking for the object. The group guides the search by saying "hot" whenever the seeker gets near the object and "cold" whenever s/he moves away from the object.

If you have a second language learners in your class who might be confused by this use of "hot" and "cold," the group can say "near" and "far."

Group Charades

Choose a fairly broad category, such as animals, simple machines, geology, etc. Students gather in small groups. Each group gets a topic within the category. For example, if the category is animals, one group might get dogs, another might get cows and so on. Each group takes about five minutes to figure out how to act out this topic without using words, sounds or props. All students

in the group work together. For example, all students act out one dog rather than each student acting out a dog. When groups are ready, they come back together in a circle, and each group acts out its topic. Other students try to guess what the topic is.

One Thing You Like to Do

Each child in the circle pantomimes a favorite activity, and then the group guesses what that activity is.