

Circle Work

Some co-operative games that work well in a circle are:

- **Chinese Whispers:** A whisper is passed around the group. There will possibly be a marked difference between what the opening sentence passed around was and the closing one.
- **Oranges and Lemons:** The group are given different fruit names e.g. Orange, Lemon, Pear. The teacher also names him/herself as a fruit. The teacher then calls the fruit s/he has named him/herself. Everyone who is that name must change seats. The teacher takes a seat also and the person who is left standing calls the next fruit. Any category of choice can be used for this game.
- **Leader of the Orchestra:** One person from the group is asked to wait outside the door for a moment. One other person then is chosen as Leader of the orchestra and they must lead the group by ‘playing’ different musical instruments which the group imitate. The person outside the door is called in and must guess which of the group Members is leading the Orchestra.
- **Partners (also called Mirror Mirror).** In pairs one child does some gentle movement/ and the other child must mirror this exactly.
- **Pattern Ball:** A ball is thrown from one person to the other in the circle until each person in the circle has received the ball once. No-one should be passed the ball more than once. The group must then see can they remember and repeat the pattern. Two/three balls might be introduced to the circle or the circle might be repeated backwards.
- **Quality Initials:** To start Circle work positively, each person thinks about one or two initials of his/her name e.g. Chris Grant, CG., and finds two affirming qualities that describe him/herself. Alternatively, the children can work with someone seated beside them and introduce each other.
- **Lap Ball:** All the players sit on the floor in a circle with their legs extended in front of them and so that everybody’s feet are in the

centre. The players' hands support their bodies by being placed behind the bodies on the floor. Heels are not to be lifted and hands must stay behind the back, although they can move. The object of the game is to keep the ball off the ground, while passing it quickly from lap to lap. If it gets stuck around the ankles, the group must think of some way of getting it moving again. The fun increases when two balls are being passed simultaneously in different directions.

- **Zoom:** Imagine 'zoom' as the sound of a racing car. Start by saying 'zoom' and turning your head to either side of the circle. The person on that side passes the word 'zoom' to the next person and so on until everyone has quickly passed 'zoom' around the circle. Next, explain the word 'Eek', which makes the car stop and reverse direction. Thus whenever the word 'Eek' is said, the zoom goes the opposite way around the circle. It may be necessary to limit the number of 'Eeks' per person.
- **Clapping Game:** One person leaves the room. The rest of the group decides upon an object for the person to find. The player outside is then brought in and tries to find his object or activity while the group claps. The group helps the player to complete the task by clapping louder and louder as the person approaches the object decided upon. If the person is far away from finding their object, then the clapping becomes soft.
- **One word Story:** Each person in turn says one word which will add to a story that is developing. It works best when the pace is lively.
- **Centre Throw:** Players form a circle, with one player standing in the centre. The centre player throws the ball to any player in the circle and immediately runs to any other player. That player then throws the ball to any other player in the circle and immediately runs to any other player. That player then runs to the centre to receive the ball thrown by the last player receiving it. The game continues until all have been the centre player.
- **Winking:** In a circle the first one chosen winks at someone else, and they exchange places. When they are used to this, someone can be placed in the middle of the circle to try to get to the vacant spot first.

If s/he does s/he is the winker. If not the one who was winked at gets a turn to wink.

- **Spin the bottle:** The children take turn to spin the bottle. Whoever the neck of the bottle is pointing at when it stops says one thing they really enjoy doing that they are good at.
- **First one back:** For this game, the chairs need to be pointing around the edge of the circle rather than inwards. There must be one fewer chair than the number of children. One child begins the game by moving around the outside of the circle in a chosen manner such as hopping, jumping or crawling. Don't allow them to move faster than a walk. This child taps four other children on the shoulder. They follow copying the movement. When the leader shouts 'Back to seats' the children make their way as quickly as possible to the vacant seats. The child left standing becomes the new leader and must think of a different way to move. The other children can offer suggestions if they are asked.
- **In the driving seat:** The children take turns to sit in the chair in the centre and mime sitting in a seat from the list. The other children try to guess what it is.
- **Clap and Call:** Number the children around the circle giving each one a sticky label with a number on it. A child begins the game by saying their number and someone else's. The second child repeats the process, saying their own and a third number. All the children clap twice in between the pairs of numbers.
- **Rocket Launch:** Count how many people including yourself are in the room. Sitting in a circle, children count down from the starting number. Anybody can stand up and call the next number, but if two children stand up at the same time, the countdown has to begin again. When you reach 1, all the children stand, raise their arms and shout, 'We have Lift Off'.
- **Fizz Buzz:** Go round the circle counting upwards. The group replaces any number divisible by three with 'fizz', and number divisible with

five by 'buzz', and any number divisible by three or five with 'fizz buzz'. Count up and see how high you can go.

- **Shopping List:** The group forms a circle. One person starts by saying 'I am going to the market to buy fish'. The next person says 'I am going to the market to buy potatoes and fish'. Each person repeats the list and then adds an item. The aim is to be able to remember all of the items that all of the people before you have listed'.

- **Follow the Touch:** One child in turn leaves the centre to make a distinct touch on an object or location in the classroom before returning to the circle. The next player retraces the touch of the first player and then touches another location before returning. A third child should repeat the sequence of the first two and add another. The game is played in silence and encourages observation and concentration.