

I Open My Eyes To You

*Dances of Universal Peace
& Creative Activities
For Peacemakers of All Ages*

Compiled by Kathryn Ashera Rose

This project was supported by
*The North American Network
of the Dances of Universal Peace*

Fourth Edition, 2013

Dances of Universal Peace and composed melodies © 1980, 1985, 1990, 1994, 2000 by the International Network for the Dances of Universal Peace, held in trust for originators. Used with permission. All rights reserved. Presentation in this booklet © 2013 Kathryn Ashera Rose. Circle of Hearts Logo (page 148) © 1984, International Network for the Dances of Universal Peace. Cover Art © 2000 Corinna Lyon. Used with permission. Photograph of Murshida Vera Corda © 2000 Stan Askew. Special thanks for the following permissions:

“Krishna Story” reprinted from the Children’s Universal Worship Song, Dance and Story Book, by Murshida Vera Corda, © 1983, used with permission of Holistic Human Development, Inc. All rights reserved.

“A Flower Blooms” words by Thich Nhat Hanh, reprinted from Present Moment, Wonderful Moment: Mindfulness Verses for Daily Living by Thich Nhat Hanh © 1990. “I Vow” words by Thich Nhat Hanh, reprinted from Interbeing: Fourteen Guidelines for Engaged Buddhism, Third Edition (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1998) by Thich Nhat Hanh. By permission of Parallax Press, Berkeley, California. All rights reserved.

“Happiness Runs (Pebble and the Man)”, words and music by Donovan Leitch, Copyright 1968 by Donovan (music) Ltd. Copyright renewed. All rights Administered by Peer International Corporation, International Copyright Secured. All Rights Reserved.

“There’s A Little Wheel A-Turnin’ In My Heart” words and music by Florence White, Copyright 1950 by Edward B. Marks Music Company, Copyright Renewed, International Copyright Secured. All Rights Reserved. Used by permission.

All Dances of Universal Peace, games and activities in this booklet and CD are held in trust by Kathryn Ashera Rose for their originators. If we did not credit the correct source correctly, please notify the editor, Kathryn Ashera Rose, so that future editions may be amended.

ISBN-13: 978-1482755497
ISBN-10: 1482755491
© Kathryn Ashera Rose 2013
All rights reserved
Starchild Celebrations
779 Dobbins Farm Road NE
Floyd VA 24091-2275
KathrynAshera@gmail.com
www.StarChildCelebrations.com
www.cgpp.org

Additional Peace Resources

This booklet is part of a growing collection of resources for peace celebration and education available through both www.starchildcelebrations.com and through the Children's Global Peace Project at www.cgpp.org.

'All My Relations': Three complete 12-lesson curriculums that provide practical, fun and empowering skills for self-awareness and empowerment (phase one), communication and interpersonal success (phase two), and compassionate citizenship (phase three), all within a multicultural creative arts mileau.

Cultivating Peace Within: Self-Awareness & Self-Empowerment for Peace

Creating Peace Together: Compassionate Communication

& Creative Conflict Resolution

Peace In Our World: Discovery, Harmony and Co-Creation With All of Life

Rainbow Path to Peace: A colorful transformational journey through the steps of creative conflict resolution that can be walked by one, two or more people! Integrates moments of heart-centered reflection, dynamic communication, active listening and empathy, creative brainstorming, respectful requests and negotiation, and celebration! Sturdy vinyl rainbow floor mat in two sizes, plus a helpful guidebook that outlines all the basics. Walking the path is highly motivating, plus it guides and reinforces emerging skills!

StarChild Peace Journal: A personal space for reflection, creative expression, visioning and integration of peace concepts and skills. Each page is formatted with peace concepts and exercises that help children become capable peacemakers. Can be downloaded as a PDF and reproduced within a classroom or family.

Children's Global Peace Mandala: This beautiful image, printed on vinyl, can be used as an on-the-floor centering piece for a peace or dance circle, and can be hung on the wall as visual inspiration -- reminding us that all children everywhere are connected and creating peace!

More resources are under development. Watch for our videos and interactive websites to evolve! Trainings and individual coaching are available for all skill sets. We welcome collaboration, inquiries, feedback and submissions for inclusion in future projects.

Toward the One
The Perfection of Love, Harmony and Beauty
The Only Being
United With All the Illuminated Souls
Who Form the Embodiment of the Master
The Spirit of Guidance.

Invocation of Hazrat Inayat Khan

Many thanks are expressed to the very wonderful children
who sang for this project,
and for the dedicated parents, teachers and others who guide them.

This project was manifested with the inspirational
and editorial guidance of Radha Tereska Buko.

Many thanks to Anahata Iradah, whose musical expertise
and abundant enthusiasm guided many aspects of the process.

This project could not have happened without a generous financial gift
from peace visionary Richard Madlener.

Special thanks to Ayesha Jeanne Lauenborg - may her soul rest in peace -
for her wonderful input,
to Mansur Richard Conviser for hours of technical support,
and to my family and friends for allowing me to pursue this bliss.

If we are to reach real peace in the world,
We shall have to begin with the children;
And if they will grow up in their natural innocence,
We won't have to struggle;
We won't have to pass fruitless ideal resolution,
But we shall go from love to love and peace to peace,
Until at last all the corners of the world are covered
With that peace and love for which consciously or
Unconsciously the whole world is hungering.

Gandhi



Photo by Stan Askew

This project is lovingly dedicated to
Murshida Vera Corda
1913 - 2002
in recognition of her extraordinary contribution
to the spiritual education of children,
and her lifetime of achievement as an artist,
visionary, author, spiritual guide,
developer of the Children's Universal Worship,
and founder of the network of Seed Schools for Children.

I Open My Eyes To You

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Working With Children	3
Walking With Children	7
Creative Movement	12
Belly Dancing	13
The Face of God	14
The Elements	15
Opening Our Voices	22
Storytelling	24
A Krishna Tale	26
The Magical Rainbow Flowers	27
Games	30
Using Games With Children	31
Breath & Visualization: The Big Sigh	32
The Wind / The Waves	33
Liquid Sunshine	34
Energy: Ya Hu!	35
Electricity	36
Imagination: Flower Petals	37
Starfleet Command Rocketship	39
Sound & Voice: Sound Current	40
Prayer Wheel	41
Free Allah	42
Harmonic Convergence	43
Ocean of Sound	44
Sound Bath	45
Sound Machine	46
Rhythm: Play-along	47
Rhythm Add-On	48
Call & Response Singing Game	49
Navajo Greeting Game	50
African Rhythm Game	51
Rhythm Weaving	53
Body/Self Awareness: Stream of Life	56
These Are My Feet	57
Sound Moves	58

Partnering:	I Am A Mirror of You!	59
	Follow the Sound	60
	Elephant	61
	Cars	62
Group Building:	The Name Game	63
	Cherokee Greeting Ritual	64
	Pass It!	65
	Web of Life	66
	Height Shuffle	67
	Mirroring the Four Directions	68
	Closing Rituals	69
Dances		70
Keys To Teaching The Dances of Universal Peace		71
Ending A Dance		74
Putting It All Together		75
	<i>The following selections are on the CD "I Open My Eyes To You"</i>	
Ho Ike Mai	<i>the aloha spirit</i>	77
Shiva's Drum	<i>the sound of Shiva's drum</i>	80
Alleluia	<i>a joyous carol of friendship</i>	82
A Flower Blooms	<i>Buddhist walking meditation</i>	85
In My Heart	<i>our imagination is the limit</i>	87
Ezekiel's Wheel	<i>uplifting vision of the Old Testament prophet</i>	90
Be Nice To Camels	<i>Mohammed's favorite desert animal</i>	94
'Tis A Gift	<i>beloved Shaker song & dance</i>	97
Allah Hayy	<i>a celebration of Divine Life</i>	102
<i>(These Are My Feet is categorized as a game and is on page 57</i>)		
Children's Vows	<i>promises of the Bodhisattva from Thich Nhat Hahn</i>	104
Giridhara Gopala	<i>celebrating playful Krishna of the Hindu tradition</i>	107
I Open My Eyes To You	<i>a universal sharing</i>	111
Rock-A-My-Soul	<i>touching the heart of Abraham</i>	113
Happiness Runs In A Circular Motion	<i>pure joy from Donovan</i>	115
This Little Light	<i>Jesus's parable with a few new twists</i>	117
The River Is Flowing	<i>travel with friends to the ocean of love</i>	120
En Lak' Ech	<i>Mayan "you are another myself"</i>	122
Ishe Oluwa	<i>Yoruban song of affirmation</i>	124
Coloring Pages	Circle of Hearts Mandala	127
	Cover Mandala line art	128
About the Author		129
Peace Quote		130

INTRODUCTION

The Dances, games and other activities collected in this booklet all revolve around a core value -- that of discovering within oneself the same truth, beauty and love that create the world, its peoples and its different faith traditions. They are about experiencing our universal connectedness and awakening compassion toward all beings. The main focus and inspiration for this project are the Dances of Universal Peace -- joyous, sacred circle dances that awaken our bodies, voices, hearts, minds and spirits. The other activities have been drawn around the Dances as tools for deepening the joy.

This booklet and recording are a crystallization of energies within an ongoing stream of inspiration that flows through the 1960's, when Samuel Lewis began the Dances of Universal Peace, to the present and on into the future. This project has grown out of the dedication of many lovers of the Dances of Universal Peace who have responded to the call to work with children. It is also an opportunity for others who may not yet have danced with a group of children to find themselves reborn in the experience! This collection features artists and musicians from all over the world, children from around the United States, and sacred traditions from each continent. It reflects the collective evolutionary nature of this work, for which I am only a scribe and historian. All are its stewards.

Back in 1986, at a Dance gathering in Niagara Falls, Canada, we recognized that many of us present also worked with children in some way. We created a homemade cassette of our favorite dances to use with children, of which this booklet and recording are a "grown-up" version. We started a fledgling network fueled by a newsletter called "Dances With Children". We realized that by sharing our unique approaches and discoveries, all could benefit. I am deeply grateful to Radha Tereska Buko for starting that newsletter and for detailing her work with children in the public school system in the manuscript "Multicultural Expressive Arts Program for Children".

HONORING OUR ANCESTORS - THE SOURCE OF INSPIRATION

Samuel Lewis had a vision of creating peace through the arts of dance, song, and walk. The inspiration for Samuel Lewis to begin the dances came in part from his mentor Ruth St. Denis, a pioneer of modern and sacred dance, and from Hazrat Inayat Khan, a Sufi master whose legacy includes teachings on the unity of religious ideals, the mysticism of sound and music, and the Universal Worship, an honoring of many sacred traditions at one altar. Sam's original Dances form the core of the Dance repertoire. "Tis A Gift To Be Simple" is one such Dance that conveys the sacred yet joyously playful spirit of Samuel Lewis.

THE GREATER BODY OF DANCES

The eighteen Dances contained in this collection are but a sampling of the over 800 Dances of Universal Peace that exist today within the worldwide Dance network. Many were chosen for inclusion because they are old favorites for working with children. Others strike a very current note. Several represent indigenous cultures only recently reflected within the Dance tradition. Recordings and notation of other Dances are available to mentored Dance leaders through the International Network of the Dances of Universal Peace. Dances yet to be published can be experienced only within a Dance circle.

SHARING THE DANCES

The Dances are given freely for all to benefit from. However, as in any sacred, living tradition, the best transmission is through direct experience. The best way to learn the Dances is to experience them from a seasoned leader in a nearby circle or to attend a series of Dance camps/trainings/retreats. One is then welcome to share them in small doses in a variety of contexts. In order to lead longer sessions of the Dances, to publicize the words “Dances of Universal Peace,” and to use the circle of hearts logo, one should be connected to a Dance leader who serves either as a supervisor or mentor to your dance-leading process. This supervisor/mentor serves as a link providing information, resources and inspiration, and as a sounding board for the many experiences you will encounter while leading the Dances. Those working with the Dances are also asked to uphold the ethical guidelines outlined for this work. To learn more about this process, find a Dance circle or mentor-teacher in your area, see the ethical guidelines and more, visit the International Network for the Dances of Universal Peace website:

www.DancesOfUniversalPeace.org

If you are interested specifically in leading peace activities and circles with children, either in schools or other programs, with families or intergenerational community, or if you are interested in sharing experiences with others who work with children and the Dances, visit the following websites for further resources and networking opportunities.

Children’s Global Peace Project at: www.cgpp.org
StarChild Celebrations at: www.StarChildCelebrations.com

WORKING WITH CHILDREN

GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR AGE-APPROPRIATENESS

The games and Dances shared in this resource have been gathered together with playful beings of all ages in mind. All of the games have been given a suggested age range, such as “*seven and older*,” which is listed in the top right corner of the page. The leader is encouraged to further assess each activity for their particular group. The Dances in this collection, with a flexible approach, can generally be shared with ages five and older.

For children younger than five, the key to success is to individualize the experience to the child or group. A brief, relaxed time is best, with a high ratio of adults to children. A very young child may also enjoy participating in a large group of mixed ages accompanied by a favorite older person who helps gear the experience to the child. They should be ready to sit out with the child if that is what the child needs.

CREATING GROUND RULES

You may want to devise a few essential guidelines for your groups. Then refer to and reflect upon them as needed. They might be as simple as:

BE A GOOD FRIEND to everyone, ourselves, instruments, belongings, and the Dance space. This means being loving and gentle with our actions, voices, and thoughts. Appreciate each person’s individual space, uniqueness, and specialness/sacredness.

GIVE IT YOUR BEST Knowing that you are an important member of the group, keep an open mind and positive attitude, give each activity your best shot, be a good listener, make positive suggestions, and think of what’s best for everyone.

MAKING CONNECTIONS WITH CHILDREN

KNOW THEM If a group is new to you, find out what you can in advance. Make remembering names and a few personal facts a top priority. Consider using nametags, which can be made as a welcoming ritual, or can be prepared in advance, perhaps reflecting the theme or curriculum unit being studied. Headbands, hats, buttons, or t-shirts can also reflect names.

BE REAL Start from where the children are. Get to know them and give them a chance to get to know you with introductions that really share who you are. For instance, you may find that introducing your drum or guitar is the perfect ice-breaker while waiting for a group to gather. Describe and demonstrate the instrument, then give each child an opportunity to gently practice its sounds. You have then made a personal connection with each one.

AFFIRM the specialness of each child. Be inclusive and democratic, finding ways to give each child special opportunities to shine. Over and over, take sharings all the way around the circle. These recognitions will pay off in higher self-esteem, participation, sense of group equality, and connectedness. These “spotlights” are also a great time to assess each child and to see where the needs may be.

LINK UP with the other team leaders who guide your children. Their connection to you and the Dances, and the attitude and respect they model will set the stage for the children. And it is they who will carry through cultivating the seeds you plant. Give them your most enthusiastic attention and supportive resources.

GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH CHILDREN

PROMOTE MASTERY THROUGH REPETITION Young children need and enjoy lots of repetition. Start with the simplest steps and activities and progress into the more advanced stages only as the group masters the previous stage.

USE A MULTISENSORY APPROACH Variety is the key to reaching all children during a session. Some may be visual learners, other auditory, and others the tactile-kinesthetic type. The younger the children, the more concretely one should start out. All learn by interacting and processing. “Layer” a theme or concept with images, sounds, fragrances, tastes, tactile experiences, stories, music, and full-bodied participation. Invite sharing from the heart and real listening.

BALANCE quiet and active, reflective and expressive, structured and unstructured, adult-guided and child-generated activities. Some examples might be the following: Continue a dance free-form, inviting children to move spontaneously throughout the room. Or have children draw a picture of their Dance or story experience. Children need space to process, formulate and absorb their new experiences!

ENCOURAGE CREATIVITY You may launch a child-centered activity by setting it up, describing it, and perhaps modeling a way of beginning. Then your job is to appreciate and encourage the creativity around you, making comments, like “How else might we do this?” “That works!” and “Let’s try Bridget’s way!” “Can you find a way to share your idea with someone else?”

TROUBLESHOOT Begin and end with "circling up." Return to it whenever necessary. Make sure everyone knows how to respond to a clear signal for “stop and listen,” such as a bell or a vocal sound and pose. If an activity is falling apart, be ready to stop and change it. Move alongside a child or children who are having difficulty, or redirect them by inviting them to take on an important role. Stop and review instructions, then begin more slowly and consciously. If things fall apart and there are some upset feelings, slow everything down, sit down and talk.

Ask, “What happened?” “Why didn’t it work?” “How could it have worked better?” Children can be very frank with you and one another, and peer influence may perhaps be greater than your own. If a behavior is distressing, it may be helpful to say, “That may work somewhere else, but not here.” Use “I” messages such as “I need you to...” or “I’m not happy when...” and assist the children in using them by rephrasing their own messages, as in “I hear Tania saying....”

SHARE LEADERSHIP AS A TEAM Many hands make light work. Cultivate collaboration that allows everyone to grow. Have children take on leadership by teaching a Dance or activity to their parents, younger children, or other groups. Have older children “guide” younger children in a circle. Invite different children in the group to “remember” a dance or game, tell a story, etc.

REFLECT TOGETHER Take time to share as a group at the end. Ask “What did you like best/least about our time together?” “What did it feel like when . . .?” Appreciate what the group accomplished, and each child for some contribution. What you pay attention to expands. You’re drawing out inspiration, leadership, creativity, sacredness.

COME FROM THE HEART Your attunement and expectations are really the guiding force of each time together. If nothing else, children will feel this special energy and respond to it on some level. Before your meeting, do your favorite practices for clearing, opening and centering yourself. Invoke your angels, guides, the beings of the traditions being conveyed, or whatever works best for you! Be receptive to the energy and guidance coming to you. Then visualize each child in the group, beholding them in their beauty and perfection. See them opening and expanding in the activities, and the time with them as flowing and harmonious. Just before you begin, get fired up, focused and ready to have fun!

BE GUIDED Lastly, be open to the inspiration of the moment. There will be moments when the space opens up and your inspiration is invited to flow through. A way of explaining or sharing that is so pure, it bypasses the mind and goes right to the heart may emerge. That is how many of the most wonderful games and rituals have been developed. Each time we work with children, we learn so much about them and ourselves. They teach us how to best be with them.

The little children know better.
They know what the metaphysicians and preachers never can fathom.
So I have given my secrets to the little children.

Samuel Lewis, Diaries,

May 2, 1965

YOUR CREATIVE “KIT”

The following tools will serve you endlessly in bringing alive the activities contained within this booklet -- and others as well! These basic props give children a starting point from which to develop their musicality and creative expression and support you in creating a deeper, more unified experience.

MOVEMENT SCARVES Gather colorful, lightweight silk or chiffon scarves from closets, thrift stores or discount stores. If you are creating them yourself, cut or tear old silk clothing or yardage into approximately 10” x 30” pieces. One or two per child are best.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS Build a rich, multicultural collection of rhythm instruments such as drums, rattles and shakers, a rainstick or two, sticks, some cymbals and bells, etc. Add others that intrigue you and are sturdy. You will be surprised at all the places you will find them, such as museum shops, department stores, and, of course, music shops.

A FEW COLORFUL COSTUME PIECES The following are fairly universal to the stories and entities you will be exploring: a cape, a shawl, a hat or two, a crown, a mask or two, a walking stick, a satchel or purse, a wand, a crystal, perhaps a wig. No doubt other pieces will find their way into your collection as well.

A CENTER-PIECE A circular, non-slippery rug or cloth of approximately three feet in diameter will serve to reinforce the gathering of the group in a round circle. It is not recommended to put any fragile items in the center. If an altar is created, it can be off to the side or moved when free-form activities begin. See the Children’s Peace Mandala at www.cgpp.org or www.starchildcelebrations.com.

OPTIONAL GUITAR & DRUM The Dances in this collection can easily be led without accompaniment if the leader has a strong voice, steady rhythm and magnetic physical presence. However, a guitar and some type of drum are highly advantageous. Invite a musician to join you, or develop skill with your own accompaniment. Apprentice in a dance circle, and be sure to ask about the open-tuning method of guitar.

WALKING WITH CHILDREN

Sam said to Ruth St. Denis,
“Mother, I am going to revolutionize the world.”
“What are you going to do?”
“I am going to teach the little children how to walk.”
She jumped up: “You have it! You have it!”

Samuel Lewis, Diaries, July 3, 1968

There are many types of walks and many contexts for them. An outdoor walk in nature is highly beneficial for children. Walking in a quiet, enclosed space may enhance concentration. Wherever your walks may take place, each builds upon a core set of self-awareness skills. It is important to take the time to introduce and sequentially build these skills so as to deepen the experience over time.

The following is an attempt to define a sequential progression of walking skills from basic to intermediate to advanced. As each skill deepens, they become interwoven, the basic skills become more intrinsic and assumed, and the focus is more on the advanced levels. Consistent practice is the key. For an invaluable and detailed look at the walks, see Samuel Lewis’ Spiritual Dance and Walk. The walks are also addressed in the Foundation Walks and Dance Manual, available through the Mentor Teachers Guild of *Peaceworks*.

See also A Flower Blooms, Flower Petals, The Elements, Storytelling Skills -- Character Walks, Be Nice To Camels.

“Walking is one of the first arts which can be taught to children.”

Samuel Lewis

A SEQUENCE OF WALKING SKILLS

to understand the walk to be a special time to connect with oneself
and to focus one's energies and intentions

to discover one's own natural walking tempo

to develop an even rhythm to one's steps

to release tension and relax the body

to become aware of and connected with the feet

to become aware of and connected within the whole body

to enhance a healthy posture and positive flow of energy within the body

to use breath to consciously release tension and draw in renewed energy

to synchronize the rhythm of the breath & footsteps with one another

to breathe deeply and fully, visualizing the extension

of breath into all parts of the body

to clear and focus the mind, bringing it to present time & space

to become aware of the heartbeat (advanced practice) and to synchronize to it

through all of the above to unite body/mind/spirit more fully

to walk with an awareness of sacred path or journey

to develop a spiritual intention within the walk

to add a feeling state, quality, idea, sound, or prayer to the walk

to walk with an awareness of the subtle energetics within the body (ie heart center)

to walk in the footsteps of a teacher or exemplar of an ideal

to walk AS the exemplar/carrier of an ideal (ie Gandhi or Peace Pilgrim)

to walk in communion with nature

to walk in communion with all beings

Pupils should be aware of their breath and its connection
with all physical movements, but most of all with walking.

If this lesson is given to children when quite young,
they will build foundations from which they can benefit all through life.

The early formative years are most important.

Then the walking practice can develop into games and rituals,
and this will make the lessons pleasant.

Samuel Lewis

THE BASIC WALK - A SCRIPT

The following is one possible script for a basic indoor, focused walk of approximately 3 - 5 minutes duration that incorporates many of the beginning skills mentioned above. I have purposely left out the weaving in of such things as sacred intention, sacred path, to show the “bare bones” of the walk. These spiritual elements will change depending upon the group and the setting, the theme or focus of the time together, and their evolving frame of reference. These “advanced” elements are then woven in as the group is ready for them.

The guiding adult walks with the children, demonstrating as she speaks. I often use the walk as a time to prepare us for the Dance. While the walks are wonderful on their own, this creates some anticipation and a respectful aura around the Dances. Also, please note that although finding one’s own natural tempo is important in the walks, some children initially seem to be on hyper-drive. In order to relax them, I model a slower pace, and gradually soothe them further with my voice and tempo. Becoming a single circle moving together in one unified rhythm at the end can further deepen the walk and can benefit the group unity required for the Dances. Actually, we are looking for no less than “the eternal moment” in the walk!

To begin, let’s create a circle, making sure we each have lots of room around us. Now let’s walk.

Find the speed that is comfortable and relaxed for you, not too fast, not too slow. You are walking just with yourself, not matching anyone else. If you feel like going a little slower, come to the middle more. If you are going a little faster, move toward the outside of the circle.

Have you ever walked round and round in a swimming pool? It creates a current of water flowing around. We are creating a vortex of energy here - the energy of the circle. See if you can feel it building.

Let’s quiet our voices, and just relax, just be present in the walk.

Relax your shoulders. Relax your arms. Let them hang down at your sides. Take a deep sigh and let your whole body relax. Let’s take one more. If anything is moving that doesn’t need to be, just relax it and smooth it out.

Now open your chest and stretch upward, feeling very upright. Drop your shoulders down and back. Feel like kings and queens walking.

See if you are walking in an even rhythm. You might want to count 1-2-3-4 or 1-2, 1-2 as you walk. Smooth out your steps so they are even.

Feel the connection of your feet with the ground/floor.

Become aware of your whole body moving in the space, each part in harmony with the rest.

Let's come into one circle, each behind one another. We're going to slow things down a bit.

Now see if you can synchronize the breath and your footsteps. For example, you might breathe IN - 2 - 3 - 4 and OUT - 2 - 3 - 4. Or IN - 2, OUT - 2, or IN - 2 - 3, OUT - 2 - 3. Whatever is best for you. See if you can breathe evenly, smoothing out any catches in the breath.

Now be aware of breathing more deeply as you walk. Allow the diaphragm and tummy area to expand fully. Bring the breath into each part of the body. Imagine the breath filling your whole body with energy. Breathe out stress and tiredness -- Breathe in more good new energy.

(At this point, you may want to bring in a particular concentration related to your theme/the attunement of your circle on this day.)

Now let's join hands in the circle, bringing all this good energy with us. Take a moment and just breathe in and out, feeling the circle. Relax.

(Move into an opening prayer, a heart-warming game, introductions, name games, etc.)

NOTES:

“A good walker leaves no tracks. This is called ‘following the light.’”

Tao Te Ching, Verse 27

WALKING OUTDOORS - A TIME TO COMMUNE WITH NATURE

Outdoor walks, especially with children, tend to be a looser, more individual experience. The vastness, the infinite discoveries, the opportunity to meld into the beauty, all overcome. You might want to gather and set the focus for the first stage of the walk, then regroup at intervals to breathe and center, check in with one another, and set the focus for the next stage.

“Both the children and adults should be encouraged to stop occasionally, to be assured of their breath.”

Samuel Lewis

SOME IDEAS FOR OUTDOOR WALKS

Walk with bare feet whenever possible. Remember to slow down, feeling the earth, breathing with each step.

Be aware of the creatures, insects, birds -- their sounds, movements, qualities, sense of purpose and unique place in the natural order. Recognize yourself as a creature of nature and contemplate your role in the whole scheme. Walk as St. Francis did, in (ecstatic) communion with the birds and creatures.

Find a spot in nature that feels good to you -- let yourself be guided to it. Be there in silence for a time, listening and feeling, then bring its special qualities back in your walk.

Find a treasure in nature that speaks to you. Let yourself be guided to it. If it is possible, ask its permission to become a part of the nature altar you are creating as a group or individually.

Attune to the majestic trees - their roots so deep and strong, drinking in the waters and richness of the earth; their soaring trunks reaching for the sky, their radiant outspread branches soaking in the sunlight; their glittering leaves dancing in the wind, their fruits and seeds of new life. In the fall, feel the explosion of color -- bold glorification -- before the tree surrenders to becoming vast, impersonal potentiality in the cold of winter. Find a tree and commune with it. Walk carrying the majesty of trees. Share about your tree and share a walk with its qualities.

CREATIVE MOVEMENT EXPERIENCES

Creative movement involves the ability to become one with the subject at hand. It is the mystic's perspective on existence -- I am the tree, I am the bird, I am the wind. It is feeling and being in a free-spirited and expressive mode. To move in such a way is to feel the ecstasy of body and soul.

To invite such an experience in movement we need to present creative fuel -- weaving together images, sound, and sensation. At first, we may need to model that freedom ourselves, moving with the children. We set safe, comfortable parameters and then welcome the flow of the children's energy and ideas. By following the children's lead, whole areas of interest can open and unfold. The more supportive we are of the children's exploration, the more their creativity can be expressed and developed. As they develop confidence and enthusiasm, it will take very little to get them started, and you can become more and more the facilitator rather than a demonstrator. Remember that there is no right or wrong in creative movement, being careful to honor each child's individual expression of him/herself.

It may be helpful to move from:

teacher directed activities.....to..... more child-directed activities
structured activities.....to.....more spontaneous activities
individual body parts moving.....to.....entire body moving
moving in place.....to.....using whole space
working alone.....with partners..... in small groups..... with whole group
rehearsing parts of the whole.....to.....performing a whole experience

To prevent "bumper cars" and other mishaps, be sure to build children's individual body awareness, sensitivity to their personal space and that of others, and awareness of the movement space.

Be sure to warm up before vigorous activity. This teaches care of the body. Create a quieting ritual for the end of each movement "session." This teaches a balance of activity and repose.

See also Working With Children, Your Creative Kit, The Four Elements, Sound Moves, Sound Machine, Belly-Dancing, The Face of God and Ezekiel's Wheel.

BELLY DANCING

What we refer to as “Belly Dancing” is a Native Middle Eastern dance form that has ancient beginnings. It is said to have its roots in the ancient Goddess-based cultures, when men and women would gather to honor the natural abundance of the Goddess. Belly dancing celebrates the more earthy and sensual aspects of the human being. It is also about veiling and unveiling our great beauty. The dance can be slow and subtle or quite dramatic and powerful. In traditional and contemporary Middle Eastern culture, men, women, and children dance together in celebratory gatherings of family and friends. These gatherings have great vibrancy and vitality.

Ideally, we would all learn traditional movements from an authentic belly dancer. However, with the help of middle eastern music, we can explore some of the nuances of belly dancing. It is helpful initially to separate out the various body parts and the ways in which they move. Some ideas to begin with are:

WRISTS	curve and twist
HANDS	say “come here” and “go away”
ARMS	move gracefully, like snakes
FEET	stomp and dance in circles
HIPS	circle, jiggle, sway, move forward & back, do figure eights
EYES	look shyly away, then boldly flirtatious
FACE	veils itself, then reappears playfully
TORSO	undulates or waves like seagrass in the water
WHOLE BODY	dramatically poses and presents itself, as if saying “ Here I am!” and “Here I am again!”

It is highly recommended to use colorful scarves, veils, and other costume pieces to drape and dance with - especially with younger children. Ankle bells and finger cymbals are also fun.

After the action has warmed up, try linking up with others by each holding one end of a long scarf or veil and dancing together.

Recommended Music: Live drumming and/or authentic Middle Eastern music, such as Fire Dance or Mystic Garden by Omar Faruk Tekbilek.

See also Be Nice To Camels, Your Creative Kit, Rhythm Play-Along.

THE FACE OF GOD

A Creative Movement Experience

Several years ago, I began an exploration with my church of the ways we might incorporate art of all kinds into our worship to gain a deeper understanding. As a dancer, I was asked to conduct a movement session.

I had been struck by a recent trip to the western part of the United States with the power and majesty of the terrain, and took that as my inspiration. I led the group in a movement exploration of this topic.

Together, we began a group warm-up, sensing our breath moving in and out of our bodies. We let the breath take us to our feet, then sank into our chairs. From this stirring of wind, we then began to imagine the energy inside the earth, in the molten rock, seething with heat and pressure. We collectively moved that pressure, pushing and expanding as we twisted and turned our bodies. We hardened our shapes into forceful igneous rock, immovable and strong. We connected our shapes to create a mountain, a symbol of our unity.

Some of us became the forces that would carve and sculpt that mountain, the forces of wind, rain, and ice. As those moving forces danced upon the mountain, the shape was slowly changed, evolved. And in the midst of our evolution, we found a collective energy, a new strength of unity and we uncovered the face of God.

-- Jan Adams

See also Sound Moves, The Elements, The Big Sigh, Wind & Waves.

THE FOUR ELEMENTS

As reflected in many of the sacred and healing traditions of the world, the four elements are the core energies or qualities that combine to create all things. They are also fundamental curriculum for children, helping them to understand the world around them - and the world within. Discovering, mastering and balancing these elements within oneself is a lifelong process. Because of their importance, work with the elements has been developed extensively within the Dance and Walk tradition. The following reflects the teachings of Samuel Lewis, Pir-O-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan, Pir Vilayat Inayat Khan and others within the Sufi tradition. In the context of working with children, the younger the child, the more concretely we begin, using the actual elements of nature, creative movement, the making of live music, and the imitation of creatures who embody the element. The subtler breathing patterns and abstract imagery can be introduced later, and are a good starting point for older children and adults.

THE EARTH ELEMENT

Sensory Experiences: Work in a garden, dig in the dirt, plant seeds. Observe and care for creatures who are close to the earth. Walk barefoot in soil, sand, or clay. Collect rocks, twigs, pine cones and other treasures from the earth. Create an earth altar. Make drums. Make earth symbols with clay. Bury crystals for their purification or to bring energy to a sacred spot. Build or sculpt with rocks, bricks, wood or earth. Lie on the earth, sleep on the earth, hug the earth!

Breath: Inhale and exhale evenly through both nostrils; with a slight emphasis on the exhalation. Inhale up through the soles of the feet, palms of the hands and base of the spine; exhale down into the earth. At a higher level of integration, breathe up through the feet and base of the spine, and simultaneously down from heavens through crown center. Energies meet in the heart and are radiated from there on exhalation, like a plant, integrating all forces.

Qualities: Earth slows, deepens and grounds us. It pervades, spreads out, covers the surface. Earth embodies patience, forgiveness, healing. Feel the earth as restful, healing, supportive, nourishing, the ground of our being, source of our physical being. It has the effect of filtering and ordering the denser and lighter aspects of our being. Archetypes/images of this element include the saint, the healer, Christ, the Goddess of fertility, the womb of creation. The color for the earth element is gold.

Walk: Walk in a sustained, steady 4/4 rhythm. Knees are relaxed and may be bent, palms are parallel to the ground. Use a slight patting motion with the hands, feeling the magnetism of the earth buoyant underneath. Breath in and out through soles of feet and palms of hands, with a slight emphasis on the exhalation.

Creative Movement Ideas: Experience the ground/floor as a large drum, drumming with the feet or hands. Dance improvisationally to live percussion, or the music of an indigenous culture. Be creatures that hug close to the ground, such as snakes, lizards, insects, and turtles. Be large, heavy animals such as elephants, bears, and dinosaurs. Imitate their sounds, movements and habits. Give one another “elephant” rides. “Bulldoze” or pull something heavy with your whole body, feeling the bones and muscles working against gravity & inertia. To end, crawl into your favorite resting place and melt into the earth, feeling your relationship to her. Connect to the earthly mineral in us -- the skeleton. Be aware of our bones resting on the "bones" of Mother Earth.

Music: improvisational drumming, music or chanting of indigenous cultures, such as Babatunde Olatunji’s “Drums of Passion,” or the Native American “Gathering of Shaman.”

Related Dances of Universal Peace: The Earth Is Our Mother (IV 15), Ancient Mother (Circle of Song). See also The Face of God, Sound Moves, Sound Machine.

THE WATER ELEMENT

Sensory Experiences: Visit and play with rivers, waterfalls, raindrops, streams, the ocean. Swim, float, bathe and wash. Create a pool or waterfall in a brook or stream. Set up a table fountain or aquarium. Care for water creatures in some way. Have each child gather rainwater and decide what to do with it. Experiment with how water flows and transforms itself. Combine water with other elements to see how it transforms them. Experiment with watercolor paints and different colors of water.

Breath: Natural inhalation through the nose, deep and extended exhalation through the mouth. Breathe in visualizing a spring of water rising up the spine to the top of the head. Exhale imagining the water flowing down through your being like a fountain, purifying and enlivening the physical body, mind and emotions. Feel the water streaming through the fingertips and the feet.

Qualities: Water flows downwards, and flows under the earth. Water inter-relates with all around it. It is symbolic of our emotional life. It nurtures and eases us. It purifies, refreshes and baptizes us with the effervescence of spirit. Archetypes/images of the water element include Quan Yin, Bodhisattva of compassion, the Goddess of water in all forms, such as Shaddai (breasted nurturance), Anahita (Zoroastrian), the Afro-Brazilian Goddess Yemaya. The color for the water element is green.

Walk: Walk in a 3/4 waltz time, feeling a pull to the left side. Arms move from shoulder level on right side down toward left side. The movement is circuitous, meandering, following the path of least resistance. The walking breath is a natural inhale, and an extended, downward exhale on the left side.

Creative Movement: Be a stream, swirling, flowing, rushing to fill open spaces, or a current within the ocean. Make or listen to the sounds of ocean, stream or waterfall. Rush forward and recede as the waves on a shore. Cascade up and shower down as a fountain. Be ocean creatures that swim, leap and dive, such as dolphins, whales, merpeople, and sharks. End by letting the ocean/water lull you to sleep as you drift, or, if you are a creature that moves along the ocean floor, feel the water flowing over and around you, gently rocking you. As you drift off to sleep, become aware of (the water flowing around you merging with) the whole ocean!

Music: Have children use rainsticks and shakers of all types. Invite improvisational flute, harp, violin, or piano. Play Saint Saens “Aquarium” from “Carnival of the Animals,” Judith Pinter’s harp music, Kim Robertson’s Water Spirit (Celtic harp), or ocean or brook sounds-of-nature recordings.

Related Dances of Universal Peace: The River Is Flowing (Open), Sha Noon (V 50), The Ocean Refuses No River (IV 57), Yemaya (V 56), Wishi Ta (UKIV 10), Goddess Cycle (V 52). See also The Waves, Ocean of Sound, Stream of Life, Sound Bath.

THE FIRE ELEMENT

Sensory Experiences: Have a campfire, burning bowl ceremony or other type of fire. Go outside and feel the warmth of the sun, create pottery that is then fired in a kiln, create fire symbol amulets, feel your own heart warm and vibrant like the sun.

Breath: In through the mouth, out through the nose, upward rising. Strong stream of air in through the mouth (pursed lips), fanning the flame within the solar plexus. As the inhalation continues, the breath rises to the heart level and beyond, transmuting into light. Breathe out from the heart, radiating light in all directions.

Qualities: Fire rises, transforming the denser aspects of our being into light. It is a catalyst for change, often radical. Initiation or transformation, truth, courage, humor, idealism, creativity, surprise, ginn/genius are all activities of fire. Archetypes include the knight (“Toward the One”), the clown (humor), the artist (creativity), the ginn (genius), the burning idealist. Beings of fire include Shiva, Red Tara, Ahura Mazda, and Joan of Arc. The color of fire is red.

Walk: In 3/4 time, one hops up on the right foot on the count of one. Step left on count two, step right on count 3. Then hop on that same right foot to begin the pattern again. Breathe in on count 1, out naturally on counts 2 and 3.

Creative Movement: Creative movement for the fire element works especially well with dancing scarves or ribbon sticks. Leap and dance as the flickering flames, expressive and unabashed. Charge onward & upward as a knight, lashing your sword at imaginary challenges. Clown around, unleash a creative fury, and gallivant freely.

Dance & Freeze: This game works especially well for the fire element, since it enhances the experience of sudden, dramatic change. Play brisk, fiery music (live or recorded) for participants to dance to. Build the suspense for a sudden stop (!) to the music. Dancers must freeze in place during the quiet and can begin dancing again when the music resumes. (This is terrific for building self-control and listening skills in children.)

Music: two sticks struck together, clapping, snapping of fingers, arrhythmic, sudden sharp sounds, Vangelis “Chariots of Fire”, Babatunde Olatunji’s “Oya (Primitive Fire)” on Drums of Passion.

Related Dances of Universal Peace: Zoroastrian Sun Dance (II 6), Kuake Lano Lano Maote (II 20), God Has Given Me The Power (CR 42), Ezekiel’s Wheel (Open 89), Bismillah Ya Fatah (SDW 115), I Woke Up This Morning With The Sun In My Heart (IV 52), Om Nama Shivaya (III 9), Allah Hayy (Open 101), Ya Hayy Ya Haqq (SDW 90). See also Electricity, Ya Hu!, Starfeet Command Rocketship.

THE AIR ELEMENT

Sensory Experiences: Feel the breeze against your face, listen to the sound of the wind, watch the dancing effect of the wind in the trees, grasses and flowers. Observe birds circling and gliding, work with feathers, fly a kite, go hang gliding, create dreamcatchers and windcatchers. Go high up in the mountains or on top of buildings, looking out at vast panoramas.

Breath: Inhale and exhale through the mouth with a very light, refined breath. On the exhalation, imagine your breath/spirit spreading out into the totality. On the inhalation, draw together the finer aspects of your being, recreating yourself anew.

Qualities: Air represents the mental realm, the dimension of thought. It has the qualities of freedom and expansion. Archetypes/images include the eagle, soaring high in the mountains, riding the wind currents. The color is blue.

Walk: Tends to meander, to be “scattered,” to change direction at random. It moves from the mind, following the inspiration of the moment, changing focus rapidly, as if moving in all directions at once. While walking, emphasize the breath in the top part of body, with a feeling of rising on the inhalation.

Creative Movement: Stretch and spin in the wind, aware of the spaces between the atoms and molecules of your being. Be the wind, playfully skipping, leaping and dancing around. Be an airplane/stunt pilot, doing loops, hard curves, etc. Take ribbon sticks to a hill or field in the breeze and run!

Become birds, noticing your long wing feathers, their beautiful colors, the magnificent span and lift they give you. Soar and flutter high above the earth. When you are tired, find your nest, be it on a cliff or in a tree. Settle down, closing your wings around you for warmth, and feel the breezes blowing gently all around you, and imagine yourself falling asleep while listening to the wind.

Music: voice, shakuhachi flute, Gathering of Shamen: Native Flute Ensemble “World Centering”, sounds of nature recording of wind, Saint Saens’ “Aviary” from Carnival of the Animals

Related Dances of Universal Peace: We Circle Around (II 17), Only A Heart (UKIII 6), Ho Ike Mai (Open 76). See also The Wind.

THE FIFTH ELEMENT - ETHER

This “element” is so imperceptible that it is generally not recommended to bring it to the attention of young children. The following is offered for teens and older.

Qualities: Ether is the mystery, the void, the vast, spaceless, timeless womb of creation, out of which emerge all the other elements. It is the origin of all, and to which all other elements return. The color is smoky gray, or the rainbow. Archetypes include the Veiled One, and the Mother of the World.

Sensory Experiences: Recommended only for teens and older: Stillness, perhaps in yogic poses. Cocooning oneself as a chrysalis, perhaps wrapping up in layers of fabric. Go out into a dense fog. Be in an empty theater late at night. Go deep within in meditation. Experience blocking out the external senses, as in the meditation practice “shagall.”

Breath: A barely perceptible, highly refined breath, in and out through the mouth and/or nose.

Walk/Creative Movement: No movement, but rather stillness. One may drift imperceptibly. Vastness. When combined with other elements, ether can express itself.

Music/Sounds: Oriental chimes & gongs, Tibetan chant, mantric chants: Hu, Om

Related Dances of Universal Peace: Heart Sutra (II 16), Seen Unseen (IV 33)

WORKING WITH ALL THE ELEMENTS

Sensory Experiences: Create a circle of stones, inspired by the Native American medicine wheel, in which to have sacred time. This circle would have an opening/doorway facing and markers for each of the four directions. Make a nature altar, bringing to it objects and symbols of beauty representing all the elements. Have children create a shield for themselves with symbols of the nature elements that mean the most to them.

Create Element Groups: Have children identify their favorite element. Alternately, identify each child's birthday/astrological sun sign. Each astrological sign is associated with a particular element, as shown below. Use these element groups when doing a dance or activity. For instance, have the earth element children play drums during a dance, then the water element children play rattles, the fire children play sticks, and the air children sing or play wind instruments or all of the instruments softly.

<u>Earth Signs</u>	<u>Water Signs</u>	<u>Fire Signs</u>	<u>Air Signs</u>
Virgo	Pisces	Aries	Libra
Taurus	Cancer	Leo	Aquarius
Capricorn	Scorpio	Sagittarius	Gemini

We are all working to create a balance of all the element qualities within us. Teach children to use elements prescriptively as they need them.

What am I? This game can be played with any or all of the elements. Children take turns pantomiming their creature of choice and have others guess what it is. Define the boundaries, such as whether we are only doing water creatures, creatures who are close to the earth, air creatures, etc. Since fire is an interesting one to find creatures for, it is a good one to begin with. A galloping horse, a rising phoenix, a prancing antelope, a kitten batting at a butterfly, a bounding squirrel, and a fierce pouncing cougar are some of the fiery creatures children have come up with.

Take the elements outside: Find places that exemplify a certain element and attune to that element there. Walk on flat terrain with the earth breath, uphill with the fire breath, downhill with water. Spin on a hilltop with air.

Four Element Dances: Hey Ya Na Na (II 18), Zoroastrian Elements (II 7), May the Road Rise With You (EU III 5), Celtic Blessing (EUII 20), Mother I Feel You Under My Feet (unpublished, see Circle of Song), Drink the Water (song only published - III 57) See also The Gardener and His Flowers, the Face of God.

OPENING OUR VOICES

LOOSEN UP!

Loosen tight shoulder and facial muscles with the following.

- * Stretch all around, as wide, as tall, as low, as wavy, as loose as you can!
- * Reach for the sky, as if climbing a ladder, then roll your shoulders.
- * Scrunch your face into a “sour pickle face,” a mean, mad face, a huge smile, a lion’s roar, and then relax.
- * Stick out your tongue as far as it will go, saying “aah.”
- * Shake your head with your tongue hanging out.

BREATHE!

Singing starts with breathing. Take some big, deep breaths in and then . . .

- * Pretend you’re blowing out all the candles on your birthday cake.
- * Blow on a strip of tissue paper softly, for as long as possible.
- * Make a snake hissing sound: “ssssss” for as long as possible.
- * Do a big, relaxing, noisy yawn. Try to “open up” your throat as big as possible.
- * Make big sighs on the “aaah” sound, letting the voice fall from high to low pitch.

Melt your whole body down to the ground as you do so.

- * Fill your belly with air, as if it is a big balloon. Expand your arms, back and rib cage, too. Blow out slowly, but keep that “big” feeling!

VIBRATE!

“Your vocal chords are actually two small muscles that stretch out side by side. (Demonstrate by holding hands side by side.) Air passes between them, causing them to vibrate, when we talk or sing. Make the “oooh” sound in your throat and you can feel them vibrating by touching your voice box lightly with your fingers. When we sing, they undulate in a special way. In our higher range, they flip on edge. Our vocal chords can be exercised and stretched just like our other muscles. They need to be “warmed up” just like other muscles too. That’s why we’ll do the following exercises.”

SOUNDING: This makes for a wonderful warm-up or quiet centering activity.

1. Relax the tummy and take several slow breaths. Become aware of breathing from the diaphragm (tummy), expanding it and relaxing it with each inhalation and exhalation. Imagine breathing from the pelvic floor muscles, then the feet. If we imagine ourselves as connected to the earth in this way, it is very sustaining.

2. Start by intoning a single note, on an open vowel sound. This is prolonged for the natural duration of the out-breath. Consciously open the resonance “chambers” of the chest, throat and head cavities, filling them with vibration. Imagine the sound as flowing energy or light. Be sensitive to when it begins to sing on its own. It may produce overtones, which are sound waves that resonate at various intervals above and below the original tone.
3. Intone another note. Slide the voice back and forth from one note to another.
4. Incorporate each additional note, one at a time, moving improvisationally from it to the others previously sung.

Experiment with sounding various “ordinary” words or phrases, or sacred phrases from various traditions of the world, such as “Om,” “Home,” “Ma,” “Pa,” or “Ah.”

VOICE SPECTRUM

CHEST VOICE: Make the “aaaah” sound, using a deep pitch. Center the sound in your chest. Put your hands on your chest to feel the vibration there.

THROAT VOICE: Using the “oooooooh” (“ew”) sound and a medium pitch, center the sound in your throat. Can you feel that in the front of your throat?

HEAD VOICE: Using the “eeee” sound and a high pitch, center the sound in your head. It should be clear and piercing, even quite nasal.

REMEMBER THE THREE BEARS? We can all relate to these three characters. Invite children to make the voices of the three bears with you, saying “Someone’s been sitting in my chair,” with Papa Bear’s deep, resonant voice, with Mama Bear’s middle-range voice, and with Baby Bear’s high, squeaky voice. They help us discover our chest, throat and head voices.

EXPLORE DIFFERENT VOICES: Whisper your name. Say your name. Call your name. Sing your name! Imitate the sounds of nature: birds calling, dogs barking, cats meowing, bears growling, wolves howling, owls hooting, ducks quacking, wind whistling. Pretend you are a siren on a firetruck. Make “spooky” Halloween voices. Take a roller coaster ride with your voice.

FOLLOW ME: In a call and response fashion, take children up and down the scale, invent phrases, using nonsense syllables, for them to imitate. Pass leadership on to others as they are ready.

See also Big Sigh, Ya Hu!, Sound Current, Prayer Wheel, Free Allah, Ocean of Sound, Harmonic Convergence, Starfeet Command Rocketship, Sound Bath, Sound Moves, Sound Machine, Follow the Sound

STORYTELLING

Stories unite us, bonding us to common experiences. Stories communicate the shared myths and meanings of our collective humanity, adding color and excitement to our existence. They are a realm of the all-possible in which we can become each character and experience each element and event as a reflection of ourselves and our lives. Stories lead us on a journey of transformation, exploring our potentials and answering fundamental questions about our unfolding purpose in life.

“There is no problem in the world that cannot be solved with a story.”

Witch Doctor of the Xhosa tribe, South Africa

Stories within this booklet:

The Gardener & His Flowers

A Krishna Tale

Stories Printed With Their Dance:

Ho Ike Mai

Ezekiel's Wheel

Giridhara Gopala

STORYTELLING SKILLS

SET THE STAGE: Transition into a magical place for your storytelling with a fun ritual. Take a journey to storyland on your magic carpet; create some "magic" sounds; sprinkle magic dust; wear a "Storyteller's Hat;" warm up your bodies and imaginations with creative stretches. Make sure everyone is comfortable and can see.

INTRODUCE THE STORY: Intrigue the group with something about the story that is personally meaningful to them. Ask them to be story detectives to answer an important question or solve a mystery. Explain new concepts or vocabulary.

CREATE A STORYBAG: Collect a few essential props, costumes, puppets, sound-makers and other magical elements for the story you will tell. Make a grand presentation of the items, removing one at a time from your "bag." Demonstrate how, for instance, donning a costume piece transforms one into one of the characters. Watch how they capture the attention and trigger the imagination of everyone present! Distribute the props as children are ready to play the various roles.

SPEAK EXPRESSIVELY: Live the story as you tell it. Change your voice for each character, making it deeper, higher, slower, faster. Pause suspensefully, rush excitedly, whisper, and be loud at times. Make eye contact with the children. Use facial expressions.

ADD SOUNDS AND MOVEMENTS: Help the group create live sound effects and motions for the different events in the story. Help them bring the story alive.

MOVEMENT IMPROVISATION: Choose certain actions, characters or themes and have children invent movements for them. Start small (hands or feet), then enlarge the movements (whole body), then travel them around the space. See what happens when children go with their ideas, try others' ideas, or combine their ideas!

CHARACTER WALKS Choose characters and create their "walk." Ask, "Where are they going? What is their purpose? How do they relate to all around them? What are they feeling/thinking?" After children have mastered various "walks," play a guessing game. Have one child at a time walk a character and the others guess who it is. Optional: Offer simple costume pieces to enhance children's imagination.

MOVE INTO STORY THEATER: As you and the children become familiar with the story, drop the script and enact various parts through pantomime, dialogue, and creative movement. Let the children co-create the directions you take together.

TAKE YOUR TIME: Introduce new elements on different days. Repeat the story many times, incorporating new learnings.

A KRISHNA TALE

The following story is part of a longer piece about Krishna, the playful and childlike Hindu God, from Murshida Vera Corda's Universal Worship Song, Dance and Story Book.

The child Krishna . . . was a mischievous child, full of curiosity and enthusiasm. He was always into some trouble or another that would try his mother's patience. His mother, Yasoda, fed him the sweetest of milk, yogurt and butter, but the butter was Krishna's favorite. He loved it so much that given the slightest opportunity he would get into any butter he could find.

One day as his mother was busy for a moment, Krishna found his way into the pantry where the butter and yogurt were stored in hanging pots. He climbed up until he could reach the edge of the pots and tipped them so that the yogurt and butter splashed down on him and in puddles on the floor. He sat in the middle of the mess he had made joyfully stuffing fistfuls of sweet butter into his mouth. Monkeys came to the window and begged Krishna to share his treat with them, and then birds came to join their party. Krishna celebrated their good fortune by throwing handfuls of butter and yogurt everywhere and dancing in the slippery mess.

When his mother discovered Krishna in the midst of this celebration, she despaired of how she could keep Krishna out of further mischief while she cleaned up. She thought perhaps if she could tie him up for a few minutes he would be safe and she could put the pantry back in order. She grabbed a rope to tie him to the grinding mortar, but when she wrapped it around Krishna it fell two inches too short. She got another piece of rope and tied the two together but still she could not tie up Krishna, for the rope was too short. She got a third piece of rope and tied it to the other two pieces. The rope was now very long but when she wrapped it around Krishna to tie him to the mortar, the rope was too short. Just as the other women of her household were beginning to gather around to watch this most unusual predicament, Yasoda experienced a realization. Krishna could be bound only by love, and never by any device or effort of man.

© Murshida Vera Corda, 1983, Reprinted with Permission

See also Giridhara Gopala Dance, Gopala Dance(IV 12),
Hare Krishna, Hare Rama Dance(Original 62).

THE MAGICAL RAINBOW FLOWERS

Murshid Samuel Lewis loved gardens. His were a metaphor for the whole of life -- man working with the forces of nature and the Divine spark to create something beautiful and sustaining. The following story incorporates themes of the four elements, growth and transformation, self-expression of all of our "colors," sharing and altruism. It is participatory story-theater, with movement, sound, pantomime and lots of imagination!

BEGINNING

"Have you been seeing flowers outside lately? Do you have any planted around where you live? What colors are they?...Well, we're going to tell a story together about some magical flowers that have all the colors of the rainbow in them. To get ready, let's first talk about what a seed needs in order to grown into a flower...."

soil/earth: drum the floor; knead and dig in the soil
rain/water: drizzle fingers downward; lightly drum fingertips; making the sound of rain as "shhh" or "pitter-patter"
sun/fire: be flickering flames that dance and clap, be large and round and beaming; travel across the sky
fresh air: be gentle breezes blowing around; "whooooo!"

"Everyone can be all the parts of the story, and do it with me as we tell it. But first we need to practice three parts..."

... when the gardener flings the rainbow flower seeds far and wide ("Fling! Fling!")

... when the rainbow flowers shoom their colors up into the sky ("Shoom! Red! Shoom! Purple!")

... when the children tiptoe in and discover the garden ("Oooh! Aaaah!")

See also The Elements, Creative Movement, Liquid Sunshine, Flower Petals, Stream of Life, Name Game (for individual, unique flowers).

... Everywhere in this garden,
That God hath granted me,
Shall love be planted and grow,
And I his servant be.

As for the blossoms that come there,
A message each shall bring,
Beauty and love and joy and hope,
And every flower shall sing.

Samuel Lewis

THE MAGICAL RAINBOW FLOWERS

A Creative Movement Story

ONCE UPON A TIME, atop a tall mountain, there lived a very old, and very wise gardener. One fine spring day, he stepped out of his hut. He looked around and saw the blue sky overhead, and the white clouds drifting by, and felt the soft brown earth under his feet. He felt the radiant sun and the gentle breezes. And he said "Ah! This would be a perfect day to plant my magical rainbow flower seeds." So he took them out of his pocket. (Do you have a magic pocket?) And he flung them far and wide. "Fling! Fling!" "Fling! Fling!"

The little seeds rolled and tumbled and tumbled and rolled until each one found its own little place in the soft brown earth to snuggle into. He patted each one gently into the earth. Then he got some water from his rain barrel and sprinkled them with water. Then the sun shone down on them, and the breezes blew, and the rain fell. Soon the little seeds felt like they were about to burst! First one tiny shoot sprang up, then another, and then they grew taller and stronger--right up to the sky! On top of each one was a little bud. One morning, the buds popped open and the voices of the flowers escaped -- they each sang a little note. Then, as the petals unfolded their beautiful colors, they began to sway and dance, each singing a beautiful song. Then, because they were magical flowers, they shot their magical rainbow colors right up into the sky: "Shoom! Shoom!" until the sky was filled with rainbows.

Some little children who lived in the village below, curious about all those rainbows, decided to investigate. They climbed and climbed the mountain, faster and faster and faster. Then came tiptoeing into the garden. When they saw the beautiful flowers, they said "Ooooooh!" and "Aaaaaaaaah!" They reached for the flowers and started snatching them up, one by one, until they had picked all of them. Then they decided to run, faster and faster, until they were running just as fast as they could. But the gardener called out, "Wait, children! Please come back." And the children inched back, with their heads hanging low, sorry to have taken all his flowers without even asking, and sorry to have to bring them back.

But the gardener said, "Children, you may keep my flowers. But first, take a few seeds from the center of the flower and put them in the ground. Pat them down. Now sprinkle them with rainwater. Listen to the breezes and feel the warm sun. These flowers will grow again. And now take your flowers and go and scatter rainbow seeds wherever you go!" So the children went laughing and dancing and skipping out into the world and flung their seeds far and wide ("Fling! Fling!") as they went. Soon Magical Rainbow Flowers grew everywhere and the earth was surrounded by rainbows.

© Kathryn Ashera Rose, 1989

I Open My Eyes To You, Kathryn Ashera Rose © 2013 ~ Page 28

Oh, God. Educate these children.
The children are the plants of Thine orchard,
The flowers of Thy meadow, the rose of Thy Garden.
Let Thy rain fall upon them,
Let the Sun of Reality shine upon them with Thy love.
Let Thy breeze refresh them in order that they be trained
To grow and develop and appear in the utmost beauty.
Thou art the Giver, Thou art the Compassionate.

Abdul Bahai

THE GAMES

USING GAMES WITH CHILDREN

Those of us who lead the Dances of Universal Peace with children are familiar with some of the challenges: a circle that doesn't stay round, distractions galore, the silly, the shy and the apathetic.

Depending on their age and experiences, children may lack the skills, awareness, and motivation to bring a Dance experience together. We want to introduce them to the "magic" that can transpire when they focus their energies. We can do this by breaking down the many skills involved into components they can have success with. By simplifying and exploring the underpinnings of group dynamics, less experienced groups can begin to "really get it."

We know that the essential underpinnings of the Dances of Universal Peace involve awareness of breath, focus and concentration, imagination/visualization, sensitivity to energy being shared between us, rhythm, listening and sounding, body awareness, posture and movement. Underlying all of that is each child's unique self-concept and his/her sense of relationship to others and the Divine. These games address all of these. And all of us, especially children, love games!

Using the outlines given as guidelines, follow your own intuition when using them with a group of children. You may invent and discover variations with the children that "fit" their unique needs at that moment. In fact, when children are invited into the process of co-creating a game, song, or story, their participation skyrockets. So please approach them collaboratively and make time for their creativity. In short, help them "make it their own."

A FEW LOGISTICAL NOTES

Unless otherwise stated, activities are presented in a step-by-step sequence. You may choose, however, to only take an activity through its first phase, or to pick and choose a few of the suggested progressions. There is always this freedom to "mix and match" the activity to suit the needs of the group. Italicized words in quotation marks are sample statements that the leader may use to address the group.

~ LISTEN ~ FEEL ~ BREATHE ~
~ CONCENTRATE ON THE SACRED PHRASE ~
~ MOVE TOGETHER ~ ENTER THE SILENCE ~

THE BIG SIGH

This breathing exercise is great for relieving tension. This is also a great way to bring everyone into focus, centering the group energy. A soft drum beat can help regulate the group tempo, perhaps four beats in, four beats out.

1. Holding hands in the circle, take a few deep breaths as a group. Inhale through the nose and exhale through the mouth, extending the exhale and sighing audibly on “aaah”, the sound of the heart.
2. Lift arms on the inhale and lower on the exhale. This can be exaggerated into stretching up on the tiptoes on the inhale, and relaxing down like a rag doll on the exhale.
3. Holding hands in the circle, expand and contract the circle by stepping backwards on the inhale and stepping forwards on the exhale. Arms can swing out to sides and in toward the center on the in and out breath. We can think of ourselves as a big lung, expanding on the inhale, contracting on the exhale.

Source: The Greater Dance Community

“WATCH YOUR BREATH. Breath is life.
Breath is movement. Voice is breath. Let breath breathe.”

Wali Ali

The following two games are ultimately very calming. One cannot help but move into an inner space while sounding and hearing the wind and the ocean. This activity can be done standing or sitting, in a circle or at random. It is a good preparation for meditation or a quiet story.

THE WIND

All make the sound of the wind: “Hu”. Start softly. Intensify into a windstorm. Be the wind in a quiet pine forest. Be the wind on a vast mountaintop. Gently sway in the wind. Dance hands, arms, whole bodies as the wind. Come to stillness at the end.

See also The Air Element

THE WAVES

All make the sound of the waves gently rolling onto the ocean shoreline. “Shhhhhhh - Whooshhhhhh.” Spend as much time inhaling as exhaling. On the inhale, be sure to feel the water gathering back into the ocean, and the next waves building to a crest. On the exhale, the waves unfurl slowly and majestically, crashing onto the shore. Movement works well in a sitting position with the torso rising and gathering on the inhale, then rolling forward on the exhale. On the feet, the movement can go backwards (inhale) and forwards (exhale), with the same rising and rolling forward of the torso. I desired, this on-the-feet motion can be done while holding hands in the circle. Very releasing. End with a calm, lulling, quiet ocean. If possible, pass around a large conch shell and listen closely within it for the sound of the ocean.

Source: Kathryn Ashera Rose

See also Ocean of Sound, The River Is Flowing, The Water Element

LIQUID SUNSHINE

This exercise is a way of bringing a circle into a sense of conscious connection.

1. *“Everyone take a deep breath, feeling your heart. As you breathe in, fill the heart with good feelings, sunshine, etc. As you breathe out, imagine warm, golden, liquid sunshine radiating throughout your body.”* Do several breaths.
2. *“As I exhale, I am sending this warm golden light from my heart, down through my right arm into my hand, and passing it to my neighbor. As I do this, I’ll give her hand a little squeeze. She will inhale, taking this light up into her heart, and then send it out the other side to her neighbor, giving him or her a little squeeze. Wait quietly to receive your squeeze, then pass it on. As you receive it, breathe in, as you send it, breathe out. This continues all the way around the circle.”* When the energy has traveled all the way around the circle, progress to the next phase . . .
3. *“Let’s all breathe in together, and at the same time imagining a current of energy coming to us from the person on our left. As we breathe out, we send it to the person on our right. Breathe in together, and out together, feeling the energy build and flow.”*
4. *“On the exhale, visualize warm heart energy flowing from your heart down BOTH your arms to your hands and into the hands of the people on either side of you. Imagine it continuing around the circle. Share your heart energy with the whole circle. Let it feel like you’re giving a warm hug to the whole circle. As you breathe in, receive that warm hug energy.”*
5. *“Send heart glow into the center of the circle. Feel our group heart in the center. Imagine a beam of golden light from everyone’s heart into the center. It will look like a beautiful wheel with many spokes.”*

Source: The Greater Dance Community

See also Flower Petals, The Fire Element

“FEEL. The dances are designed to take us more and more into the universe of feeling. The heart center...is a natural place to begin.”

Wali Ali

“To feel is for real.”

Joe Miller

YA HU!

This simple game energizes bodies, voices and spirits. It connects earth/feet to heaven. Energy literally leaps from the body - the definition of “ec-stasy”!

1. Start flopped over from the waist, like rag dolls. Stretch luxuriously to prepare, letting out some sighs. Young children might like to say hello to their feet and count their toes while they are down there.
2. Imagine a current of energy rising from the earth into our feet. It continues to rise up into our legs, up through our torso, and finally up and out through the top of our head. Our hands lightly sweep up along each section of the body as the energy rises. Simultaneously, we say an elongated “Y-a-a-a-h,” slowly raising the pitch.
3. The “Hu!” is released with a burst of energy at the top with the hands opening high above the head. Feel free to lift onto toes or jump up!

Repeat three or four times.

VARIATIONS

Try this same exercise with the following phrases or one of your own:

Oh, Yeah ! (“a” sound as in apple) Yay, God! Ya Fatah! Ya Azim!

Try holding hands in a circle. Swing arms down and back, bending knees; then swing up and release hands as you send the sound and energy up and out.

Adapted from Jeff Bliss, Wolftrap Institute for Early Learning Through the Arts

See also The Fire Element

“Knock, knock.”

“Who’s there?”

“Allah.”

“Allah who?”

“Allah Hu!”

Melanie Aspen Haydon

I Open My Eyes To You, Kathryn Ashera Rose © 2013 ~ Page 35

ELECTRICITY

There is a current of energy that runs from person to person around the circle. It is what connects us and makes the circle magical. This game makes us more aware of this energy and how we can direct the flow of energy.

1. “ZIP!”: Practice sending “Zip!” around the circle from neighbor to neighbor in one direction. Zip is received on one side and sent out to our neighbor on the other side. Send it by putting hands palms together in front of the heart (prayer position) and pointing fingers toward your neighbor and saying “Zip!” as you imagine the current of energy going out your fingertips. The rule for “Zip!” is that it always travels in one direction.
2. “ZAP!” arcs across the circle to a friend in any direction. It does not go to a neighbor right next to us. And it can’t go to the person who just sent us energy. Practice just “Zap!” across the circle.
3. Mix ZIPS and ZAPS. Remember, zips go to our neighbor on either side. ZAPS arc across the circle. And they don’t go to the person who just sent to us.
4. BUMMMMM or BONG: “Bong!” bounces energy back to the person who just sent it to us. We can always choose not to accept someone’s energy at any point. This is a very useful skill for life. Mix “Bummmm” or “Bong!” into the game.
5. ENHANCE THE FLOW: Now that we have a full repertoire of skills, we can play the game fully. Keep it moving, remembering that if we hold onto the electricity for too long, we may start to fizzle! Increase the challenge and the keenness of the group by going faster and faster. Add challenges such as “Only one ZAP in a row and only one BONG in a row.”
6. ENERGIZE THE PLANET: To end, everyone gathers all the energy generated into their hearts and sends it out in all directions all at once. You may use “ZAPS” or invent your own sound for a stream of electricity such as “BIZZ-Z-Z-Z-Z-Z!” Try it facing into the circle, and facing out toward the world.

*Source: Contemporary Game
This Interpretation: Vasudeva Kirbiatiev*

See also *The Fire Element, Pass It!*

FLOWER PETALS

This is a beautiful ritual that opens the heart and the imagination.

Optional: A bowl of fresh flower petals
 an altar with a statue or picture of Kwan Zeon, Mary,
 an angel, other beneficent beings or loved one

1. Each child gathers flower petals into their individual “heart-cup”. Each petal represents a special gift that they uniquely have to give or share.
2. We imagine that our hearts are like a beautiful flower, with ever-unfolding petals - each representing a blessing of some kind: a smile, a hug, and gentle word, a kind act. Recall the Buddhist prayer: *“May my spirit be as fragrant as a flower.”*
3. Each child passes a petal to the person on their right and in turn receives a petal-blessing from a friend on their left.
4. Allow each child to go into the center of the circle to receive a shower of petal-blessings.
5. Send petals to an imaginary creature (a tiny kitten, perhaps) in the center of the circle.
6. Imagine a loved one, someone who isn’t feeling well or is hurt in some way, or a part of the world that needs love, and blow imaginary petals “on the breath” (“huu!”) far away to them. Or, more concretely, photographs, pictures or objects may be placed in the center of the circle to represent this entity.
7. End by showering (and being showered by) petals all around us. They may also be scattered on an altar around a statue or picture of a being of love and/or taken home by each participant.

EXTENSIONS:

This game is a wonderful introduction to the Kwan Zeon Bosai Dance (SDW 110), which is detailed in the book “Spiritual Dance and Walk: An Introduction to the Dances of Universal Peace and Walking Meditations of Samuel L. Lewis.”

In further preparation for the dance, use the prayer position at crown, forehead, heart and opening downward to practice the “vows” or promises of the Bodhisattva: to remember the source of all blessing ~ to keep our thoughts peaceful ~ to send out loving feelings ~ to perform acts of kindness.

When doing the dance, be sure to include the adaptation of scattering flower petals from the heart. The child or world held in the arms might be that tiny kitten or loved one. Allow the children to take turns beating the heartbeat of the world (drum) for Kwan Zeon to listen and respond to.

Source: Kathryn Ashera Rose & Children

See also Kwan Yin Mudra Dance (UKIV 39), Mary Dance (III 38),
The Water Element, Sound Bath, Liquid Sunshine, Closing Ritual,
Ho Ike Mai, A Flower Blooms, In My Heart, Children’s Vows

NOTES:

In giving education to children
the first consideration should be that
the seeds of beauty are sown in their hearts.

Hazrat Inayat Khan

STAR-FEET COMMAND ROCKETSHIP

When we gather together with intention, we go on an adventure. Hopefully, we reach the stars! This is pure fun for stirring up energy, creativity and group cooperation. It also reminds us that in order to reach the stars, we need to pay attention to our feet.

1. Group stands in a tight circle. Everyone has feet positioned with heels together, toes spread outward. Toes touch the toes of neighbors on both sides, forming a STAR of FEET! Hands are around waists.
2. Leader improvises the following scenario as everyone creates sound effects:

“We are the Star-feet Command Rocketship getting ready for take off.”
“Everyone buckle in.” (reconfirm hands around waists)
“Close the hatches tightly.” (feet are all touching)
“Let’s power up our engines.” (deep, rumbling noises)
“And, blast off!” (shake with the effort!)
“Up, up, we go!” (voices careen upward, rising in pitch)
“We soar out through the Milky Way into the universe!” (free-form sounds)
“Passing blazing comets, billions of stars, supernovas, brand-new solar systems!” (more improvisational sounds)
“Finally, we prepare to return home to Planet Earth.”
“We power down.” (voices switch gear)
“Descend in altitude.” (voices lower in pitch)
“We set down on the Earth.” (gently?)
“Turn off our engines.” (come to silence)
“We are home on Mother Earth.” (big sigh)
“Remove seat belts” (hands down from waists)
“Open the hatches.” (feet turn parallel)
“Welcome home.”

Source: Charles Maboud Swierkocz/PeaceWorks Board of Directors, circa 1996

See also Opening Our Voices, Ya Hu!, The Fire Element, Sound Moves

THE SOUND CURRENT

Whatever we send out comes back to us, amplified. Hopefully, we are sending out harmonious vibrations! This exercise deepens the connection around the circle.

1. The initiator starts intoning “OM” or another sound, such as “AAAH”. As the person to his right hears it, he/she joins in with the sound, and so on around the circle. The sound is intoned by each person until their exhale reaches its natural completion. As each person finishes the phrase, they wait silently until the sound again comes to them from the person on their left. Send it several times around the circle.
2. At the end, let everyone intone OM simultaneously for one or more breaths, letting their sound blend in with the whole.
3. Try this exercise with any of the sacred mantrams or phrases. This will give children the opportunity to enter more deeply into its sound and energetic quality. They will also learn it thoroughly!

“We are going to share a word that to many millions of people is a very special and sacred sound. This sound rhymes with where we live, the place we curl up and sleep in, are with our family in. Yes, home! Now take off the “H” and you have what? OM, the sound of our universal home. And it is a very round sound. OM. It has a big “O” in it, which is round too, like our circle. So we imagine ourselves in this big round universe as we make this sound.”

Source: Vasudeva Kirbiatiev

PRAYER WHEEL

This is a fun way to learn a new phrase.

1. After a group has been introduced to a mantric phrase, begin by chanting it together. Then, divide it into its parts. For instance:

Om - Mane - Padme - Hum

or

Om - Sri - Ram - Jai - Ram - Jai - Jai - Ram

or

Allah - Hu

or

Ya Hayy - Ya Haqq!

2. Start the chant around the circle, each person chanting a syllable, word or phrase. Develop a strong rhythm. Use a simple drum beat to help it along.
3. Speed it up gradually as the group masters it. Leader can raise the pitch a step at a time as it comes around the circle. At the end, lower pitch and slow it down.
4. Everyone chants the entire phrase. Then you're ready to progress to the dance that uses this mantric phrase!

Source: Kathryn Ashera Rose

“The sacred phrase centers the dance. With each repetition, feel the phrase touching your being in a deeper and deeper way.”

Wali Ali Meyer

Sound

Ages 9 to infinity

FREE ALLAH

This experience is an invocation, a prayer, an opportunity to connect deeply into the sacred vibration being intoned.

Invite participants to sing the name of “A-llah” freely. Some may do so in the style of Islamic prayerful singing, with powerful, extended syllables and many variations in pitch. There can be a deep guttural quality to the sound at the point of the “l’s.” Rhythms, tempos may vary. When done with a full heart by the group, it will naturally crescendo and then fade out on its own. It may be accompanied by guitar or other instruments to provide a background drone.

Optional: End by intoning “Hu” (Arabic for the presence of the one being), as a whisper.

VARIATION: Sing another inspiring word or phrase, such as: Freedom, Kyrie, Christe, Subhan Allah, Allah Ho Akbar, Sat Nam, Shema, Shalom, or any other sacred phrases that you want the group to have a fuller experience of.

Source: Spiritual Dance & Walk

HARMONIC CONVERGENCE

For new or beginning group singers, this brings invaluable awareness of blending one's voice into the group sound.

1. The group takes a syllable or power word such as "Aaah," "Om," or "Shalom" and sings it, or intones it on the same note (pitch), extending the sound until the breath naturally runs out. Instruct singers to breathe in deeply and naturally in between their sounds.
2. Make it very soft, then louder.
3. Invite participants to vary their pitch, seeing what harmonies and dissonances occur.
4. Optional: Exaggerate the disharmony of voices, making them loud, nasal, strident and yucky.
5. Bring voices into harmonious resonance. Listen to all the voices and try to blend in or harmonize. Sing from your heart. Listen for the center of the sound. Let your sound get lost in the group sound.

Source: Kathryn Ashera Rose

"LISTEN. . . Find the center of the sound."

Wali Ali Meyer, 1988

OCEAN OF SOUND

The context for the Ocean of Sound is invitation, freedom, delight, curiosity and connection with the group. Although everyone is singing differently, the idea is to tune into your neighbors, so that the harmonies, rhythms and tones weave together into a group sound.

1. To begin, one person sings a single note. Any note within reach of everyone is fine. The whole group joins. All “tune in” together on this first note. Any open vowel sound, such as “Ah” or “O(m)” is fine.
2. Some maintain the original note while others branch out into a spectrum of harmonies, thus creating the “ocean of sound.” Singers move freely from one to another note as they wish.
3. While some maintain the “ocean,” others “surf the sound,” singing any way that feels right, exploring with the voice. Alternate freely from ocean to surf. Experiment with melodies, phrases, non-singing sounds, percussive sounds, sounds from nature. Maintain awareness of the whole sound.

The group creative mood can shift from reverent to silly to animal-like to free-flowing to choppy to melodic to meditative. It is impossible to sing the Ocean of Sound the same way twice.

Ideally, there is no need to direct the group to a close. The sound stops naturally. Everyone knows when it is complete.

*Source: Contemporary Vocal Improvisation Game
This Interpretation: Terri Crosby-Sanda*

“What makes us feel drawn to music is that our whole being is music:
our mind, our body, that nature in which we live, the nature that has made us,
all that is beneath and around us -- it is all music.”

Hazrat Inayat Khan

SOUND BATH

Everyday life provides us with many kinds of sound baths -- a waterfall, a church choir, the birds awakening at dawn, standing under a ringing bell tower, listening to a CD, feeling the hum of a hundred participants in a crowded conference room. Each sound bath has its own unique properties and affects us in different ways.

In this game, we consciously create a healing and rejuvenating sound bath for our fellow dancers. As you will see, giving or receiving a sound bath for the first time is an unexpected delight.

1. Invite one person into the center of the circle. Ask them what kind of sound they would like to receive. They can request birds chirping, a waterfall, "healing sounds," or anything else. They can describe the specific result they want from the sound bath. For example, "I'd like the sound to relax me." Or "I'd like sounds to lift my spirits." Or "I want the sound to make me more joyful." Certain mantras or phrases may come to mind. Alternatively, the group leader may initiate the sound created by the group, choosing for instance, mantric words or phrases, or the open vowel sounds of toning such as "aaah," "ooooh," or "eeeeee."
2. The person in the center may begin the sound-making and can continue or can simply listen and receive. As the outer circle creates the sound, they may stand in place, or circle the recipient. Some may want to add movements to their sound. The recipient may be still, or may turn or move in whatever way they feel inspired to.
3. See if the sound bath comes to a natural end. Often, recipients end by expressing appreciation in some way to those in the outer circle.
4. Continue until each member of the group has had a sound bath. The contrast of doing several in sequence is quite nice.

VARIATIONS FOR THIS EXERCISE ARE ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE

SOUND BATH VARIATIONS

PARTNERS: One person stands in place silently, receptive to the song of the other. The other partner sings resonantly, directing the flow of vibration and healing intention into their partner's energy field. Let intuition guide pitch, amplitude, intensity, location of sound placement, and distance from the body. Switch roles, taking time to share after each one.

TRIOS: Two people work in concert to give another a sound bath. One might place themselves in front of the receptive person and the other in back. Or they can encircle the receptive person with sound by moving around them.

INSTRUMENTS: Use a variety of chimes, bells, gongs and singing bowls. Or try drums and other percussion instruments.

Source: Terri Crosby

Sound Ages 5 to infinity

SOUND MACHINE

One person goes to the center of the circle and begins making a rhythmic sound pattern. This may be accompanied by a movement, as in being one cog of a machine. As soon as the first person's sound is clear and well-established, the next person joins in and adds another rhythm. This continues until all participants have joined. Alternately, establish groups of five or so.

*Source: Contemporary Theater Game
This Interpretation: Terri Crosby*

THE PLAY-ALONG

This activity is a good way to introduce a new song, chant or dance. It starts with the basic rhythm, continues on to the song/chant, then moves on to the dance.

1. All sit in a circle. Pass out a variety of rhythm instruments, such as multicultural shakers, drums, and sticks. Keep the largest/loudest drum for the leader or a solid percussionist to set a strong common rhythm.
2. Start the rhythm you want, and invite everyone to play along. Continue until everyone is comfortable.
3. Add whatever song or chant you are introducing, and let everyone become thoroughly familiar as they play along.

(Alternatively, start the song/chant, then add rhythm to it.)

4. Invite children to stand and move freely to the rhythm as they continue to play and chant/sing.

If this is a Dance

5. See if the group will begin to follow you through some of the basic steps of the dance (feet only). Walk together in the circle, turn, move toward the center of the circle and out, etc. Notice the ability of your group to keep time and move together.
6. Identify one or two children to continue the rhythm on instruments. Set the rest of the instruments aside/into a basket in the center. Be sure to let others have turns later, if requested.
7. Add hand movements, etc., to the dance.

Source: Kathryn Ashera Rose

RHYTHM ADD-ON

Each instrument has a voice. In this activity, everyone has a chance to express their voice.

1. Everyone sits in a circle. Each has an instrument. One player begins playing.
2. The person next to them in the circle adds their rhythm to the mix. Continuing around the circle, add one instrument at a time.
3. When all have had a chance to play together, reverse the process, having one player at a time stop playing. Note: If you continue around the circle, the first to begin will be the first to stop.

Source: Jeanne Ayesha Lauenborg

CALL & RESPONSE SINGING GAME

In many cultures, people often sing during community gatherings and work times. It brings everyone closer together and the work flows more easily! This improvisational singing game is one example of one they might do.

1. Group forms a circle to begin. A rhythmic movement can be introduced for all to join in on. Examples might be a simple “dance” movement (contemporary or traditional), a “work” movement, such as threshing grain or kneading dough, or a human-machine movement, such as rowing a boat or being the mechanism that turns the wheels on a steam-engine.
2. Leader initiates the call and response of spontaneous chants or song phrases, sound effects, trills, tongue clicks, etc., that are very brief and in rhythm with the movement. The group responds to (echoes) each call in turn.
3. Leadership is passed around the circle as members of the group are ready.

IDEAS

Sing the children’s names in extremely varied ways. Let them sing their own names, echoed by the group.

Weave in the words, feelings and concepts being introduced in the dances, such as:

“Allah! Allah!” “Ishe Oluwa” “Ya Hayyo!” “Kyrie Eleison”
“Happy!” “Wow!” “Ya Hu!” “Together!”

Source: Contemporary Theater/Vocal Improv Game

NAVAJO GREETING GAME

Everyone kneels in the circle, almost touching. Everyone moves in unison to the rhythm of the chant below. Each person begins by patting their own knees twice, then continues patting twice in the pattern shown below. There are two pats for each line of the pattern below.

own knees	“Heyo, Heyo”
the floor in front of them	“Epsenaya”
own knees	“Heyo, Heyo”
knees of neighbor on their right	“Epsenaya”
own knees	“Heyo, Heyo”
floor in front of them	“Epsenaya”
own knees	“Heyo, Heyo”
knees of neighbor on their left	“Epsenaya”

Practice without the chant, then with. To add new dimensions, have girls only sing, then boys only. Speed it up once the children are comfortable with it, then slow it down at the end.

CHANT:



Hey - o Hey - o Ep - sen - ay - a Hey - o Hey - o Ep - sen - ay - a



Hey - o Hey - o Ep - sen - ay - a Hey - o Hey - o Ep - sen - ay - a

Source: Shared by Barbara Swetina at Findhorn Foundation

AFRICAN RHYTHM GAME

This game builds mastery in keeping a rhythmic pattern. It awakens energy, excitement and laughter in a group. Build each new layer as the previous one is well-established. Mix and match the additional layers, going only as far as you and the group feel comfortable.

Its conveyer, Hannah, tells us, “I was shown a body rhythm years ago and was told it was a Zulu empowering and enlivening rhythm. I lead children, and some adults, in rhythm -- letting them discover their own rhythm and how it interacts with the rhythm of the cosmos. I modified the rhythm so that children could actually do it -- simplified it and gave it more spaces. We cannoned it in groups, and found that it did, in fact do amazing and uplifting things. Happiness and joy, strength and courage! This exercise has never failed to enliven groups -- including tired and disgruntled classes at school.”

1. The group learns the following rhythmic movements. Each number represents one of four beats in the bar.

‘Foot’ means a stomp in place with the foot, transferring weight onto it. ‘Knee’ is a gentle hand slap on the knee, alternating right and left.

‘Heart’ is an open hand beating gently on the heart.

‘Clap’ is a natural two-handed clap in front of the body.

1. foot	2. foot	3. clap	4. rest/hold
1. knee knee	2. knee knee	3. clap	4. clap
1. heart	2. heart	3. clap	4. rest/hold
1. rest/hold	2. heart	3. clap	4. rest/hold

2. Divide into two groups of equal size. The sequence is done as a round or cannon. The second group comes in after the first measure (line).
3. This can be further layered with three or four groups, each coming in one measure (line) after the preceding group.

TIPS FROM HANNAH:

“It is good to point out that participants don't need to hit themselves hard, as the group creates the volume and energy, and if we forget this, we can end up with red, sore chests, hands and knees. It helps us relax if we do not have to hit hard, and teaches a valuable drumming technique - playing softly and being gentle with our bodies.

I ask them to listen to the whole polyrhythm when it's canoned to feel what is happening in the entire group.

The only time I ask for "right foot first" or some such structure is the beginning of the rhythm, so that less feet get jumped on, as we're all moving in the same direction with the feet.

We have also added cross and poly-rhythms, depending on the age/stage/length of the group. But the basic one is what works the simplest and best.”

TO GO FURTHER:

What I also do with the kids is teach them that talking is a rhythm, as is breathing, as is where we choose to place our gaze and our thoughts. I have them experience this by asking them simple questions one at a time, such as “What's your favorite color?” while we are doing the body rhythm. It causes them to have to work out how to hear and answer in rhythm.

In parts, when the foot stomping is on, you can add movement forward, back and sideways, so that the different 'parts' interact with each other on another level, advancing and retreating, moving or not.

Anyway, the possibilities are endless and I would encourage them all to be played with!!

*Source of Original Rhythm: Traditional/Unknown
Modified Rhythm & Canoning Game: Hannah & Raven Steele,
Dance Circles in Australia*

“At an early age... children respond to rhythms and make rhythms themselves.
The use of rhythms helps one to walk and to walk properly.”

Samuel Lewis

RHYTHM WEAVING

Optional Materials: Drums, Shakers, Jingle Sticks, Scrapers, Sticks, etc.

This is a wonderful activity for getting a group focused on a theme. It is recommended for a group that is ready to collaborate creatively. It is also a great ice breaker and guaranteed to create lots of laughter. Have fun.

1. **FORM TEAMS:** Small Group: A smaller group can begin this activity in a circle. Identify two teams within the circle. Large Group: For a larger group (12+) begin by dividing participants into four teams. Form a square with each team being one side of the square, standing shoulder to shoulder and facing the center.
2. **CHOOSE A THEME:** Choose one theme with the whole group, such as sacred phrases, prophets, a particular religious tradition, a story that is fresh in their minds, nature images, or a holiday.
3. **CREATE PHRASES:** Ask each team to come up with one phrase related to the theme. Some examples might be:

Buddha is compassion	Om Mane Padme Hum	wind whirls all around
Shiva is fire	Allah Hu	water flows, flows down
Quan Yin is mercy	Shalom	fire dances, leaping high
Coyote's full of tricks	Kyrie Eleison	earth rumbles

4. **PUT PHRASES TO RHYTHM:** Help each team put their phrase to rhythm. Have each team say their phrase out loud, in rhythm several times.

Note: The facilitator's creativity is vital at this point. As the rhythms are created the facilitator must make sure they will fit together when chanted at the same time. Some adjustments may be needed. It is helpful if one part has a very simple rhythm such as just quarter notes to serve as the basic groove or "pulse" phrase. This usually works itself out, but it is something to pay attention to.

It is recommended that you begin this activity in a duple meter (2/4 or 4/4). Once the group has developed some rhythm skills you can try triple and other odd meters.

5. **BEGIN THE WEAVE:** Ask for a volunteer from each of the teams. Have each volunteer come out to the center and face their team.
 - A. **CHANT THE RHYTHMS**

Each volunteer conducts their team in saying their rhythm of their phrase. Begin with the "pulse" team doing their rhythm, then add the others one at a time. Encourage participants to listen to each other as they synchronize the rhythms together. The facilitator may need to play a wood block or bell to provide a steady pulse. This continues until the facilitator says "ready and stop" in time.

B. ADD BODY PERCUSSION

Volunteers rotate one group to the right, taking their part with them. Have each team learn their new phrase, then come up with a body percussion sound that mimics the rhythm of their phrase. Use different body percussion sounds for each new part, such as foot stomps, claps or patches (clapping hands on thighs). Begin again saying the parts in rhythm, and after the rhythms are lined up, add the body percussion sounds one team at a time. At this point stop saying the phrase and listen to the body percussion sounds alone. Enjoy the music the group has created! End as above.

C. ADD MOVEMENT

Volunteers rotate one team to the right. They teach their rhythm along with the body percussion. Their new team adds body movement as well. It can be a dance step or a zikr sway, anything to get the team moving together in time. Remember to have the body percussion sound included so that it can be heard when the words are no longer spoken. Begin the round with words, and after rhythms are lined up, add body percussion, then movement. Drop out the words at the end.

D. ADD RHYTHM INSTRUMENTS

Volunteers rotate one team to the right. Pass out instruments to each group. It is recommended that each team have the same timbre instrument. I use shakers, sticks, scrapers, and metal jingles. This gives you four distinctive sounds. Again use your creativity to come up with your sounds. There are many great instrument-making books out there to get ideas from. Have enough of each sound so that each person gets an instrument. Continue as above beginning with words and progressing to instruments. Drop out the words at the end.

E. OPTIONAL - ADD MELODY USING THE PENTATONIC SCALE

Creating a pentatonic vocal improv works nicely as well. The great thing about this scale is that there are no wrong notes. Any combinations the group comes up with will sound beautiful. However, this will take some guidance from the facilitator. Help each team make up a melodic part using their phrase. They may keep their original rhythm or alter it somewhat. In the key of C the notes to choose from are: C, D, E, G, & A. To keep it simple, some teams may choose to use just two of these notes.

SIMPLIFICATIONS: Eliminate the rotation of leaders and rhythms. Let each team keep its original rhythm, adding body percussion, movement, instruments and melody to it as they are ready.

*Source: Sarmad Barry Bernstein, Lenexa KS,
Copyright 1998, Healthy Sounds, used with permission*

A keen observation shows that the whole universe is a weaving of rhythms: the rise and fall of the waves, the ebb and flow of the tide, the waxing and waning of the moon, the sunrise and the sunset, the change of the seasons, the moving of the earth and of the planets, the whole cosmic system and the constitution of the entire universe are working under the law of rhythm. Cycles of rhythm, with major and minor cycles interpenetrating, uphold the whole creation in their swing.

Hazrat Inayat Khan

NOTES:

STREAM OF LIFE

This activity is a wonderful beginning to a long day, and also when a break from lots of activity is needed. It will be welcomed by sore feet, backs, muscles and brains. It is nicely accompanied by improvisational flute, bells & gongs with an oriental tone that is spacious, natural and flowing.

1. Begin by loosening and stretching the body in whatever way feels good. Participants may choose to draw from the stylistic and energetic forms of yoga, tai chi, Qi Gong, modern dance, etc. Tense and release tight muscles. Become aware of body sensation from the inside-out. Feel into each body part as you move it, letting it communicate its state of well-being or stress.
2. Breathe with the movement, using the breath to accelerate the process of releasing tension and increasing the flow of chi (life energy) through the body. Work with the body and breath to come into a deeply natural state of connection and relaxation.
3. Gradually become aware of moving within a greater energy field. Experience yourself as a part of an expansive landscape, stretching to the sky, connecting deeply into the earth, scanning the distant horizon, breathing in a color-washed sunset, tracing the arc of a rainbow. Take in whatever elements of healing nature has to offer that are most beneficial to you. Imagine the rich earth beneath you, the waters flowing around you, the sky/stars above you, the wind blowing through you.
4. Slow your movement, coming into a state of flowing equilibrium. As you come to stillness, become the center of the rivers of energy, light and life flowing in and around you.

Be the stream of the universe.
Being the stream of the universe,
Ever true and unswerving,
Become as a little child once more.
. . . Return to the state of the uncarved block.

Tao Te Ching, Verse 28

*Source: Kathryn Ashera Rose
Inspirational Source: Arifa Miller*

THESE ARE MY FEET

This playful game is featured on band 10 of the “I Open My Eyes To You” CD and cassette. It is about recognizing all of who/Hu we are. It has been around since the early San Francisco dance community in the 1960’s. Its originator is unknown. At times it is referred to as “The Children’s Zikr” because, like the Sufi practice of zikr, it opens one’s remembrance to our true reality. Here is one way of doing it.

1. All sit in a circle. Invite everyone to stretch their toes into the center. Have them wiggle them and say hello to them. Then teach the basic truism:

“These are my “(name body part)”	wiggle, rub or pat & appreciate part of self
“And they’re pretty good for “()”	nod head up & down affirmatively
“But they’re not me”	shake finger & head side to side
“I am MUCH more!”	open arms wide to encompass all

Have children identify different body parts and all the great things they can do. A common progression would be:

toes/feet
legs
tookas or buhunkas - (rear end)
tummy
hands/arms
mouth/eyes/ears/nose/head
my whole body
heart/feelings
mind
all of me

When Siddhartha Buddha sat under the Bodhi Tree, he realized that he was not just his body, or his mind, or his emotions, or his individual soul, but that he was all of life, all beings throughout time and space. This game is a nice introduction to the Heart Sutra Dance (II 16).

“Gate Gate, Paragate, Parasamgate, Bodhi Svaha!”

“Gone, Gone, Gone Beyond, Beyond the Beyond, To Realization, So Be It!”

Source: *Early San Francisco Dance Community*

This Variation: Akbar Manolson

See also Ya Hu!

SOUND MOVES

Sound, accompanied by awareness and intention, brings change and healing. We begin this activity with the intention of transformation and wholeness. To prepare, all spread out at random in the space.

1. Begin moving your body --- a body part or your whole self --- adding a sound that accentuates or echoes the movement. Perhaps the sound supports, expresses, or underlines the movement. Let your sound and movement be one.

Or begin by making sound and let the physical movement flow from the sound. Play with the movement. Go slowly at first to become acutely aware how the sound feels and how the sound expresses itself physically through you.

2. When your sound-movement has ripened, bring it to another dancer to share. Joining with someone else, blend or contrast the sounds and movements you make. Allow two to transform, coming into a more interesting or harmonious blend.
3. If desired, together move to another couple to experiment and blend.
4. Continue to join groups together until the entire group is interacting.

Source: Terri Crosby

I AM A MIRROR OF YOU!

In this partnering exercise, we have the opportunity to experience another as literally a mirror of ourselves! We can take it to a deeper level by focusing on getting into a continuum, or flow of energy, between us, moving slowly enough that our movement truly melds into one. We might even be sensitive enough to “predict” where our partner’s movement might go before they do. At this point, an observer might be unable to tell who the leader is, and we may even wonder ourselves!

1. To begin, partners face one another with about 3 feet distance between them. There should be plenty of space around them. If possible, partners maintain a gentle gaze into each other’s eyes. If this gaze is difficult, the eyes may be softened and averted. The point is to really connect to our partner, and to maintain a central visual awareness, using peripheral vision to take in the whole.
2. Each partner takes a turn leading the other in slow-motion movements. It is easiest to begin in place, moving only the hands. As skills progress, bring in full arm movements, leg movements, and shifts in body position. This can progress to “traveling” across the space together.
3. In this phase, partners shift the leadership back and forth while maintaining the motion. They can agree upon a signal, such as the current leader saying “shift,” when ready to pass the lead over. The shifts can occur closer together as skills progress. Alternatively, the group leader may use vocal directions or a signal, such as a drumbeat, to mark the shifts in leadership, gradually shortening the time between them.
4. The most advanced level is a shared mode in which neither is leading, both are discovering and creating the movement together. If a partnership is especially good at this, ask permission to have the rest of the group watch them.

Source: Universal

See also En Lak Ech, Mirroring the Four Directions & Closing Rituals

The following partnering games require a high level of sensitivity and awareness to be successful, and in fact could be dangerous if even one child is out of control. Therefore, adult-child pairings with young children are recommended.

Partnering

Ages 10 and older

FOLLOW THE SOUND

This is a delightful activity in which players are tested in their level of trust, their listening skills and their sensitivity in guiding another, more vulnerable being. There are metaphors here for attuning to and allowing the Spirit of Guidance to guide one's life! The advanced levels take us even farther, with the last activity being a very attuned practice that requires the preparation of the other two.

1. Find partners. One partner begins a continuous sound, such as an open "Aaaaaah" sound, an improvised melody, laughter, or a percussive or other sound effect. The other partner listens with eyes closed, bringing all of his or her concentration to the sound.
2. The sounding partner begins to move slowly, leading the listening partner around the room. The listening partner keeps eyes closed. This can be made more challenging by at times interweaving with the other players. The sounding partner needs to keep eyes open and make sure the listening partner is guided safely. After a time, come to stillness.
3. Share experiences verbally. Switch roles and repeat.

PREPARATION I

As children relax with eyes closed, a volunteer takes a sound around the room. The sound could be vocal, or from a musical instrument such as a chime or flute. The children follow the sound with their hands in "prayer position", pressed together, pointing toward the sound. Vary volume and length of silences in between.

PREPARATION II

Children stand and face the direction of the sound, turning their bodies as needed.

"At first I couldn't do it, Then I started listening with my third ear
(pointing to third eye/forehead area) and it was easy!"

child participant

FOLLOW THE SOUND, ADVANCED LEVEL II

Players proceed as before, but the whole group is sounding one note, so that the concentration on one's own partner must deepen considerably.

FOLLOW THE SOUND, ADVANCED LEVEL III

Sound ceases, and one's connection to one's partner is created by facing palms together with those of one's partner, feeling the energy connection, without touching. The following partner has eyes closed and must sense the warmth/energy of their partner in order to follow them.

Source: Unknown

This Version Shared by Amida Harvey

Partnering

Ages 10 and older

ELEPHANT WALK

Sensitivity, trust and an intuitive connection with one's partner are in play as the partnership seeks increased fluidity and freedom in moving together. To begin, find a partner and stand together. Decide who will be the elephant first, and who will be the guide. The rest of the activity is done in silence.

1. The "elephant" extends her dominant hand in front of her body with the palm parallel to the ground, as if it were an elephant's trunk. The "guide" puts his opposite hand directly under the elephant's, so, for example, the palm of the elephant's right hand rests lightly on the back of the guide's left hand. The elephant closes her eyes and prepares to be guided. The guide keeps eyes open, and side by side, gently leads the elephant around the room, walking forwards, in circles, backwards, and so on.
2. After a few moments, as both feel more comfortable, they begin to let hands slide away from each other, so that eventually only one finger of each hand remains in contact, and partners communicate by subtle attunement to one another. Participants monitor their feelings to discover how it feels to trust someone and to be trusted in this way.
3. After a few minutes, switch roles. Share at the end.

*Adapted by permission from Playful Self-Discovery,
David Earl Platts, Findhorn Press, 1996, ISBN 1-899171-06-1*

The following partnering game requires a high level of sensitivity and awareness to be successful, and in fact could be dangerous if even one child is out of control. Therefore, adult-child pairings with young children are recommended.

Partnering

Ages 10 and older

CARS

Car and driver must truly become a team in this exercise, somewhat akin to leading and following in ballroom dance. The “cars” especially must surrender to being guided.

VARIATION I: The car keeps eyes open. VARIATION II: The car keeps eyes closed.

The choice for the car - not the driver - is between keeping eyes open or closed!

Begin by finding partners and deciding who will first be the car and who will be the driver.

1. The driver stands behind the car, putting her hands on the car’s shoulders. The car puts hands up in front of the chest, palms outward, to serve as bumpers. These may be later dropped to the side if the car feels more daring.
2. The driver, keeping eyes open, guides both around the room, weaving in and out of “traffic” while keeping the car completely safe at all times and avoiding collisions with other cars. Speed is determined with sensitivity and daring.
3. Switch roles. Share afterwards. Was it easy or difficult to feel trusting? How did it feel to be in a position of total responsibility for another?

*Adapted by permission from Playful Self-Discovery,
David Earl Platts, Findhorn Press, 1996, ISBN 1-899171-06-1*

“Not my will, O Lord, but Thine guides my every step.”

THE NAME GAME

This is another classic activity which lends itself to many variations and situations. It can be done sitting or standing, with more movement occurring when the circle is standing.

1. Going around the circle, each person in turn says their name, while simultaneously creating a movement that expresses something about them. Each person can step forward into the circle to perform their movement, or they can stay in place. They could:
 - clap the rhythm of their name
 - demonstrate a move from their favorite activity, sport or hobby
 - show what they are feeling
 - do whatever movement they like to do
 - express an essential quality - the essence of who they are
2. The group then repeats their name and movement, once, twice or three times, as determined by the leader. The originator can listen and observe, or can continue to model and lead the movement and sound.

VARIATIONS

This can be done as a cumulative memory game. The first person's name and movement are echoed by the group, then the second and first persons, then the third, second and first person's, and so on. Each person adds their name and movement onto the string of names and movements, and the group recalls the longer and longer sequence. (Somewhat like the "Twelve Days of Christmas" song.) If this is done rhythmically and energetically, it is quite exciting (and challenging!)

TIPS: It is helpful to emphasize the spontaneity and pleasure of sharing a movement. Some children may feel unready to be in the "spotlight" for even the briefest of times. If a child "freezes up," encourage them to identify some tangible idea (on the mental level), and then translate that into movement. You can also look for an inadvertent micro-gesture, such as a shoulder shrug or movement of the head, which can, in a friendly way, be amplified and imitated by the group. Other children get very complex, offering a string of several different movements. Encourage simplicity!

Source: Universal

See also *Connecting With Children, Putting It All Together, Closing Rituals*

CHEROKEE GREETING RITUAL

This ritual is shared with us by Mama Mary Sunbeam, a tribal Cherokee elder who lives and teaches in the Virginia area. It is a way of greeting friends old and new which is used by Cherokee peoples in the Appalachian and other regions. It affirms that we are all brothers and sisters, with a common bond of respect and responsibility toward one another.

1. Facing a partner, take your right hand and gently place it palm down on top of your own left hand. It relaxes there, curving over the back of the left hand. As you do this, you affirm, “As your brother or sister, I will use this hand only to respect you, your family and your ancestors.” Look them in the eyes.
2. Move your right hand to your upper arm (bicep area), gently curving around it. This means, “I will not use force against you. I will support you with my gentle strength. Whatever our differences, we can sit and talk.”
3. Move your right hand to your own left shoulder and rest it gently there. This is called standing tall. To your partner, affirm, “ I honor you and your path of life with friendship and support.”
4. Right hand moves to your own heart, resting there. Affirm, “I now claim to be your brother or sister. I will only call you by your good name.” This means that one vows never to gossip or criticize the other.
5. Partners press right hands together, palm to palm, in silence with eyes meeting. (Like a “high five,” only hands stay together.) This is the seal of the preceding affirmations.

Source: Mama Mary Sunbeam, Cherokee Elder

See also *Connecting With Children, Putting It All Together, Closing Rituals*

PASS IT!

1. All stand in a circle, evenly spaced, with hands at sides. Leader starts a contagious movement around the circle, which is passed from person to person until it returns home. One favorite is an even rhythmic stamping of the left, then the right foot. Each person in turn stamps L then R until the circle is completed. The trick is in maintaining an even, unbroken rhythm.
2. Change direction around the circle. Speed it up for more challenge.
3. Overlapping stamps: The initiator lifts and stamps first her left foot, then her right foot. As she lifts and stamps her right foot, this coordinates with the simultaneous lifting and stamping of her neighbor's left foot. That person lifts and stamps their right foot, simultaneous with the left foot of the next person. This continues on around the circle. When the circle is complete, change directions. Make it faster and faster.
4. When speed and accuracy are attained in both directions, try starting both directions simultaneously. The paths will "cross" at some point/person, who may have to jump!

VARIATIONS

Send a clap around the circle. Send a jump (both feet to both feet) around the circle. Speed it up. See what other movements can be sent.

TIP: Emphasize the uplift of the foot on the upbeat. (AND stamp, AND stamp.)

Source: Vasudeva Kirbiatiev

See also Sound Current, Electricity

THE WEB OF LIFE

This is a classic activity which lends itself to many groups and situations.

Materials: a ball of yarn

1. All sit in a circle, touching or almost touching knees. With young children, legs can be opened into a V-shape, neighboring feet connected. Talk about the connection of each member of the circle to each other member. You might like to share Chief Seattle's famous words:

*"This we know: All things are connected like the blood that unites us.
We did not weave the web of life, we are merely a strand in it.
Whatever we do to the web, we do to ourselves."*

2. Bring a ball of yarn to the circle. First pass it all the way around the circle, each person unrolling it and holding onto their section. Then roll or toss the ball of yarn across the circle. When it is received, each person should make sure to wrap it around the original circle before sending it on to the next person.
3. This can be done without words, as a name game, or as a "brainstorming" session. An idea based on a common theme can be spoken by each person as they throw the ball. Themes can be as simple as naming our favorite "something," stating what we most care about protecting in nature, or the qualities of a good friend. We can choose to throw the yarn to someone who indicates that they resonate with our idea.
4. When finished, admire the web from above and below, lowering and lifting it up. If desired, it can be carefully taped to a wall, ceiling or corner. If someone takes the time to record the ideas generated, they can be symbolically represented via pictures or written words and attached to the web. A title such as "We Are All Interconnected" or Chief Seattle's quote can also be added.

A complete version of Chief Seattle's speech is given in Susan Jeffers' Brother Eagle, Sister Sky: A Message From Chief Seattle, Dial Books, New York, 1991. ISBN 0-8037-0969-2.

Source: Unknown, Becoming Universal!

HEIGHT SHUFFLE

In the language of group dynamics, this is a loosener-up. Taking us outside of our usual envelope, it brings out creative thinking and lots of chuckles.

1. Group forms a huddle. All close eyes.
2. Leader gives the instruction that all must somehow, without talking, form a line one behind another, from shortest to tallest.
3. When the group feels it has accomplished this, they may open their eyes to see how well they did!

One of Many Delightful Activities Shared at the Findhorn Foundation

MIRRORING THE FOUR DIRECTIONS

This is especially helpful for groups that need to build awareness of slow, sustained movements and moving “as one.” Emphasis should be on bringing the breath into the movement.

1. Expand the circle so that everyone has space around them. Identify four leaders in the circle, each at one of the four “cardinal” directions (North, South, East and West).
2. The first leader starts a slow, continuous movement sequence. These movements may reflect the movements and themes being presented in the dances during this gathering. The group mirrors.
3. As the leader turns her body toward one of the other leaders on either side, the group turns also, transferring leadership to that person. The leader may also make a gesture of passing over the leadership to the new leader. The new leader continues the movement until ready to pass on the leadership.
4. The leadership is passed around the circle until it returns to the original leader. All is done in silence. Close in stillness.

VARIATION

If the group is comfortable, simply pass the movement from one person to the next, one by one, around the circle.

Source: Universal “Theater” Game

See also I Am A Mirror of You, Name Games, Closing Rituals

CLOSING RITUALS

After sharing a special time with a group, you may want to invent a way of summing up your time together. You enact it together as a way of recognizing one another and remembering your time together. Later, when you see one another in other contexts, you can connect by pulling a bit of your ritual out of your hats. In a sense, it then becomes a greeting. It may be very deep, or it may be funny and create laughter. There are several ways to choose from.

LEADER: Choose one “quintessential” element from each main activity to create a sequence of sounds and movements. Or, without sound, silently pantomime the movements as the group mirrors them back. These highlights can come from any type of activity: rhythm, song, dance, game, story, etc. Overall, the sequence should be brief and simple and reflect the core theme or inspiration of the session.

GROUP: Improvise, going around the circle one by one. Each participant shares a parting or theme-reflecting gesture and/or sound, such as a bow, a flourish of the hand, a wave, a sweeping arc of the arms, etc. The group may mirror it back or not. You might go around a second time, moving more quickly through the sequence.

PARTNERS: Buddies can invent their special ritual together, creating a simple sequence or ritual that reflects some of their favorite parts of the session. It should blend sharings from both partners. When everyone has created a buddy greeting, they can be shared with the group.

You might also choose to share traditional parting rituals from a culture being studied. The phrases from ENDING A DANCE may be very appropriate. Here are just a few other parting rituals from various world traditions.

Sanskrit/Hindu Tradition: Namaste (I bow to the divinity within you.) Hands are palms together in front of the heart center in prayer position as one bows to one’s partner/the group.

Sufi Dervish Greeting: Alhumdulillah! (How magnificently does God manifest to me through you!) Hands are thrown upward from the heart to the sky as one beholds each partner. Many other Sufi wazaif can be used as well, such as “Ya Fatah!” (Oh, Opener of the Way!)

Kiss the back of the hand of the person on either side of you. This traditionally travels around a circle in which participants are already holding hands.

See also *Mirroring the Four Directions, Putting It All Together, Connecting with Children, Ending a Dance*

THE DANCES

DANCING WITH CHILDREN

KEYS TO TEACHING THE DANCES OF UNIVERSAL PEACE

By Radha Tereska Buko

The first step is to feel comfortable with the Dances and melodies. It is good to practice the movements and melodies alone or with a support partner until you feel comfortable enough to go "public." If you are relaxed, your students will be more willing to start with something "different." The following suggestions may help to create an environment in which the dancing will be enjoyable and enriching.

Keep it simple The Dances will speak the experience themselves. Keep your own description of imagery simple, thus allowing children to experience their own feelings. During the dancing, keep descriptive words consistent and simple, for example saying, "right turn" instead of "now turn to the right." Ideally, teach one or two Dances per session, allowing the experience to be taken in fully.

Wake up the voices It is important to warm up voices before introducing melodic songs. Once the vocal cords have awakened and stretched, introduce a simple melody or chant.

Walk before you dance Warming up bodies is equally as important as warming up voices. Begin any Dance session with a few minutes of stretching and walking exercises.

Teach the words first It is usually helpful to teach the words, then the melody, then the movements -- in that order. For the slightly longer or more complex dances, you may want to break this up into consecutive sessions. Foreign words are easier to remember when sung, so you need not spend great lengths of time on the pronunciation or memorization of the phrase. Sing the melody once or twice through, then ask those who are comfortable to join in when they are ready. Through repetition, voices tend to harmonize, so don't be discouraged if at first it sounds like an evening cat concert. If children are bashful about singing the words, allow them to hum or sing "La." The objective is to allow each child to find his/her own comfortable level of participation.

Teach rhythm Hand-clapping while singing is a good way to introduce the rhythm of a Dance, and gets the children actively involved in the learning. Children also love percussion instruments. Funnel this natural inclination into supportive roles in the Dance circle. Native American Dances or a simple non-melodic dance in 4/4 time help in establishing rhythm in the feet. Use a clear drum beat to identify each step to be taken.

Move to show the movements Showing is more effective than telling. Be clear with your own movements, for children will imitate you to a "T." When demonstrating movements, make sure

everyone has a good view of you. Do movements in several positions, so no one is just viewing your back.

Vary the feeling of a Dance Variety is the spice of the Dance. At times have "girls only" sing or "boys only" sing. Call out "sing loudly" or "softly" or "hum." Singing "on the breath" (in silence) brings the phrase into the heart. This enriches the Dance experience while keeping everyone alert and aware of their responsibility to the dancing circle. Explore the different feelings Dances can offer by varying the tempo.

End a Dance gracefully Before the final cycle of a Dance, say "last time." This prepares the dancers for a cohesive, smooth ending. It's nice to slow the rhythm down, and increase or decrease the volume. Holding several moments of silence (length will vary according to the attention span of groups) helps to contain the energy and gives dancers an opportunity to focus on the preceding experience. The silence can be broken by the leader saying a sacred affirmation, such as "HO," a Native American sound meaning "It is so," or one of the other suggested endings listed below.

Tame the giggles It is not unusual to get a degree of silliness and giggling when introducing the Dances, as with any new activity. The thought to hold in your mind in this case is "and this too shall pass." If the giggles persist, bring the Dance movement to a stationary circle, and return to singing without dancing for a while. If the silly behavior centers around one or two individuals, try changing their position in the circle or ask them if they would like to drum or play another rhythm instrument in the center of the circle. This may give them a sense of responsibility and focus them.

Repeat learned Dances At first, concentrate on repeating Dances rather than offering a large selection. Children will enjoy the Dances which are familiar to them. In addition, repeating the same Dances frequently takes the Dance experience beyond the mechanics and into the realm of attuning to the theme and the group process.

Pick the right Dance Choose Dances that are timely and relevant to students and their interests. Holidays and special occasions are perfect times to introduce certain Dances. Include folktales from the Dance's tradition before beginning the Dance. Children love storytelling and this will help set the stage.

Timing is important Be sensitive to the ebb and flow of the children's energy levels. It is best to do a Dance when the children have the right energy for it. Use energizing, "wake up" Dances in the morning, slower Dances after lunch, grounding Native American inspired Dances to stabilize energy, etc.

Continued on next page . . .

Be respectfully flexible Most Dances allow for variations in movement when done with respect for the integrity of the original Dance. Minor changes or improvisation are possible to fulfill the needs of a particular situation or group. In small circles, dancers may hold hands with "imaginary angels" on either side, opting for a larger circumference rather than a tight circle. A Dance should not be altered because of forgetfulness. In that case, it is best to let the Dance rest until one can check sources.

Involve parents and other teachers The Dances are a wonderful inter-generational activity. Use Dances at family and community gatherings. Suggest that children share the Dances at home. Consider involving other educators, such as music directors and physical education teachers, in the process.

Honor the feelings The Dances do touch the emotions, both the joyful and the sad. Allow time after each Dance session to process or share what may have come up for students.

Enjoy yourselves Above all, let the Dances be a fun experience. Allow each child to find his/her level of comfortable participation. As time progresses, you will be sure to have more and more requests for "The Dances."

NOTES:

ENDING A DANCE

Traditionally, we end a Dance with several moments of silence. A few words may be spoken encouraging dancers to breathe and feel deeply. Then, a closing phrase, such as the ones below, is spoken to seal the dance, ground the energy, and affirm the blessing. “And so it is,” we witness what has occurred as being true.

Alternatively, as the Dance is finished, it may feel natural to move right into the singing of one of the closing phrases below on one pitch. Sung once slowly, some members of the group may sing harmonies to it. A silence would then follow this. This would work for all the traditions other than the Native American, which is always spoken. The following are some suggested ending affirmations for Dances of various spiritual traditions.

Hindu	Om Hare Om (for Dances invoking a form of Vishnu) Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti Jai Ma (for Dances invoking the Holy Mother/Shakti: Kali, Durga, Sita, Radha, Sarswati, Lakshmi) Hara, Hara, Mahadeva (for Dances invoking Shiva)
Buddhist	Om Svaha
Zoroastrian	Ashem Vohu
Aramaic	Amain (ah-mayn)
Native Middle Eastern	Ament
Jewish	Amain (ah-mayn)
Christian	Amen (ah-men)
Islamic & Sufi	Amin (ah-meen)
Native American	Ho or Aho! Aho Ma-tah-quee-ya-seen (All My Relations)
Goddess/Pagan	Blessed Be
Sikh	Sat Nam Wahe Guruji Ka Khalsa - Wahe Guruji Ki Fateh

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

There are many ways of putting a session together. Any one of the Dances or activities in this booklet can be used “solo” to augment a gathering. Many would be quite wonderful in combination. Sessions might range from 15 minutes to an hour with children, or up to three hours with adults.

Many experienced Dance leaders do not plan their Dance sessions in detail so that they remain open to the energy of the group, the mood of the moment. Their extensive repertoire and polished skills allow them to do this with ease. For the rest of us, it is wise to plan and rehearse to the point of being clear and confident in the face of the unknown. It is best to prepare perhaps one and one half times the number of activities you will need to fill the time, knowing which are your priority activities. When you get there, be ready to discard any activities that do not seem appropriate to the moment. At the same time, be ready to extend and develop any activity that is working especially well.

When putting a session together, one most often has an inspiration that forms the core focus, or theme, of the gathering. Around this theme are gathered the key elements. Of course we know that our game plan can veer off-course in delightful and surprising ways. However, it is helpful to develop and maintain your own consistent core structure. This will ensure that a variety of needs will be met and will build a sense of flow and completion for your groups.

THE DYNAMICS

Several key elements serve to shape sacred gatherings, directing the group energy and marking the transition from one phase of the gathering to another. They promote meaningful connections for the individuals present. They are expressed differently within each tradition and group, and may vary from meeting to meeting. The following are intended as “food for thought” for those creating circles, so that you may become aware of shaping the dynamics of your time together. You are invited to customize the right sequence and combination of elements, formal or informal, for your group and circumstances.

Preparation/Purification This phase involves stepping out of our “everyday” mode and stepping into a heightened state of awareness. It also involves creating sacred space. Both involve cultivating an attitude of reverence. This may be done as a group, or individually as participants enter the space and prepare for the circle. It may be as simple as leaving one’s shoes at the door, bringing flowers, or donning “special” clothing. You might want to offer practices that reflect the theme or culture being studied, such as the Native American smudgestick ritual, Buddhist water ablutions, silent walking practices, prayer, meditation, yoga or Tai Chi movements. Creating sacred space may involve lighting candles or incense, putting an altar together, playing sacred music, drumming, or moving through the space with intention. See the following activities: Sound Bath, the Element Breaths, Walks, Stream of Life.

Gathering In may be as simple as circling up, meaning that all take hands in the circle. It may take the form of beginning a snake dance around the room, gradually gathering in all the people present in the room, then spiralling into the center or into circle formation. Or may be that each individual joins the group in a drumming experience as they arrive. See *The Big Sigh*, *Liquid Sunshine*, *Rhythm Play-Along*, *Sound Current*, *Harmonic Convergence*.

Invocation This is usually a spoken prayer or statement that serves to unify the group in its intention and to connect in consciousness to the greater whole. See the “*Toward the One*” prayer in the opening pages of this booklet. Also see *Free Allah*, *Prayer Wheel*, *Ocean of Sound*.

Connecting In some way, participants are welcomed and acknowledged. This may involve spoken sharings or introductions, or some ritual in which each individual holds the group’s focus for a moment or longer. This phase is very important for children, as it brings them into relationship with the circle and its leader. See *Name Games*, *Native American Greeting Game*, *African Threshing Chant*, *Pass It*, *Web of Life*, *Mirroring the Four Directions* and any of the *Partner Dances*, such as *I Open My Eyes To You* and *Alleluia*.

Ice Breaker/Energizer/Warm-Up This is where to plug in a simple, delightful “sure-thing” activity to raise the energy! Up until now, children haven’t decided whether this is dumb or not. If they love this, they are apt to go happily on to the next thing. It could be a story, game or Dance. See *Ya Hu!*, *Electricity*, *Rocketship*, or any of your favorite *Dances* such as *Happiness Runs*, *This Little Light*, or *‘Tis A Gift*.

Core Time The essential activities, especially the *Dances* and their related games. There are hundreds of additional *Dances of Universal Peace*, many featured in the several other *Dance* booklets and tapes available through *Peaceworks*.

Grounding & Ending Ritual This is a time to reaffirm group unity before parting. It is also a time for each individual to gather into themselves the energy and blessings of the time together and to send these out to those they love, and to everywhere and everyone. This may involve circling up, a few moments of quiet, spoken appreciations and prayers, a song or an ending Dance. It may involve a ritual such as passing a symbolic blessing around the circle, or a group hug. See *Closing Rituals*, *Pass It*, *Mirroring the Four Directions*, *Ishe Oluwa*.

Take It With You This optional element is especially meaningful to children, who love a symbol of remembrance to share with others, or to bring to their special place at home. It may be as simple as an image stamped on the hand, a flower or petal for their special place, seeds to plant, water or earth blessed within the circle.

HO IKE MAI

Words & Music: Leilah Be
Dance Originator: Leilah Be

Key of C Major

Ho i - ke mai i - ke a - lo - ha, Pu ni - i ka ai - na.
U - a le - le a ma - nu. U - a le - le a ma - nu.

Words:

- | | | |
|----|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1. | Ho ike mai | <i>Reveal to us/show us the love</i> |
| 2. | I ke aloha. | <i>I then extend it to you</i> |
| 3. | Puni ka aina. | <i>I spread it around the land</i> |
| | Repeat 1-3. | <i>(& to do that...)</i> |
| 4. | Ua lele a manu. | <i>We Fly Like A Bird</i> |
| | Repeat 4 for a total of four repetitions. | |

Movements:

The movement of the sacred Hawaiian hula dance is graceful and flowing, a language of love. During 1 and 2, the lower body is doing what is called the Hela movement. The torso is straight and the knees are bent, bringing us closer to Mother Earth. The feet alternately touch right, then left in front of the body. To do this, the leg extends straight out and the toe and ball of the foot gently touch the floor. Then the foot returns to "home." It is an even touch-step-touch-step rhythm. Hips are also moving, so as the right foot goes forward, hips swings to the left, and visa versa. There are a total of four touch-steps throughout parts 1 and 2, two per part.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
	Ho	i	ke	mai	i	ke	a-
right		together		left		together	

9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
lo				ha			
right		together		left		touch (prepare to circle around)	

1. Ho ike mai. Arms stretch outward and upward, at a diagonal in front of the body, inviting, filling up with love. Head looks up toward and beyond the hands.
2. I ke aloha. Palms face and are a few inches away from the heart. Hands are vertical, one and a half inches apart, pressing toward the heart. Look down at hands.
3. Puni ka aina. Spreading the love, dancers circle around individually counterclockwise, pivoting on left foot which is stationary. With each step of the right foot (heel meets the ground first), the hips swivel counterclockwise (to the left and around in a circle). Left hand is on the left hip, palm facing down. Right arm is fully outstretched, palm down. Subtly press down with outstretched hand four times as turning. Eyes are always looking toward and beyond the outstretched hand.

Repeat 1, 2 and 3. Spin in 3 is clockwise on the repeat, left arm outstretched.

4. Ua lele a manu. We become as the birds flying. Fingertips of each hand touch their same shoulders. Torso stretches upwards. Dancers stand tall, legs straightened. With each repetition of the phrase, arms swoop down & up, with feet doing the Kaholo movement: four complete step-togethers moving to the right, beginning with the right foot stepping right, then left joining the right foot. Hip goes toward the foot that's stepping. Gradually make the body lower through the four step-togethers.

Repeat 4 a total of four times, moving first to the right, then to the left, then right, then left again.

CREATIVE MOVEMENT VARIATION: Part 4, the “flying” part, can be done free-form, breaking the circle formation and taking the movement around the room, being sure to return to one’s original position in the circle by the end of the song.

PREMA'S VARIATION:

- 1 & 2. Feet do a simple sidestep first to the right: R - L - R - touch on "Ho ike mai ike," then to the left: L - R - L - touch on "aloha." Hands move from the heart out and return to the heart, (as described in 1 above), while moving right. The hands then repeat this motion while moving left.
3. Movements are the same as for 3 above.
4. The arm motions are the same as in 4 above. Feet do a slower version of the Hela movement, touching the ball of the foot in front of the body, first with the right just before singing "Ua", and a pulsing in place (downbeat on "lele"). Left foot touches in front on "man-" and pulses on "u." The hips sway to the opposite side of the foot being extended forward. This cycle is repeated four times.

THE STORY OF KIMO & PUA

Kimo lived in the Hawaiian Islands. He loved to play in the surf. One day, on his way to the beach, he saw his friend Pua. She was making a lei, a garland of sweet-smelling flowers. She was humming to herself. "What's that song?," Kimo said. "Oh," she said, smiling shyly, "I heard Auntie Lani singing it yesterday. It's beautiful. Let's go find her and ask her to teach us the song. And maybe she'll teach us the Hula, the sacred dance that goes with it." "Let's go!" said Kimo, and off they ran around the hibiscus hedge, under the graceful Koa trees, to the beach. They knew they would find Auntie Lani there, weaving mats in the shade of her favorite coconut tree. When she heard the children's request she laughed, and just then a school of dolphins leapt up out of the ocean behind her -- silver, shining in the sun. "That song is about aloha," she said. "It is the most important word in the Hawaiian language. It means 'I give you my breath.' That's the greatest gift we can give, because our loving thoughts and the power of our good wishes ride on our breath, our aloha. This song is also about the "aina." That means this beautiful land, the great Mother Earth and the people who live and grow upon her, the aina. So children, repeat after me. . . . Ho ike mai ike aloha puni ka aina. Pua smiled and placed the garland of flowers over Auntie Lani's head. And Auntie Lani stood up with the children before her, and they swayed their hips like the coconut palms, gentle in the sea breeze, and they moved their hands to tell the story of love, and they stepped lightly on the earth. And behind them, the dolphins leapt, silver, flashing in the sun. . .

RELATED ACTIVITIES

Make leis by stringing garlands of flowers to wear. Wear long flowing "hula" skirts. Find authentic hula music and dance improvisationally to it. Study the flora and fauna of Hawaiian islands, especially the trees, flowers and birds. See also Flower Petals, Air Element (bird activities), In My Heart, The Wind and The Waves.

SHIVA'S DRUM

Words & Melody: Traditional
Dance Originator: Philip Tansen O'Donohoe

Key of Bb Major

Bam, bam, bam, bam, Ma-ha de-va. Ha-ra, ha-ra, ha-ra, ha-ra,
Sad-ha Shi-va. Bam, bam, bam, bam, Ma-ha de-va.
Ha - ra, ha - ra, ha - ra, ha - ra, Sad-ha Shi-va.

Words:

This is a dance to Shiva, the cosmic dancer who embodies the principle of change, or “constructive destruction” in the Hindu trimurti (triple-godhead).

1. Bam, bam, bam, bam, *the sound of the damaru, Shiva's drum*
 2. Mahadeva. *Great God - another name for Shiva*
 3. Hara, Hara, Hara, Hara, *victory*
 4. Sadha Shiva. *immortal, enduring one*
- Repeat 1 - 4.
5. Bam, bam, bam, bam, Mahadeva.
 6. Bam, bam, bam, bam, Mahadeva.
 7. Hara, Hara, Hara, Hara, Sadha Shiva.
 8. Hara, Hara, Hara, Hara, Sadha Shiva.

Movements:

Define partners before beginning. Partner facing counterclockwise is partner A, partner facing clockwise is partner B.

1. Holding hands, circle moves to the right, starting with the right foot.
2. Releasing and raising hands, individually spin right.
3. Grapevine four steps to the left by stepping to the left with the left foot, then right foot steps in front, left steps left, right steps in back.
4. Release held hands and individually spin left.
Repeat 1 - 4. Then face partners.
5. Partner A skips around partner B, while B claps with the beat.
6. Partner B skips around partner A, while A claps with the beat.
7. Partners link right elbows and turn clockwise.
8. Partners link left elbows and turn counterclockwise. At the end of the turns, partners have progressed and dance begins again.

RELATED ACTIVITIES

Share images and stories of Shiva and his drum. Make drums. Have each child create their own signature rhythm, and share it in a call and response with the group. See also Rhythm Add-on and Rhythm Play-Along.

ALLELUIA

Song: Traditional Song

Dance Originators: Alima Jeanne-Joy Ross & Radha Buko

Key of G Major

G D C G

A - la - la - la - la - la - la - le - lu - ia,

C G D 1

A - la - la - la - la - le - lu - ia.

D 2 C D7 G

le - lu - ia

G D C G

9

Shake an - o - ther hand, shake a hand next to ya.

C G D 1 D7

Shake an - o - ther hand and sing this song.

D 2 Am7 D7 G

si - i - ing sing a - long.

Chorus:

1. A la la la la la le lu ia, A la la la la le lu ia.
2. A la la la la la le lu ia, A la la la la
3. La ah ah le lu
4. Ia.

Verses:

A.

5. Shake another hand, shake a hand next to ya.
Shake another hand and sing this song.
6. Shake another hand, shake a hand next to ya.
Shake another hand and
7. Sing, sing along.

B.

5. Clap another hand, clap a hand next to ya.
Clap another hand and sing this song.
6. Clap another hand, clap a hand next to ya.
Clap another hand and
7. Sing, sing along.

C.

5. Swing another hand, swing a hand next to ya.
Swing another hand and sing this song.
6. Swing another hand, swing a hand next to ya.
Swing another hand and
7. Sing, sing along.

Movements:

Begin by establishing partners and line of progression. Person behind you is your corner. The partner progression happens with one's corner.

1. Join hands in circle and step lively to the right. (Eight steps starting with the right foot.)
2. Switch direction and repeat to the left.
3. Move into the center slowly raising arms, emphasizing the upward movement of the arms together.
4. Move out from center by taking 4 steps out, while lowering arms.

The chorus gets repeated between each verse.

A.

5. Shake right hands with partner.
6. Shake right hands with corner.
7. Progress past corner and reform circle and begin chorus.

B.

5. Patty cake clap with new partner, who was your previous corner: clap own hands together, partners clap right hands, clap own hands, partners clap left hands, clap own hands, partners clap both hands and begin cycle again.
6. Patty cake clap with new corner.
7. Progress past corner and reform circle to start chorus.

C.

5. Swing with new partner joining right elbows.
6. Swing with corner in same fashion, joining left elbows.
7. Progress past corner and rejoin circle to start chorus.

End with a round or two of the chorus.

RELATED ACTIVITIES

Sing Alleluia free-style, as in Harmonic Convergence or Free Allah. See also Native American Greeting Chant (another clapping activity), African Rhythm Game, Closing Rituals for the creation of buddy-rituals that incorporate clap, shake, and swing movements.

A FLOWER BLOOMS

Words: Thich Nhat Hanh
Composer: Amrita Heather Rose
Dance Originator: Amrita Heather Rose

Key of C Major

The musical score is written in treble clef with a 3/4 time signature. It consists of several staves of music with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: "Om Om Om The mind can go in a thou-sand di-rec-tions But on this beau-ti-ful path I walk in peace With each step a gen-tle wind blows With each step a flow-er blooms. (Smell the flower) Ah (Appreciate your flower) (The) Hum". The score includes a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 3/4. The lyrics are written in a simple, sans-serif font. The music is written in a standard staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The time signature is 3/4. The lyrics are written below the staff. The score includes a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a time signature of 3/4. The lyrics are written in a simple, sans-serif font. The music is written in a standard staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The time signature is 3/4. The lyrics are written below the staff.

Words:

1. Om Om Om
2. The mind can go in a thousand directions.
But on this beautiful path I walk in peace.
With each step a gentle wind blows.
With each step a flower blooms.
3. - - - - Ah!
4. Hum

Movements:

1. Dancers gather in a circle and face clockwise. Place feet gently on the earth, stand still, and feel roots going into the earth, like a great tree. Breathe together, then the whole group sings three "Om's" to prepare for the journey.
2. As the group starts to sing the song, they also synchronize footsteps right - left - right - left. After the words "a flower blooms," come to stillness.
3. Standing still, take a moment to breathe in the essence of the flower (two measures) and then breathe out with a soft "Ah" (for four measures).

Leader says something like "Get ready to walk again." As the song begins again the group coordinates their footsteps in rhythm once again.

4. At the end of the walk while still standing still, everybody faces center and says the word "Hum" to close.

Om at the beginning symbolizes "all that is."

Ah in the middle is "each moment arises as wisdom nectar."

Hum at the end means "all experience is an offering to all beings."

SSvvaahhaaa!!

“A Flower Blooms” words by Thich Nhat Hanh, reprinted from Present Moment, Wonderful Moment: Mindfulness Verses for Daily Living by Thich Nhat Hanh © 1990. By permission of Parallax Press, Berkeley, California. All rights reserved.

See also Walking With Children, Sounding (Opening Our Voices), Sound Current, Flower Petals, Stream of Life, The Gardener and His Flowers.

IN MY HEART

Song: Florence White (1948)
Dance: Kathryn Ashera Rose & Children

Key of C Major

C F C

There's a lit - tle wheel turn - ing in my heart. There's a

F C

lit - tle wheel turn - ing in my heart. In my

F Am C G

heart, _____ in my heart, _____ There's a

C F C F C

lit - tle wheel turn - ing in my heart.

Words:

Verse A:

1. There's a little wheel turning in my heart.
2. There's a little wheel turning in my heart.
3. In my heart, in my heart,
4. There's a little wheel turning in my heart.

Verse B: There's a little light shining in my heart. . .

Verse C: There's a little song singing in my heart. . .

Movements:

The movements progress from an adult-given structure, to a child-created structure, to a freestyle partnership dance. After that we move into spontaneous expression accompanied by child-invented verses!

Verse A:

- 1&2. Group forms one large "wheel" by facing clockwise and putting right arms straight into center, touching hands. Walk in the line of direction.
3. Spin individually, feeling one's heart as alive, moving - a wheel! Start with hands crossed over the heart, then gradually open arms wide as one spins.
4. Return to the group wheel formation as in 1 & 2.

Verse B:

For this verse, we create a dance with the children, using their movements.

- a) All the children brainstorm to come up with their own movement for this verse. Do a walk in a circle, while singing through the whole verse, with everyone trying their movement.
- b) Have those who are willing share their movement, and have the group try them out.
- c) To create a dance, choose two or three movements that work well and string them together in a beautiful way. For example, do one movement for lines 1 and 2, another for line 3, and returning to the first movement or using a third movement for line 4. Try other ideas when the dance is repeated.

Verse C:

Dancers choose partners and are invited to move together freely during this verse. Leaders can model waltzing, swaying, turning and spinning together. This makes for a nice transition into the individual free movement that is coming. Threes and solos are also permissible.

Child-Created Verses:

Introduce the creating of new verses and individual free movement. You may have to seed their creativity by sharing some of your own favorites. Then children invent a new verse, everyone sings it, and everyone explores free movement to the verse. Some ideas are:

eagle soaring	wild reebok bucking	quiet lake shimmering
fireworks bursting	snowflakes falling	gentle moon rising
ocean waves leaping	million stars sparkling	rose/flower opening
great horse galloping	golden sun spinning	peaceful river flowing
tree standing	grey wolf howling	mighty oak
fierce tiger prowling	thunderstorm crashing	snow falling gently
angel praying	little kitten playing	crystal shining
fairy dancing	dolphin splashing	what's in your heart?

This dance has helped us to understand that we each have unlimited possibilities in our hearts and imaginations.

RELATED ACTIVITIES

Have children draw artwork of their images. Have them create a dance and perform it for the group, either solo or in groups. See also This Little Light of Mine, Name Games.

Grown men may learn from very little children,
for the hearts of little children are pure,
and therefore, the Great Spirit may show them
many things which older people miss.

Black Elk

EZEKIEL'S WHEEL

Song: Traditional Black American Spiritual (1856)

Dance Originator: Unknown

Key of F Major

E - ze-ki-el saw a wheel, way up in the mid-dle of the air. E -
ze-ki-el saw a wheel, up in the mid-dle of the air. A
wheel with - in a wheel, way up in the mid-dle of the air. A
wheel with - in a wheel, up in the mid-dle of the air. The
lit-tle wheel turns by faith, the big wheel turns by the grace of God. The
lit-tle wheel turns by faith, the big wheel turns by the grace of God.

This dance is an exuberant celebration of the vision Ezekiel had of God's awesome power. It gave Ezekiel the faith and zeal to continue his work of inspiring people to follow God's way.

Words:

1. Ezekiel saw a wheel, way UP in the middle of the air.
Ezekiel saw a wheel, UP in the middle of the air.
2. A wheel within a wheel, way UP in the middle of the air.
A wheel within a wheel, UP in the middle of the air.
3. The little wheel turns by faith,
4. The big wheel turns by the grace of God.

(Repeat 3 and 4.)

Movements:

Form two concentric circles. These are the two wheels. The inner circle faces out toward the outer circle. The outer circle faces inward. Hands are held within each circle.

1. All move to the right in time with the music, lifting arms on "UP".
2. All move to the left, again lifting arms on the word "UP".
3. Inner circle dancers turn in place clockwise. Outer circle is still and silent.
4. Outer circle dancers turn in place clockwise. Inner circle is still and silent.

Gradually speed up the dance until it is quite fast. Slow down for the last few repetitions.

THE STORY OF EZEKIEL

Ezekiel was a holy man who lived long ago in the land of the Israelites. He was a priest whose job was to teach the people to remember God and live in God's way. But the people were stealing, lying, cursing, worshipping idols -- and worse! They were rebellious, and they wouldn't listen to him. Ezekiel became discouraged and prayed to God for inspiration and guidance. God responded in a big way so that Ezekiel would be very energized.

In Ezekiel's vision, God opened up the heavens and gave him a look at his mighty angels, and His mighty powers. Ezekiel tells all about it in the book of Ezekiel in the Bible. It is a fantastic story that goes like this:

The hand of God was upon me, and the heavens opened up. And as I looked, behold, a stormy wind came out of the north! And a great cloud with brightness all about it! And in the midst of it a fire, flashing forth! And from out of the midst of the fire, like gleaming bronze, came four living creatures! Their wings spread out, each touching the edges of the others. They had strong legs and hooves like a calf's, and they sparkled like gleaming bronze. And above their heads there was a shining crown (firmament), like crystal. Each had the face of a man, the face of a lion, the face of an ox, and the face of an eagle. And when they moved their wings, I heard the sound of wings like the sound of many waters, like the thunder of the Almighty. And when they stood still, they let down their wings.

Now the living creatures, when they moved, each went straight forward, wherever the spirit would lead them, they went, without turning as they went. And they were like torches of light, for in their midst they were like burning coals of fire, and flashes of that light burst from them, like lightning. And from above them came a voice from the throne of God. When God spoke to them, the creatures stood still, and they let down their wings and listened.

And they each had a wheel beside them, turning, and the wheels were alive with the spirit of the creatures. Each wheel was a wheel within a wheel; it had rims and spokes; and the rims were full of eyes round about. And the wheels were gleaming like crystal.

And when the living creatures went, the wheels went beside them; and when the living creatures rose from the earth, the wheels rose. Wherever the spirit would go, they went, and the wheels rose along with them. When one stood, the other stood, and when one went, the other went.

CREATIVE MOVEMENT EXPERIENCES

“Now, as you can see, it would be great fun to enact each part of the story as we tell it. Let’s get ready by practicing each part in advance.”

Note: Below are some seed thoughts to get the group creative process going, but children’s ideas should be tried and incorporated as much as possible. During the initial “brainstorming,” let everyone try all the parts. Then, if the children want to choose individual parts to play for the telling of the whole story - great!

stormy wind	<i>become the sound & movement of wind</i>
great cloud	<i>group forms soft, moving, radiant cloud</i>
burning fire	<i>dart, leap, flash!, crash, rumble</i>
four creatures	<i>do walks, focusing on each aspect; create multi-child creatures; try props, masks, costumes & sound effects</i>
the creatures and the wheels	<i>partnering: take turns being creature and the wheel; the wheel mirrors the movements of the creature as it is still, rises, and zooms around the space</i>

Start with the words of the story to narrate the children’s enactment.

Notice the children’s fresh ideas for everyone to try.

Repeat the story several times with variations and experiments.

Talk about what it all means.

RELATED ACTIVITIES

Explore the way in which other spiritual traditions use the symbol of the wheel.

See also Your Creative Kit, Creative Movement, Storytelling, Fire Element, The Wind, Prayer Wheel, Sound Machine, I Am A Mirror of You, Follow the Sound, Cars.

“A wheel was shone to me, wonderful to behold...
Divinity is in its omniscience and omnipotence like a wheel, a circle, a whole,
that can neither be understood, nor divided, nor begun nor ended.”

Hildegard of Bingen

BE NICE TO CAMELS

Composer, Dance Originator: Sarmad Barry Bernstein
& the Shining Heart Sufi Community

Key of C Minor

Cm Fm Cm G Cm
Be nice to cam - els, They are real - ly neat.

Cm Fm Cm G7 Cm
Be nice to cam - els, 'Cause they have big feet.

Cm Fm Cm Fm G
Walk - ing to - geth - er in a car - a - van,

Cm Fm Cm Fm Cm
Liv - ing to - geth - er, ly - ing in the sand.

Cm Bb Cm Bb Cm Bb Cm
Hu Al - lah Hu Al - lah Hu Al - lah Hu.

<p>Verse 1: Be nice to camels, They are really neat. Be nice to camels, 'Cause they have big feet. Walking together, In a caravan, Living together, Lying in the sand.</p>	<p>Verse 3: Camels come in sizes, One hump or two. Walking through the desert, They will carry you. On long legs they travel, Walking in the sun. Swaying together, Moving Toward the One. Hu Allah Hu Allah Hu Allah Hu.</p>
<p>Verse 2: Mohammed loves camels, Feeds them every day. He rides his camels To places far away. At night in the desert, They will keep him warm. Lying together, Sheltered from the storm. Hu Allah Hu Allah Hu Allah Hu.</p>	<p>Verse 4: Be nice to camels, They are really neat. Be nice to camels, 'Cause they have big feet. On long legs they travel, Walking in the sun. Swaying together, Moving Toward the One.</p>

Chorus:

Hu Allah Hu Allah Hu Allah Hu

You might want to teach each verse in a call and response manner as a “rap” -- rhythmically speaking each line and having the group repeat it in time with a drum beat you provide. After they have mastered the words, add the melody. For the following Dance, the first and third verses only are used.

Dance:

Participants take hands in the circle, then turn to face the line of direction, clockwise for the first verse, counterclockwise for the second. Hands are held loosely so that when one is facing clockwise, one’s right hand is in front of one, and one’s left hand is behind one, like a camel’s tail. Thus we imagine ourselves as a caravan, all interconnected in a chain.

During the verses, we walk in a moderate tempo, stepping with the right foot on “Be” and the left foot on “cam” of camels. With each step, the upper body bends forward and back, in a bobbing motion. The knees straighten as one bends forward, and the knees bend as one’s upper torso

returns to upright. The head is extended slightly forward with the chin jutting out as one bobs down and up to imitate the slow bouncing motion of the camel.

During the chorus, everyone stands in place facing the center of circle, holding hands. The upper body dips diagonally to the left (Hu) and returns to center (Allah), then right (Hu), and center (Allah) and so on, to the rhythm of the zikr.

After some repetitions, the group sings “Moving Toward The One” continually as they break up into smaller caravans, strings of several people holding hands and walking like camels, as above. The group “snakes” randomly around the room, intersecting (cutting through the middle of) with other caravans, spiraling in and out of itself. The leader then calls out to re-form one circle. At this point, the leader may choose to have the group simply sidestep to the right as they hold hands and sing. The chant softens as the group prepares to end.

We invite you to explore some of these other creative ideas as well.

- A. Imagine you are in the desert. Feel the desert wind, the sand running through your fingers. Imagine the cool night with the stars overhead. As the sun gradually rises over the dunes, prepare to journey to your next destination.
- B. Get into camels! Look at pictures, sculpt camels, read a story, learn some interesting facts. Make a multi-person camel creature. (Think of Chinese Dragons.) Walk like camels. Make camel sounds.
- C. Learn about Mohammed. Read stories of his life. Do the walk of Mohammed. Imagine him walking in the desert.
- D. Dress up as middle-eastern people, using fabrics, scarves, cords.
- E. Belly dance. (See Belly Dancing.) Dance with scarves and veils for added effect.
- F. Play along with rhythm instruments. Move around while playing them.
- G. Create a caravan of love - with a destination, or not! Go on a journey through the desert. Discover an oasis. Take turns leading the caravan. (One way to create a caravan is to give each child a scarf, then have them link into a continuous chain by giving one end of their scarf to someone else. The line/caravan then snakes around the space.)

See also Your Creative Kit, Creative Movement, Storytelling,
Belly Dancing, Character Walks (Storytelling).

This song is dedicated to and inspired by my beloved guide, Murshida Vera Corda. While living in California in the mid 80's I was able to receive Murshida's Children's Universal Worship transmission. Spending time around her house I also learned that she had a love for camels.

Sarmad Barry Bernstein

I Open My Eyes To You, Kathryn Ashera Rose © 2013 ~ Page 96

'TIS A GIFT TO BE SIMPLE

Composer: Shaker Alfred Ministry (1848) Counterpoint Music: Clif Hardin & K. Ashera Rose

Dance Originator: Murshid Samuel Lewis Counterpoint Dance: Kathryn Ashera Rose

Key of E Major

The musical score is written for piano and voice. It features a treble and bass clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 4/4 time signature. The music is divided into four systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The lyrics are: "'Tis a gift to be simple, 'tis a gift to be free. 'Tis a gift to come down where we want to be. And when we have come down to the place just right, We will be in the valley of love and delight." The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and bar lines. Chord symbols (E, B, B7, A) are placed above the piano part. The lyrics are placed below the vocal line.

E

'Tis a gift to be sim-ple, 'tis a gift to be free. 'Tis a

'Tis a gift, 'Tis a gift, 'Tis a

B B7

gift to come down where we want to be. And

gift, 'Tis a gift, 'Tis a

E

when we have come do - wn to the place ju - st right, We will

gift, 'Tis a gift, 'Tis a

B7 E A E

be in the val - ley of love and de-light.

gift, 'Tis a gift, 'Tis a

E

When the true sim - pli - ci - ty is gained, To
gi - ft. 'Tis a gi - ft, 'Tis a

B B7

bow and to bend we shan't be a - shamed. To
gi - ft, 'Tis a gi - ft. To

E

turn, to turn, 'twill be our de - light, 'Till by
turn, to turn, to turn, to turn, 'Till by

F#m B7 | 1 E A E | 2 E A E

turn-ing and turn-ing we come 'round right. 'Tis a come 'round right.
turn-ing and turn-ing we come 'round right. 'Tis a come 'round right.

ORIGINAL DANCE - OUTER CIRCLE

The outer circle dance is an original dance of Murshid Samuel Lewis and is a favorite of children of all ages. Adding the inner circle counterpoint is surprisingly challenging and is best done after

mastering the original song and dance. This may take more than one session. The pause at the end is important: it helps to maintain the unity and integrity of the group.

Words:

1. 'Tis a gift to be simple, 'tis a gift to be free,
2. 'Tis a gift to come down where we want to be.
3. And when we have come down to the place just right,
We will be in the valley of
4. Love and delight.
5. When the true simplicity is gained,
6. To bow and to bend we shan't be ashamed.
7. To turn, to turn, t'will be our delight,
'Til by turning and turning
8. We come round right.

Movements:

1. All join hands in a circle and skip to the right.
2. All kneel, continuing to hold hands.
3. While kneeling, place hands on shoulders of those on either side and sway from side to side, beginning on the right side.
4. Place both hands over the heart on "love" and open arms wide on "delight."
5. All stand, join hands and skip to the right.
6. "Bow and bend" in rhythm with the music.
7. Spin individually to the right.
8. All move in toward the center of the circle with arms around shoulders or waist of persons on both sides and pause briefly.
Dance begins again.

COUNTERPOINT - INNER CIRCLE DANCE

The inner circle dance expresses the enthusiasm of the Shaker children, and the discipline with which they often marched to their daily activities. Their marches symbolized the "souls trip to heaven." The hand movements reflect the Shaker maxim, "Hands to work, hearts to God."

1. 'Tis a gift, 'Tis a gift,
2. 'Tis a gift, 'Tis a gift,
3. 'Tis a gift, 'Tis a gift,
4. 'Tis a gift,
5. 'Tis a gift.
6. 'Tis a gift, 'Tis a gift,

7. 'Tis a gift, 'Tis a gift,
8. To turn, to turn, to turn, to turn,
9. 'Til by turning and turning we come round right.

Inner circle faces the line of direction, moving clockwise with a lively marching step, lifting knees high. Right foot steps first on "Gi-", left foot on "-i-" and right again "-ift" (quarter note beats) and the march continues through movement 5.

1. Arms are straight, lowered into a V shape, palms down. (hands to work)
2. Arms are raised up in a V shape. (hearts to God)
3. All face center and march in four steps, hands connecting in a basketweave around the circle. (Open hands outward and hold hands with those on either side one person over.) March in place for four counts.
4. Still holding hands, raise arms in a V.
5. Arms are lowered. If the group is able, duck under arms and lower them behind backs, creating a group hug.

Progressions are optional for the following partner movements (6, 7, & 8). Younger/less experienced dancers will do best without progressions. Older/more experienced participants will enjoy them.

6. Turning to partner, hold right hands together, raising them to eye level between you. Circle clockwise together, in a slow, stately skip (not fast -- step hop step hop for each 'Tis A Gift. Appreciate the gifts this friend has and that you share together.
7. Continue with same partner in same direction, or if ready for greater challenge, take left hands and circle counterclockwise.
8. Turn clockwise with partner, right elbows linked. Feet are stepping quickly, knees are relaxed to "ground" the energy of the spin, which can be quite quick.
9. All spin individually, being aware to arrive in the circle in one's correct spot, slowing down to face center and take hands on "come round right."
Dance begins again as dancers turn to face the line of direction.

Variation for all ages: At the leader's discretion, parts 6 through 8 open up into spontaneous dancing. In the style of the Shakers, at a "quick" meeting, there might be leaping, skipping, hopping, turning and shaking with spirit!

MORE SHAKER BACKGROUND

The Shakers were early American communities that believed in creating heaven on earth. They were very orderly, hardworking, spiritfuf people. They lived in large "families", women separate from men, children separate from parents! They loved singing, dancing, and praying.

Another interpretation of “simple gifts” are those gifts of the spirit that the Shakers believe are given to each of us. Children were encouraged to follow their gifts, or spiritual promptings. They believed in creating heaven on earth, and that our divine gifts and revelations should be a part of everyday life.

Indeed, the Shakers came up with many inspired inventions, including the circular saw, the washing machine, clothespins, and water repellent clothing. They welcomed innovation because it made more time for prayer!

The early Shakers had many “quick meetings.” These were times when they would spontaneously sing, dance, leap and shake. This was called a “Shaker high.” They would spin individually and together, at times collapsing on the floor. They had many revelations, or visions during these meetings, when they believe they saw heaven, or heard the voices of angels. Later, their dances became very intricate and choreographed. They would practice at all times of the day, indoors and out, so as to learn them well. But even then, they would occasionally “quicken” and it would become inspired pandemonium.

SHAKER MEALTIME: Ask the children to describe their mealtimes, especially dinnertime, at home. Some may eat in front of the television, or heat up their own plate in the microwave. Then imagine this: At the sound of a bell, the Shaker children marched in lines into their dining room, where they knelt behind their chairs for a few minutes of silent prayer. On signal, and following their leader, they sat tall and straight, eating everything on their plates in silence. They had plenty of delicious food to eat, but always had to finish everything they took. Then they had to “shaker their plates,” which meant wiping the plate clean with bread and arranging their silverware neatly when they were done. This was because they believed that they were in heaven (on earth), and therefore everything should be in perfect order.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: You might be able to find the following, or other good books, in a local library.

Shaker Children: True Stories and Crafts, Kathleen Thorne-Thomsen, Chicago Review Press, 1996.

Shaker Hearts, Ann Turner, Harper Collins, 1997.

RELATED ACTIVITIES

Begin the circle by asking each child to contemplate what their special “gifts” are, such as a talent for sports or a loving attitude. Have them share one such gift with the group. See Name Games for some creative ideas on how to do this.

ALLAH HAYY

Composer: Allaudin Ottinger
Dance Originator: Allaudin Ottinger

Key of G Minor

Al - lah, Al-lah Al - lah Al - lah, Al - lah, Al - lah, Al - lah.

Al - lah, Al-lah Al - lah Al - lah, Al - lah, Al - lah, Al - lah.

Hayy! Hayy! Hayy! Hayy! Hu _____
("Hayy!" is spoken)

Words:

1. Allah, Allah Allah Allah,
2. Allah, Allah, Allah.
Repeat 1 and 2 for 4x total.
3. Hayy! Hayy! Hayy! Hayy!
4. Hu-u-u-u
5. Silence (pause)

Movements:

- 1&2. All take hands in the circle. Circle steps to the right for the first two cycles of 1 and 2. Circle then steps to the left for the next two cycles.
3. Take four strong steps into the center, raising held hands higher with each step.
4. Dancers spin out clockwise individually, moving out from the center to reform the circle. Note: the duration of this phrase may be extended upon the leader's discretion.
5. Silent pause, then inbreath as a group in preparation to begin again. This pause may last one beat, four, or longer. The lifting of the head and inbreath of the leader signals the group to begin with him/her.

This dance is highly energizing, so it is important that the leader maintain an even tempo, speeding it up very gradually if at all.

Optional: Have the girls/women sing 1 and the boys/men sing 2.

ANIMAL CRACKERS VARIATION

Everything praises God, even the creatures in their own way. The children of the Charlottesville, Virginia community came up with this variation, which they encourage you to try!

1. Woof, woof, woof, woof, woof, woof, woof.
2. Meow, meow, meow.
Repeat this cycle 4x total.
3. Hayy! Hayy! Hayy! Hayy!
4. Hu-u-u-u
5. Silence (pause)

The sounds of different creatures may be substituted for 1 and 2. Dance can remain the same, or animal movements substituted on 1 and 2.

See also Ya Hu!, *Opening Our Voices*, Free Allah.

All creatures have their moment of joy, and one can hear this in their voices, in their song, but its greatest expression is in their dance. To nearly all animals there come moments when the spirit moves within them, and they respond by dancing.

Paraphrased from Pir-O-Murshid Hazrat Inayat Khan

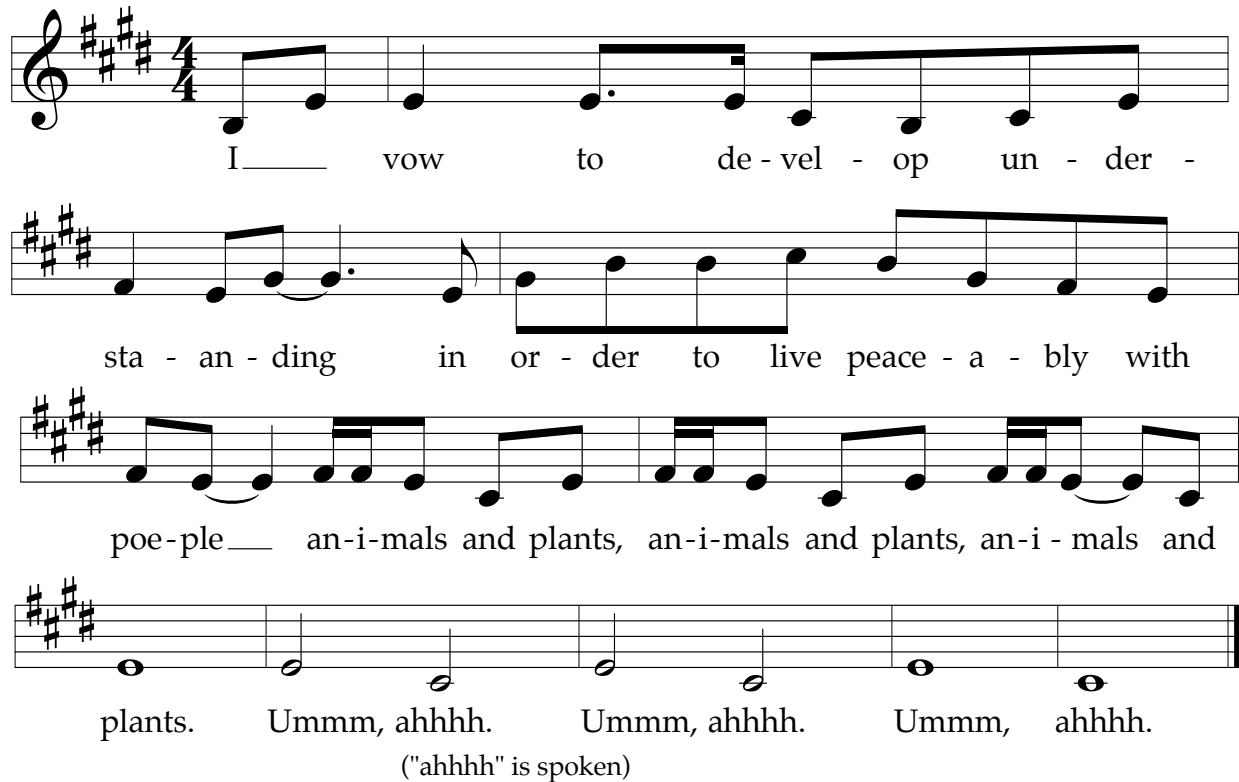
CHILDREN'S VOWS

Words: Thich Nhat Hanh

Music: Betsy Rose

Dance: Darvesha Victoria MacDonald

Key of E
A capella



I _____ vow to de - vel - op un - der -
sta - an - ding in or - der to live peace - a - bly with
poe - ple _____ an - i - mals and plants, an - i - mals and plants, an - i - mals and
plants. Ummm, ahhhh. Ummm, ahhhh. Ummm, ahhhh.
("ahhhh" is spoken)

These vows have been adapted from the “Two Promises” made by young children with the Buddha, as set forth in Interbeing: Fourteen Guidelines for Engaged Buddhism, Third Edition (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1998) by Thich Nhat Hanh. The lyrics were developed in Plum Village, a community and retreat center founded by Thich Nhat Hanh in Southern France, for children attending summer family retreats. Every week children gather to take these vows. At the beginning, they are asked to reflect on their activities during the week, and to consider in what ways they have been able to offer compassion and understanding to people, animals and plants. They do not have to respond verbally, but in their hearts and minds they account to themselves. Then they take the vows for the following week.

These vows were set to music by American composer Betsy Rose. This piece is featured on her album "In My Two Hands."

Words:

Verse I:

1. I vow
2. To develop
3. Understanding,
4. In order to live peaceably with
5. People,
6. Animals and plants, animals and plants, animals and plants.

Verse II:

1. I vow
2. To develop
3. Compassion,
4. In order to protect the lives of
5. People,
6. Animals and plants, animals and plants, animals and plants.
7. Ummm, Ahhhh.
8. Ummm, Ahhhh.
9. Ummmmmm, Ahhhhhh.

Movements:

1. All stand facing the center of the circle, bodies relaxed. Hands are back to back, pointed downward toward the earth at hara level. Hands begin to rise.
2. Hands continue rising, back to back. When they reach the heart level, they begin to rotate inwardly, toward the body, pointing toward the heart, and then they continue the rotation, facing outward, where they begin to stretch outward in an expansive gesture, which continues into the spin of #3.
3. All spin individually to the right, palms continuing to face outward, arms spreading, radiating understanding and compassion.
4. Facing the center of the circle, turn hands over to face the earth, and bring them down from above the head to the heart level, in the blessing mudra, with the intention of bestowing peace and protection.
5. Bring palms together at the heart level and bow. (Namaste mudra)
6. Take hands with the circle and walk to the right for the entire phrase.

Repeat 1-6. The movements are the same, but the second time, the word “compassion” is substituted for “understanding,” and the word "protect" is substituted for "to live peaceably." After movements 1 through 6 have been done both ways, then continue to one cycle of 7 through 9. The movement repeated for each of the three “ummm ahhhh’s” is the Tai Chi movement "Return to Mountain."

7. At the beginning and end of the cycle, the knees are fully bent and hands are at hara level. The palms are facing down throughout this whole movement. On "Ummm," the hands begin rising up, until they are held out horizontally at shoulder level, away from the body. During this part the knees slowly straighten.

On the "Ahhhhhhh," the hands, which have now reached shoulder level, are drawn toward the body, and then allowed to float downward, until they are again at hara level, having completed a circle. The knees slowly bend again.

8. Same as 7.

9. Same movement as in 7 & 8, but the duration of the phrase is twice as long.

The entire cycle can be done repeatedly.

RELATED ACTIVITIES

Give each child an empty canister, can or box. These can be collected from home by the parents with some advance notice. Have the children decorate the containers with pictures of animals, plants and people, either drawn or cut out from magazines, etc. Each week, ask the children to write down an act of kindness or protection that they did, or to draw a picture representing some act of kindness or protection, and put it in the box. They may create more than one. Periodically, have them take out the slips of paper and tell the story of each one. Have them share their stories with others. The children can take these home and continue to fill them with their kind actions. Call them Kindness Containers, or Bodhisattva Boxes, or Heart Gatherings.

See also A Flower Blooms (words of Thich Nhat Hanh),
Flower Petals, Stream of Life

It is time for elders to listen to the child's voice. You see,
in the child's mind there is no demarcation of different nations,
no demarcation of different social systems of ideology.
Children know in their minds they are the same,
and that all human beings are the same.

The Dalai Lama

I Open My Eyes To You, Kathryn Ashera Rose © 2013 ~ Page 106

GIRIDHARA GOPALA

& the story “The Lifting of Mount Govardan”

Words & Music: Traditional Krishna Bhajan
 Dance: Prema Dasara & Anahata Iradah
 Story: Prema Dasara

Key of D Major

Go - var - dha - na Gi - ri - dhar - i,

Na - ta - va - ra Nan - da La__ La Na - ta - va - ra Nan - da La__

La Hey Gi - ri - dha - ra Go - pa - la.

la. Hey Gi - ri - dha - ra Go - pa - la, Hey

Gi - ri - dha - ra Go - pa - la, Hey

Gi - ri - dha - ra Go - pa - la. Hey la.

Words:

When first teaching this song, we substitute the syllable “la” for the words. We gradually phase in the Sanskrit phrases as the melody is assimilated.

1. Govardhana Giridhari, Natavara Nanda La La. (2x)
- 2(a). Natavara Nanda La La,
- 2(b). Hey Giridhara Gopala.
Repeat 2.
3. Hey Giridhara Gopala, Hey Giridhara Gopala,
4. Hey Giridhara Gopala.
Repeat 3 & 4.

Advanced Dance (Original):

1. Linking elbows in the circle, head turns to the same direction as feet. Right heel is struck at diagonal, right toe is struck by side of left foot, left foot strikes to complete movement to the rhythm of tea-coffee. The same movement is then repeated with the right heel striking in front of body instead of diagonal. Alternate between these movements until end of phrase when the right heel strikes out in front, followed by the right foot then left foot closing as our own hands clap together twice. This is done to the rhythm of “tea, tea, tea, rest.” All of these movements are repeated on the left side. They sound more complicated than they are! Once or twice demonstrated correctly will ordinarily allow the group to model the movements. If some individuals do not get it perfectly, we always put it down to Krishna Lila -- the play of Krishna.
 - 2a. Face partners, link right elbows and spin right, looking at partner with laughter and joy. Left hands shake up in the air, in “joy Mudra.” On beats 7 and 8, clap both hands with partners’ and prepare to turn left.
 - 2b. Face partners, link left elbows and repeat above movements, spinning left. On beats 7 and 8 clap both hands with partners’. Return to original position at end (no progression).
Note: In this advanced version, there are twice as many sets of claps and reversals of direction with one’s partner as in the simplified version. Otherwise the movements for 2a and 2b are identical to 2 (simplified).
 3. Hold hands in circle, walk in joyfully raising arms, and on beats 6 and 7 clap own hands. Walk out lowering arms and clapping as above on beats 6 and 7.
 4. Right hand person of partnership takes the hands of Dancer on left and swings them around in front of them, placing them in the circle on the other side.
- 3 and 4 repeat, and at the end of the Dance, they may repeat more than once. Each time, the progression of partners happens.

Simplified Dance:

1. Dancers link elbows in the circle, and dance lightly to the right. On the repeat, reverse direction, dancing to the left. For added challenge, the head can turn quickly to the right and left, matching the foot being stepped on.
2. Face partners, link right elbows and spin right, looking at partner with laughter and joy. Left hands shake up in the air, in “joy Mudra.” After singing “Gopala,” clap both hands twice with partner’s and prepare to turn left. On the repeat, reverse directions, linking left elbows and spinning left. End with two quick claps. Return to original position at end (no progression).
3. Hold hands in circle, walk in joyfully raising arms, and on beats 6 and 7 clap own hands (the space after “LA”). Walk out lowering arms and clapping as above on beats 6 and 7.
4. Dancers spin or free dance in place, ending by facing center, ready to link elbows/take hands and begin the dance again.

After all, what is God?
An eternal Child playing an eternal game in the eternal garden.

Aurobindo Ghose

THE LIFTING OF MOUNT GOVARDAN

The Great Lord of the Universe, Lord Narayana, was asked to rescue Mother Earth one more time. Her forests were ragged, her streams polluted, and her children were always fighting, thinking only of themselves. He decided that this time, if he had to leave his Paradise for Earth, he was going to have a good time doing it. He incarnated as Krishna, the charming cowherd boy. No one in the village Brindavan knew that he was the Great Lord Narayana. He was so mischievous, but everyone loved him anyway.

The cowherd folk of Brindavan were having a meeting discussing the upcoming festival - the offerings to Indra, God of the Rain. They were all talking about their offerings when Krishna strolled up and tried to persuade them against making any offerings at all. He said that Indra was becoming too greedy, and too proud, and all the people of Earth were following his behavior. The townspeople would not hear of it, and chased him out of the meeting.

The next day was a beautiful day, and the cowherd folk gathered for the festival. They started moving toward Mt. Govardan in a wonderful procession, carrying all of their offerings. Krishna made himself invisible. A couple of young girls were sitting in a bullock cart, talking. Krishna pinched one. "Oooh!" Then when she howled, he pinched the other. "Oooh!" And when they started fighting, he smacked the bullock on the rump and they took off with the girls, upsetting everyone in the procession. Krishna shouted out, "Indra has a face like a juicy tomato!" Indra got so mad that he called for his thunderbolts, and he unleashed a furious storm upon the villagers. Everyone was miserable. Things were looking terrible. Krishna became visible, and suddenly everyone thought he was the reason for all of the problems and began booing and hissing. So he ran over to a gopher hole, and he stuck his hand into the gopher hole, and he picked up the whole mountain! He held it over his head, and he called the villagers to come underneath and get out of the rain. Once they were there, they decided to have a good time. So they began singing and dancing.

Indra was in a really bad mood. He couldn't fit under the mountain and join the party. He was tired of throwing thunderbolts and making the rain pour down. So he sat down on a rock. The sun came out! Krishna put down the mountain, and the villagers strolled off, enjoying the sunshine. The frogs jumped about, the deer pranced, and the ducks splashed in the puddles. Peacocks danced. Krishna sat down next to Indra and looked at him and said, "Serves you right, tomato head." Indra jumped up, face purple, and Krishna said, "All because of your foolish greed and pride." In that instant, Indra suddenly realized just who that Krishna really was.

I OPEN MY EYES TO YOU

Composer: Unknown
Dance Originator: Unknown

Key of Eb Major

I o - pen my eyes to you. I
o - pen my heart to you. To - ge - ther we raise our
hearts to the sun. And to - ge - ther we are
o - pen - ing our lo - ving hearts as one.

Words:

1. I open my eyes to you.
2. I open my heart to you.
3. Together we raise our hearts to the sun.
4. And together we are opening
5. Our loving hearts
6. As one.

Movements:

Form a circle. All face a partner, establishing lines of progression. Eyes are closed and hands cover the eyes. This is a moment of anticipation when children might think of opening their eyes to a wonderful surprise - a special present, a long-lost friend or loved one.

1. Eyes open and gaze at partner in wonder as the hands are slowly removed.
2. Hands open from the heart center out, feeling a communion of hearts with one's partner.
3. Arms relax down, palms facing out. Touch palms lightly to partners and open arms together up and around, creating a big sun-sphere. End with hands up to the sky.
4. Make a half-turn with partner.
5. Hands cross over one's heart.
6. Bow to partner, hands still on heart.

Cover eyes before turning around to next partner, preparing to begin again.

DANCE EXTENSIONS

This dance can be used as a tool for healing our hearts in relationship to others and ourselves. Dancers face into the center. They dance with the "partners within our hearts" described below.

Imagine a loved one who is not here with you now. Do the Dance with them, sending them light-love energy.

Imagine someone who has been close to you but with whom there has been strong tension. Or someone you find very difficult to love. Dance the Dance with them.

Imagine your own image before you, as in a mirror, or in the mirror of the heart. Feel into those parts of yourself that have not yet fully opened to the light and are most distressed. Now sing the song to yourself, shining the radiance of your heart where the healing is most needed.

Dancers turn so that they are facing out from the circle. Sing to and dance with the world-at-large, sending out radiance and love.

End by facing into the circle and opening to all in the circle. Hands are held and raised together on 3. Individually spin on 4. Bow to all on 6.

These wonderful dance extensions were created by Jeanne Ayesha Lauenborg.

See also *I Am A Mirror of You!*, *Cherokee Greeting Ritual*, *Closing Rituals*.

I see God in the eyes of every child.

Mother Teresa

ROCK-A-MY-SOUL

Composer: Traditional Black American Spiritual (1830)
Dance Originator: Early San Francisco Dance Community

Key of C Major

C



Rock - a my soul in the bo - som of A - bra-ham.

G7



Rock - a my soul in the bo - som of A - bra-ham.

Rock - a my soul in the bo - som of A - bra-ham.

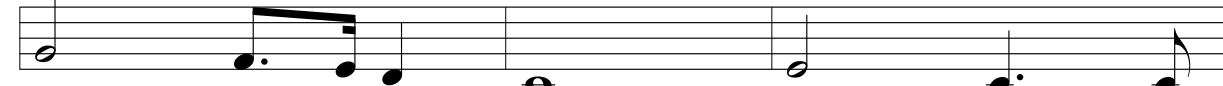
C



Rock - a my soul in the bo - som of A - bra-ham.

Rock - a my soul in the bo - som of A - bra-ham.

G7 C



Oh, rock - a my soul. So high, you

Oh, rock - a my soul. So high, you

G7



can't get o - ver it, So low, you

can't get o - ver it, So low, you

C



can't get un - der it, So wide, you

can't get un - der it, So wide, you

G G7 C



can't get a - rou - nd it, You've got - ta go in through the door.

can't get a - rou - nd it, You've got - ta go in through the door.

Words:

1. Rock-a-my-soul in the bosom of Abraham,
Rock-a-my-soul in the bosom of Abraham,
Rock-a-my-soul in the bosom of Abraham,
Oh, rock-a-my-soul.
2. So high you can't get over it,
3. So low you can't get under it,
4. So wide you can't get around it,
5. You've gotta go in through the door.

Movements:

1. Form a circle holding hands. Rock back and forth, stepping first to the right and then to the left in time with the music. Sing freely and joyously.
2. Holding hands, stretch high.
3. Still holding hands, bend down low.
4. Expand circle to its widest.
5. All move into the center.

This dance can be led without giving any advance instructions. Simply modeling the movement may suffice.

VARIATIONS

Try whispering and tiptoeing into the center on 5.

If a small child is in between two adults in the circle, they can lift him/her gently on 2.

RELATED ACTIVITIES

Abraham is called the father of three religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Through his willingness to follow the will of God, he was given many graces. Tell the story of Abraham, do the walk of Abraham, Sarah and his son. Talk about making sacrifices, tangible and not-so-tangible. Create family trees.

See Rhythm Play-Along, Walking With Children, Storytelling/Character Walks

HAPPINESS RUNS

Composer: Donovan Phillips Leitch

Dance Variation I: Unknown/Early Boston Dance Community

Dance Variation II: Jeanne Ross and Radha Buko

Key of A Major

D A E7 A

Hap - pi - ness runs in a cir - cu - lar mo - tion.

D A E7 A

Life is like a lit - tle boat up - on the sea.

D A E7 A

Ev - ery - bo - dy is a part of ev - ery-thing an - y way.

D A E7 A

You can be hap - py if you let your-self be.

D A E A

Why oh? _____ Be - cause!

Words:

1. Happiness runs in a circular motion.
2. Life is like a little boat upon the sea.
3. Everybody is a part of everything anyway.
4. You can be happy if you let yourself be.
5. Why - oh? Because! Why - oh? Because!

As happens in an evolving folk tradition, there are many dance variations that have developed for this lively song. Here are two to consider.

VARIATION I:

Movements:

1. Group holds hands in a circle. Run lightly counterclockwise.
2. Still holding hands, sway deeply to the R (life is like) - L (a little boat) - R (upon the) -L (sea).
3. Continuing to hold hands, the group steps backward, stretching the circle out BIG. Be aware of the whole circle and the feeling of expansiveness.
4. All move into toward center while expressing happiness in spontaneous improvisational ways. (Small jumps, clapping, bouncing, hugging, etc.) OR all walk toward center, bringing arms around shoulders for a group hug.
5. Body language speaks the “WHY OH?” Hands open wide in front of body above shoulders, shoulders are “shrugged,” head slightly tilted to one side.
6. Jump backward twice quickly while clapping hands twice on “Be” and “cause.”
Repeat 5 & 6.

VARIATION II:

Movements:

Establish partners and line of progression.

1. Hold hands in circle and move with lively steps or skipping to the right.
2. Release held hands and everyone turns individually around towards the right, swaying hands, palms down, imitating a boat rocking in the water.
3. Rejoin hands in circle and swing arms to the beat of the music. Simple variation is to stand still while swinging arms. More advanced variation is to walk to the right while swinging arms.
4. Join hands with partner and exchange places, reforming circle. Advanced variation is to turn with partner one and a half times around. Partners have now progressed and will have a new partner the next time through.
5. Step touch to the side beginning with right foot - left touch, then step left - right touch ready to go back the other way. This is done a total of 8 step-touches.

The Dance may end by singing extra rounds of “Why - oh? Because!” with a final emphatic BECAUSE!!! If there are sufficient numbers to have two concentric circles, the song/dance can be done as a round coming in at line 3, ending with both circles singing the “Why - Oh? Because!” together.

THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE

Traditional Gospel Song // Dance Originator: Kathryn Rose

Key of F Major

F F7

This lit-tle light of mine, I'm gon-na let it shine.

This lit-tle light of mine, I'm gon-na let it shine.

This lit-tle light of mine, I'm gon-na let it shine.

B \flat F

This lit - tle light of mine, I'm gon-na let it shine.

This lit - tle light of mine, I'm gon-na let it shine.

This lit - tle light of mine, I'm gon-na let it shine.

Dm

This lit - tle light of mine, I'm gon-na let it shine. Let it

This lit - tle light of mine, I'm gon-na let it shine. Let it

This lit - tle light of mine, I'm gon-na let it shine. Let it

F C B \flat Dm F
 shine, Let it shine, Let it shine.
 shine, Let it shine, Let it shine.
 shine, Let it shine, Let it shine.

Words:

1. This little light of mine,
2. I'm gonna let it shine.
3. This little light of mine,
4. I'm gonna let it shine.
5. This little light of mine,
6. I'm gonna let it shine.
7. Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine.

Verse 2: Everywhere I go,

Verse 3: From my heart to yours,

Verse 4: Building peace around the world,

The group may return to the initial verse to complete the cycle.

Movements:

All take hands in the circle.

1. Circle moves to the right.
2. Releasing hands, all turn in place clockwise with arms raised.
3. Rejoin hands and move to the left.
4. Releasing hands, all turn in place counter-clockwise with arms raised.
5. Holding hands in the circle, all walk toward the center, raising hands slowly.
6. Releasing hands, all spin out clockwise individually, returning to circle formation.
7. Each dancer improvises their own movement, expressing their individuality.

The subsequent verses all maintain the same walking pattern and the improvisation on line 7. However, they have the following variations:

Verse 2: Everywhere I go,

Movements are identical to verse 1.

Verse 3: From my heart to yours,

Each time this phrase is sung, the hands move from the heart out toward the group. (Hands are never held within the circle in this verse.)

Verse 4: Building peace around the world,

Each time this phrase is sung, hands, held in the circle, are slowly raised, feeling the strength of each individual and the solidarity of working together.

VARIATIONS

When the group is comfortable with the song and the basic format of the Dance, at the leader's discretion, improvise verses that suit the group, calling them out just before the verse begins. Leader should be sure to use some examples drawn from the group's experiences, or let members of the group come up with the verse, especially "the times when it is most difficult to shine." Some examples are:

"Right here in (name of town, state, or country) . . ."

"Even when I'm feeling sad,"

"When my brother makes me mad,"

Movement may stay standard as in Verse 1, or be created by the group.

RELATED ACTIVITIES

Go around the circle, having everyone share their name and one way in which they shine. This is a variation of the Name Game, as in, "My name is Charles and I shine when I am playing the violin." Or "I am Mary and I shine when I am loving my little sister." These "shining times" may be expressed through movements that the group mirrors back to the sharer while chanting their name.

Repeat the go-around the circle, sharing when it is hardest to shine.

See also Ya Hu!, Liquid Sunshine, Name Game, In My Heart.

THE RIVER IS FLOWING

Composer: Traditional Folk Song
Dance Originator: Vasudeva Kirbiatiev

Key of F Minor

The ri - ver is flo - ow - ing, Flow - ing and gro - ow - ing. The
Ri - ver is flo - ow - ing, Down to the sea.
Mo - ther, car - ry me, Your child I will al - ways be.
Fa - ther, car - ry me, Down to the sea. sea.

This dance celebrates the ever-flowingness of life, and the joy of surrendering to the source. Along the way we experience the friendship and love of those who travel with us.

Words:

The river is flowing,
Flowing and growing.
The river is flowing,
Down to the sea.

Mother, carry me,
Your child I will always be.
Father, carry me,
Down to the sea.

Movements:

These are the basic ideas of the dance, not a step-by-step progression.

- A. Everyone finds a partner and forms one large double line. Face partners and take hands, lifting them to form a tunnel between the two lines.
- B. Determine which direction the river will flow through the tunnel. The river begins flowing when the couple at the “source” of the river separates and the individuals from it begin journeying through the tunnel-river.
- C. Along the way, each individual chooses a new partner at random by taking them by the hand. The new partnership travels together to the end. As they emerge, they lift arms to re-form the tunnel.
- D. Those who are left partnerless because of the choosing process go around the outside of the tunnel to the source of the river and enter it, then choose a new partner along the way to take through it with them.
- E. Whenever the flow begins to thin, the current “source” couple can separate to begin their journey through the river.
- F. Those in the tunnel formation need to constantly inch down toward the source of the river, so that it does not become bunched up at the end.

VARIATIONS:

Snake Dance: Link hands and weave the line around the room, mingling, spiralling into a coil and reversing the spiral, and looping through the line at different points. For a circle dance to this same song, see Circle of Song by Kate Marks.

See also Water Element, The Waves, Ocean of Sound, Sound Bath.

I Open My Eyes To You, Kathryn Ashera Rose © 2013 ~ Page 121

EN LAK' ECH

Words: Traditional Mayan Greeting

Composer: Jonathan Goldman

Dance Originator: Hafiz Heartsun

Key of Eb Minor



En Lak' Ech, A Lak' En Ah Ol Lil Ah

This traditional Mayan greeting is an acknowledgement of our essential oneness and unity. The dance works well with large groups. Preferably, the center of the circle is open for the random partnering and snake dance phases -- no altar or sitting musicians. However, if necessary the musicians can be in the center until the last spiraling snake dance movement.

Words:

1. En Lak' Ech, (en lahk esh) *I am another you*
2. A Lak' En (ah lahk een) *You are another me*

Repeat 1 and 2 a total of three times

3. Ah Ol Lil Ah
"Ah"= awaken to
"Ol"= enlightened consciousness
"Lil"= universal vibration
"Ah" = awaken!!

Movements:

Partners form inner and outer circles, facing each other. As if facing your own reflection in the mirror, see this other being as another face of your own being. Notice whatever stands out about them for you, positive or negative and accept that as a quality of yourself, of your sacred family. Let your whole body move, especially shoulders and knees. Relax and soften boundaries.

1. Place palms together with partner, at chest height. Push forward with left hand while receiving push of partner with right on "En." Push with right, receive left on "Ech."
2. Left hand out on "Ah," right out on "En." Always left out on the first beat.
3. Disengage from partner on "Ah Ol Lil Ah," maintaining the same push/receive rhythm while sidestepping twice to the left. Engage with new partner and begin again.

Begin slowly, increasing the tempo as the dance "awakens." A period of singing more quietly or silently while maintaining rhythm may help to deepen this awakening.

4. At some point, break from the circle form and find partners at random during "Ah Ol Lil Ah" transition phrase.
5. Still singing, form a chain (snake) behind the leader, hands on the shoulders of the person in front of you. A previously-coached assistant may be helpful to tie the quickly evolving line together and prevent snake-eating-it's-tail circles. Continue left/right pushing rhythm. (Everyone has to push from their SHOULDERS for this to work.) Do an undulating snake dance, embodying the sacred winged serpent Kukulcan (Koo-kul-KON), which symbolizes the universal vibration/unity of earthly and heavenly forces. (Hissing is appropriate here as a snake attunement.) Then spiral inward, finally putting arms around waists and standing when the spiral gets wound up tight. You may increase the tempo and even bounce up and down to build the energy. End with a single, slow repetition of the entire chant. Feel the oneness of the group in silence.

Music to this dance is from Jonathan Goldman's tape, GATEWAYS: Men's Drumming and Chanting, available from Spirit Music, PO Box 2240, Boulder CO, 80306

Special thanks to Hunbatz Men, Mayan Daykeeper, for refining, blessing and enlivening this dance.

RELATED ACTIVITIES

Before beginning the Dance, use the mirroring exercise, "I Am A Mirror Of You!" as a way of deepening the connection between partners.

ISHE OLUWA

Song: Traditional Yoruba

Dance Originator: Gurumukh Mark Harris

This piece is often done in the key of F or G, as recorded. However, if you are working with young children, you may want to try it in the key of C, as written here. This notation also offers alternate melodies and harmonies to experiment with.

Key of C Major

The musical score is written in C Major, 12/8 time. It consists of four systems of music. Each system has a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The lyrics are: "I - she O - lu - wa, Ko - le Ba - je Oh!". The chords are: C, G, C, G, Am, C, F, C, F, C.

Ishe Oluwa, Kole Baje Oh means that God's work will never be undone. This is a favored parting song at gatherings of the Yoruba people, a major tribal group in Nigeria. Though it is sung in Christian church, Oluwa can refer to a supreme being who could be either male or female, neutral or both. In other contexts for example, Oluwa has referred to Oya, goddess of rivers and winds.

This dance moves in planting and harvesting phases. In the planting phase, the image is of gathering in spiritual seeds from heaven and sowing them on earth. In the Yoruban religion, Ashe (Ah Shay) is considered to be the primal force of the universe -- the power to make things happen. Morally neutral, it is in lightning, stones, mountains, rain, snakes, snails, poison, medicine, hate, love, anger, and healing. In the planting phase, we are gathering in positive energy from Ashe. In the harvesting phase, we are sending out the fruit of blessing into the universe.

Words:

1. Ishe Oluwa, *(Eeshay Oh Loo Wah)* *God's work*
Kole Baje Oh! *(Ko-Lay Bah-Jay Oh)* *Will never be undone*

Ishe Oluwa,
Kole Baje Oh!

Repeat 1.

2. Kole Baje Oh!
Kole Baje Oh!

Repeat 2.

Movements:

Group forms a circle, facing the line of direction, hands not held. If the group is in one circle, it moves sunwise (clockwise). If there are concentric circles, the inner circle goes sunwise, the rest go in alternating opposite directions.

1. The stepping motion begins with the outer foot. Moving sunwise, one steps forward diagonally onto the left foot and touches the right foot next to the left foot, as the arms reach up over the left shoulder, gathering in seeds of blessing from the sky with open hands. As one steps diagonally right and touches with the left foot, the hands are lowered into the center of the circle, sweeping down the blessing, "ashe," and grounding it in the center of the circle. The knees are relaxed, and the whole body pulses up and down with the emphasis on the downbeat. The rhythm is: Ishe (step left, touch right) Oluwa (step right, touch left) Kole Baje (step left, touch right) O-oh (step right, touch left). When traveling counterclockwise, the outside (right) foot begins, and the hands reach up over the right shoulder, then sweep down to the left.

Repeat 1.

2. Dancers spin individually, spiralling out slightly, which expands the circle, during this phase. The initial spin mirrors the overall line of direction of the circle. If the circle has been moving clockwise/sunwise, dancers spin clockwise individually, with both arms open and up, with the sense of eternally unfolding blessing. On the repeat of the phrase 2, the direction of the spin is reversed. The circle returns to its original size to re-begin the dance. At the end of the last repetition, when the last musical vibration is stilled, the group says, "Ashe" together. Ashe means "It is so! So be it!"

MORE ABOUT AFRICAN MUSIC

African's know the world through symbolic imagery and rhythm. In traditional African music, various rhythms were used to invoke particular spiritual forces. The 6/8 rhythm is used to convey both deeply moving and stately spiritual feelings, as well as to convey celebrative and ecstatic moods. In the latter states the intent is to dance the body past a state of physical and ego exhaustion into a state of spiritual receptivity. This dance uses the 6/8 rhythm at a slower pace to instill a reverential mood.

6/8 is often a challenging rhythm to play for beginners, or those heavily entrained to Western music. It demands attention until it's in your blood and bones. If it helps, conceptualize a fast waltz (although it is not a waltz!) by counting 123456, 123456, or 123, 123, then go for it. What makes the rhythm tricky is that it sounds fast, but there is a slow rhythm within it. Which do you focus on? Both, eventually.

If it helps you, especially with children, you can focus on entraining the rhythm first by imagining that, while walking in the line of direction they are elephants clearing a path through the jungle. Start on left foot 123, right foot 456. Reinforce the rhythm by playing the one and four beats only.

Use a shekere (a large beaded gourd), and either an agogo, samba, or other two-tone African or Latin Percussion bell. In a pinch, an LP mambo or Black Beauty Cowbell can be used. Simply strike the body of the bell for the downbeat {boom} and the edge for the rest {ba}. Tar or other drum can be substituted for shekere.

Unfortunately African percussion cannot be notated in Western music. Too complex. But here is an attempt to transcribe this using text only.

Together it "sounds" like this:

Voice:	I	she	O lu	wa
	Ko	le	Ba	je O - o - h
Shekere:	Shek!	2, 3,	Shek!	5, 6 Shek! 2, 3, Shek! 5, 6
Bell:	Boom!	ba-ba-ba-ba-ba-ba	Boom!	ba-ba-ba-ba-ba-ba

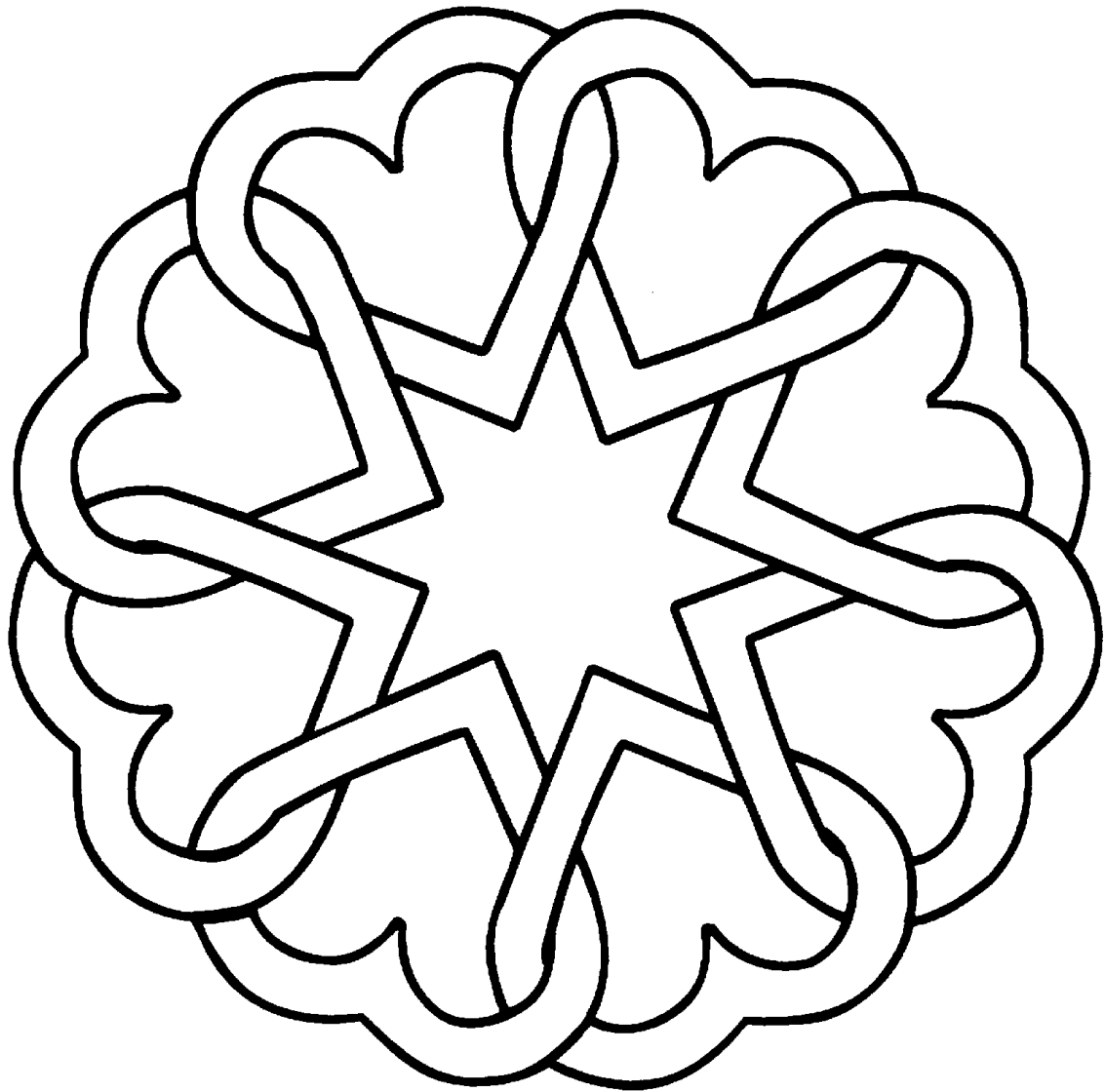
If you can talk you can sing. If you can walk you can dance.

Zimbabwean proverb

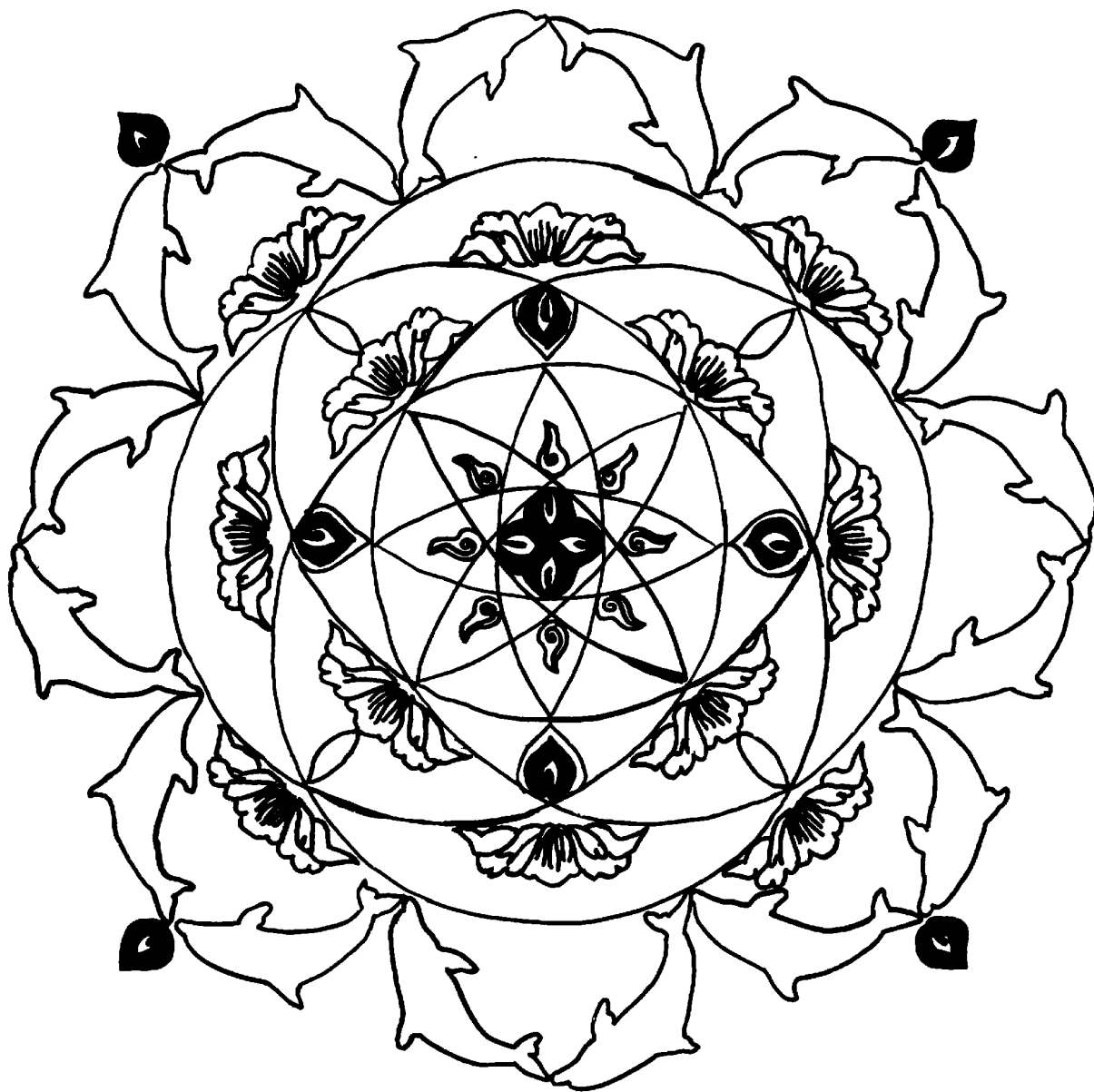
If you can feel your heartbeat you got rhythm.

Gurumukhean corollary

Dances of Universal Peace



sm



ABOUT THE AUTHOR . . .



Kathryn Ashera Rose is a creative spirit, educator, visionary and peace ambassador who creates and facilitates programs for children and intergenerational communities. She has served as an early childhood educator, music and movement teacher, childcare quality enhancement specialist, interfaith celebrant, leader of the Dances of Universal Peace, director of religious education programs, BePeace/ Connection Practice trainer and coach, lifelong dancer, qi gong practitioner, Reiki master, and mother of three daughters. She directed a series of intergenerational ‘Creative Arts For Peace’ summer camps, and now creates peace programs worldwide and at the Anahata Community & Education Center in Floyd, Virginia. She is available for trainings, conferences, consultation, and mentoring.

Kathryn Ashera Rose
StarChild Celebrations
Children’s Global Peace Project
779 Dobbins Farm Road NE
Floyd VA 24091-2275
KathrynAshera@gmail.com
www.StarChildCelebrations.com
www.cgpp.org

Many have come to teach the holiness of God,
but still there is not peace in the world.
Many have come to teach the holiness of man,
and still there is not peace in the world.
When many come to teach the holiness of children,
then there will be peace in the world.

Rabbi Schlomo Carlebach