

Northall Village Hall Management Committee



Have a Games Party!

Ideas for Children's Party Games

Northall Village Hall is a very popular venue for children's birthday parties with lots of green space outside to run around, child-size tables and chairs inside, and an array of outdoor play equipment. Children's entertainers can be expensive, so why not organise your own traditional party games? Below are some ideas to get you started and if you have others to add, we would be pleased to hear from you by email to rebecca.newbert@btinternet.com or lornacubbage@larums.com

Notes to go with Party Games

1. You will need help. At least 2 adults – one to supervise and another to help with judging who is first, help little ones etc.
2. Don't have games where children are "out". Give out beans instead and then have a count at the end and one with most (or least) is the winner, but they all play all the time.
3. Don't play each game too long. About 10 minutes max with explaining game and clearing up extra time. If games get out of hand children are probably bored and it has gone on too long. Play something else.
4. If children don't want to join in, let them help with giving out beans, blowing whistle, putting out props etc.etc. – or if they just want to watch – let them. They will probably join in once they see what fun the others are having.
5. Keep up the momentum. Don't have gaps. Have the next game ready to go as the previous one ends (this is where the help comes in!). It helps to make a plan of what you want to play well before the party so that you have any props necessary to hand. Have some extra "fillers" in case the games go more quickly than anticipated – it is better to have too many games ready than too few. Keep games simple with few rules. It is possible to have four activities going at once in each corner of the room but you need an adult to supervise each corner and to move groups on at short intervals.

6. Small children can't cope with games with "rules". Up to 3 or 4 years old keep it very simple –perhaps Pass the Parcel or a Musical Bumps or Statues and then use the playground outside or play with toys inside. Playing with balloons is also fun.

7. It's a good idea to have a quieter game before tea which doesn't involve the whole hall so that helpers can get tea ready. Or the children could play outside while tea is being prepared. It is also a good idea to have a quieter game after tea to let it settle. This could be a craft such as making a party hat, bag or paper plane (perhaps to race afterwards.)

8. Prizes. Bags of small sweets, lollipops or fun size bars from supermarkets. Or packets of cheap small toys from party shops, Tesco, Wilkinson etc. Put mixed in a box or basket for children to choose from. There is no need to buy expensive presents. Small children often prefer small toys to sweets. If a team game is played – all the team get a bean or a small prize.

Why not get the children to make and decorate a "doggy bag" with their name on it as one of their activities. As they win prizes these can be put into the bags to take home and you can quietly top up anyone who hasn't won much. Then you don't need to go too mad with presents – just add a piece of birthday cake and a balloon or something similar. It should not be necessary to spend a huge amount on "going home" presents – the children enjoy small things just as much.

9. Some of the games will require some preparation before the party e.g. making props, collecting paper, felt pens, making cards and newspaper cut-outs etc but it is worth the effort and does not cost a lot. The Hall will have a Party Games Box of props for some – but not all - of the games to hire.

10. The important thing is to have a good time – relax and enjoy watching the children having fun!

The Games.

Key to ***

*- games suitable for younger children

* - games suitable for older children

* - games suitable for playing outdoors.

* - games requiring no props.

*1, 2, 3 etc. - props for these games available in the NVH 'Party Games Box' in numbered packs.

The complete box is available for hire at £5.00 per booking

Ice Breakers

These games help the children to mix....

Find Your Pair.* * *18

As children arrive pin a card on their backs with the name of half a pair of characters from TV, nursery rhymes or fairy stories or pictures for younger children. The children walk round and ask questions about their characters but mustn't tell the name of the character. When they have guessed, they then need to find their partner. The first pair are the winners – or all pairs can receive a sweet as they finish.

Animal Families. * * *9

See below.

Who am I? **27

Children are labelled with a name or picture of a character on their foreheads without seeing it. They then have to ask the others questions to find out who they are.

Quizzes. **24, 25, 26

A short quiz as the children arrive is a good way to get them mixing. Questions should be easy –nursery rhymes or TV programmes or on the theme of the party and should be spread around the room. Children can be rewarded for finishing with a sweet for their “doggy bag”.

Also see craft ideas later for making hats, mats and doggy bags to use at the party.

Noisy Games.

Animal Families. * * *9

You will need sets of 4 small cards with a picture of the animal on one side and the name on the other. E.g. Cat, Dog, Cow, Horse, Pig, Donkey, Chickens/Cockerel etc. Shuffle cards. Stand in centre with children round you. Throw cards into air so that they scatter. Children pick up a card and find the rest of their group by making the noise. When they are all together, they sit down in the group. First group sitting wins. You need the same number of cards as children,-no spare cards- so you may have to do it in threes. All groups must be the same size.

Farmers and Animals. * * * *5

You will need one or two packs of dried kidney beans from a supermarket. These can be used for lots of games.

Before the game, put lots of little piles of beans around the room where they can be seen by the children. Divide the children into groups of four or five – or three if not many children. Give each group the name of a farm animal as above. One of each group is the Farmer who doesn't make the animal noise. When the whistle is blown to start the game, all the animals run about the room until they find a pile of beans (individually). They then stand beside the pile and make the animal noise to call their farmer who must come and collect the beans. Only the farmers can pick up the beans. The game finishes when all the beans have been picked up and the group with the most beans wins.

Puddles. * *

You will need two or three newspapers separated into sheets. A whistle, or music.

Spread the sheets of newspaper all over the floor of the room. When the whistle is blown or the music starts the children run about the room – try to keep them in one direction to avoid collisions! When the whistle is blown or the music stops they jump onto a sheet of paper. Repeat the process taking away a sheet of paper each time the music starts or the whistle blows. They gradually all end up on one sheet of paper with much merriment. There are no winners in this game!!

Car Numbers. * * *17

You will need lots of cards with car numbers on them – e.g. ABC 231, XYZ 657 etc. You can put the same letters with different numbers on some cards to make it more difficult for older children Spread around the edge of the room on the floor where they can be seen. Divide children into three groups – Police, Fire Brigade, Ambulances. Children sit in a circle on floor in centre of room, you in middle with list of numbers. Call out” There has been an accident/robbery/fire-in car number..... They need an ambulance (–or police car –or fire engine)”. Then say the number again. The children in the chosen group stand and run about making siren noise (nee-nah) until one of them finds the right number and brings the card to you to exchange for a bean. Keep going until all the numbers are found or they get bored! The one with most beans wins.

Ready, Steady, Go. * * * *14

You will need a red card, flag, or hankie, a yellow one, and a green one.

Children are cars, ambulances, fire engines, police cars as in the previous game and they run around the room making appropriate “Nee-nah” noises or beeping. At intervals, hold up a card, flag, or hankie. If it is red, they must stop and not move; if orange they must slow down and walk or run on the spot. To

release them wave the green one. You can designate parts of the floor as a roundabout or a speed bump with a cushion.

Quiet Games.

Sleeping Lions* * *

Children pretend they are sleeping lions lying on the floor and anyone moving leaves the game. The last still lion wins.

Pin the Tail on the Donkey (or other animal/cartoon!)* * *6

You will need a large picture of a donkey and a separate tail with blue-tac to stick to the picture. Children are blind folded and turned around 3 times to make them slightly dizzy. The child must then try to stick the tail on the donkey in the right place. Mark with a pen where each child puts the tail and the closest is the winner.

Try pinning the tail on Pluto, or the hosepipe on Fireman Sam, or the crown on the Princess etc.

Feely Bag.* *

Fill a soft bag or pillowcase with up to ten familiar objects e.g. small toys, lego bricks, ball, small book, ruler, coins, rubber, glove with fingers, sink sponge, lemon, onion, stone, marble etc.(nothing sharp or pointed eg pencil – or messy e.g. felt pens)

Children close eyes or wear blindfold, feel in bag and either write down or draw what they feel. Pass on to next child until they have guessed them all. Can be done in groups.

Smell game.* *

Similar to feely bag. Plastic cups with “smelly” things inside and covered with gauze or paper with holes in it to smell through. e.g. perfume, coffee, soap powder, vinegar, cut lemon, cut onion, curry powder, strong smelling crisps etc. Nothing nasty. “Wet” things on paper hankies.

Children close eyes or wear blindfold and guess what is in each pot.

Sounds recordings.* *

Make a recording of 10 sounds for children to identify. e.g. doorbell, dog barking, kettle boiling, door closing, toilet flushing, mobile phone ringing, eating crisps, using computer keyboard, clock ticking keys jingling, tap running etc.

Kims Game * *13

10 – 12 items on a tray. Children look at them. Cover tray and write down what they can remember. Another variation is to remove items and see if anyone can see what is missing.

Chinese Whispers.* * *27

Children sit in a circle. Adult whispers a short (hopefully funny) sentence to first child who whispers it to the next and so on round the circle. The last child calls out the sentence as they heard it.

Note:- make sure that any child with a hearing difficulty is at the beginning and helped by the adult.

Drawing Consequences.*

Each person is provided with a strip of paper and a pencil. They draw a “Head” and fold the paper so that it cannot be seen except for the line of the neck. The paper is then passed to the next person who adds the upper body and folds the paper leaving the lines of the waist visible and the paper is passed on again. This is repeated with the lower body, the legs and the feet and then after the paper has been passed again all the papers are opened and a display is made of all the pictures - hopefully to much amusement.

The Flour Pudding. *

The pudding is prepared in advance using a small pudding bowl filled with flour and pressed down and tipped on to a plate much like making a sandcastle. It is better to do this just before you need it. A small sweet such as a chocolate button or maltezer is carefully placed in the centre at the top without destroying the “pudding” shape. The plate is placed in the centre of a circle of players, who take it in turns to cut a small section of the “pudding” away without dislodging the sweet. The person who dislodges the sweet must retrieve the sweet – preferably not using their hands, but if small children are involved, using hands (and then possibly offering the rest of the packet of sweets round.

Beetle Games. * *20, 8

These games involve groups of people playing for pieces of a picture (often a beetle with body, head, legs, feelers, tail) using a dice. Each person has a picture to make and the pieces are valued 1 – 6. The dice is shaken and the piece corresponding to the number shown on the dice is collected. Generally there is only one “6” piece which must be collected first and then the rest in no particular order. Players take turns to shake the dice. If a person has used all their pieces which correspond to a number they must miss a turn. The winner is the person who finishes their picture first.

I went shopping... * *

Children sit in a circle. The first says “I went shopping and bought a ***.” The next person adds something else and so on round the circle. Each person must say all the things that have been mentioned in the right order. To make it easier the items bought could start with a letter of the alphabet e.g. apple, ball, crayons etc.

Charades. * * *27

This game is played in groups. One person from each group is given a word or short phrase such as the name of a book or film or T.V.programme. That person must then mime the word or phrase to the rest of the group until they guess what it is. The word or phrase can be broken down into component parts to make it easier. Anyone speaking is disqualified. The mimer can sign a correct guess by nodding or pointing at the person making the guess. The first group to guess the word or phrase wins. Players take turns to mime and guess.

Circle Games.

Pass the Ghostie * * *16

The children sit in a circle and take turns to sit in the middle blind-folded. The children in the circle pass around a knotted hankie and when you signal the child holding the hankie makes a ghost sound “whhhooooo” and the child in the middle has to point to the child who said it or guesses their name and if they are correct they swap places.

Bear and the Honey pot * * *21

Similar to pass the ghostie but the person in the blind-folded person in the middle is the bear guarding the honey pot (a bunch of keys). Children take a turn to creep up and try to take the keys without being heard. If they manage it they swap places and get to be the bear.

Apple Pie. * * *16

This is played like “Pass the Ghostie” except that the children make a funny noise or use a silly voice” which makes guessing harder.

Squeak Piggy, Squeak! * * 1

Children sit in a circle on chairs. Person in the middle is provided with a small cushion, blindfolded, and turned gently a few times to disorientate them. They are then guided to the nearest person in the circle and feel their way round until they choose a person and put the cushion on the person's lap and sit on it saying "Squeak, Piggy, Squeak"! The person then makes a squeaking noise and the blindfolded "sitter" has to guess who it is. If they are right, they swop places and the game starts again. If they are wrong they must stay blindfolded and try again.

Poor Puss! * *

One player is chosen to be "Puss". Rest sit in a circle. "Puss crawls round inside circle on hands and knees and picks a person and sits in front of them begging for attention. The chosen person must stroke the head of "Puss" saying solemnly " Poor Puss" three times and must not smile or laugh while they are doing it. "Puss can do everything possible to make them laugh, by purring, pulling faces etc. Other players are allowed to laugh if it is not their turn to say "Poor Puss". If the person laughs, they must become another "Puss" and the game carries on until there are no people left in the circle.

Musical Games.

Musical Chairs. *

Place sufficient chairs for the number of children participating in a row. As the music is played, the children circle the row of chairs. When the music stops everyone must find a seat. Each time the music is restarted, a chair is taken away and the child last to find a seat drops out of the game until the last child on the last chair wins.

Musical Statues * * *

Children dance around and stand still as statues when the music stops and the first person to move drops out in that round. The last child remaining wins.

Musical Bumps. * * *

Children dance around to music and when it stops, they quickly sit on the floor. The last one down drops out and helps to spot the others. The last remaining child wins.

Puddles – see above.

Pass the Parcel * *

Wrap a prize with lots of layers of wrapping paper. Children sit in a circle and pass the parcel from child to child in turn until the music stops when the child with the parcel un-wraps a layer. It's a good idea to put some sweets or a small prize in each layer and have sufficient layers for all children to unwrap a layer and win! The child un-wrapping the last layer wins the prize.

Dressing up Version. *

Instead of a parcel, two bags are filled with "dressing up" items such as hats, gloves, scarves, wigs, sunglasses, aprons, ribbons, nighties, leggings – anything amusing – at least two things for each person playing. The bags are passed around the circle in opposite directions and when the music stops, the people holding the bags must quickly choose an item, the music starts, and the bags are passed on. The game finishes with a "fashion show". Take a group photo!

Small Children's Games.

Simon Says * *

Someone plays the role of "Simon" and issues instructions (usually physical actions such as 'jump in the air' or 'stick out your tongue') to the other players, which should only be followed by the children if prefaced with the phrase "Simon says", for example "Simon says stand on one leg". Players are eliminated from the game either by accidentally following instructions that are not immediately preceded by "Simon Says" or by failing to follow a Simon Says instruction.

What's the time Mr. Wolf? * **

One player is chosen to be Mr Wolf. Mr Wolf stands at the opposite end of the room from the other players, facing away from them. All players except for Mr Wolf say together "What's the time, Mr Wolf?", and Mr Wolf will answer in one of two ways:

(1) Mr. Wolf may call a clock time (e.g., "3 o'clock"). The other players will then take that many steps out loud as they go ("One, two, three"). Then they ask the question again.

(2) Mr Wolf may call "Dinner Time!" Then Mr Wolf will turn and chase the other players back to their starting point. If Mr Wolf successfully tags a player, that player becomes the new Mr Wolf for the next round.

Oranges and lemons * * *

Oranges and lemons, Say the bells of St. Clement's.

You owe me five farthings, Say the bells of St. Martin's.

When will you pay me? Say the bells of Old Bailey.

When I grow rich, Say the bells of Shoreditch.

When will that be? Say the bells of Stepney.

I do not know, Says the great bell of Bow.

*Here comes a candle to light you to bed,
And here comes a chopper to chop off your head!
Chip chop, chip chop, the last man's dead!*

The children form pairs. One pair is chosen to form an arch and the other pairs walk under the arch in turn whilst singing Oranges and Lemons. The challenge comes during the final lines and on the last word "dead", the children forming the arch drop their arms to catch the pair of children currently passing through, who are then "out" and must form another arch next to the existing one. In this way, the series of arches becomes a steadily lengthening tunnel through which each set of two players have to run faster and faster to escape in time.

The Farmers in his den * * *

One person is stands in the middle of a circle of children who hold hands. Everyone sings:

*The Farmer's in his den,
The Farmer's in his den,
E I de addy oh,*

The Farmer's in his den.

*The Farmer wants a wife,
The Farmer wants a wife,
E I de addy oh,
The Farmer wants a wife.*

The Farmer chooses a wife to join him in the centre of the circle. They hold hands and circle round while the others sing:

*The wife wants a child,
The wife wants a child,
E I de addy oh,
The wife wants a child.*

The Farmer's wife chooses someone to stand in the centre. The farmer, wife and child hold hands and circle round while the others sing:

*The child wants a nurse,
The child wants a nurse,
E I de addy oh,
The child wants a nurse.*

The child chooses a nurse who joins the inside circle. As before, everyone sings:

*The nurse wants a dog,
The nurse wants a dog,
E I de addy oh,
The nurse wants a dog.*

A dog is chosen by the nurse and joins the others in the centre of the circle. Everyone sings and pats the dog on the head:

*Everyone pat the dog,
Everyone pats the dog,
E I de addy oh,
Everyone pats the dog.*

When the dog has been chosen and the final part of the song sung, the dog then becomes the farmer and the game starts again.

Here we go round the mulberry bush. * * *

Players in a circle holding hands dance round singing:-

“Here we go round the mulberry bush, the mulberry bush, the mulberry bush,
Here we go round the mulberry bush, on a cold and frosty morning.

They then stop and sing:-

“This is the way we wash our face/comb our hair/sweep the floor – or any other activity that can be acted – and act while they sing. Then the game starts again with the dance and chorus.

Also appropriate for small children are “Ring-a - ring o’ Roses” and the “Hokey Cokey”

Races and Team Games.

Balloon games *

Children can form teams and stand in a row and race to pass a balloon to each other through their legs, or under their chins.

Children can form teams and keep their balloon in the air by bouncing it upwards, if the balloon hits the floor then after say three chances, the team would be eliminated.

Teams can have races walking the length of the room and back with a balloon between the knees or under the chin.

Ladder game * *

Children sit in pairs on the floor with their feet touching, in a long row of pairs in the style of a ladder. Each pair or rung of the ladder is given a number and when their number is called, each child in the pair stands up and steps over each of the other pairs or rungs to the top of the ladder then races down the outside on their side of the ladder to the bottom and steps back over the legs of the other pairs to their position again. The first in the each pair to return wins a point for their team (being all the children on the left or the right rungs of the ladder).

Variations:-

Give the pairs names of ingredients – e.g. flour, eggs, sugar, sultanas etc and then tell a story about making a cake. Or items you would have for tea and tell a story about a birthday party etc. Or zoo animals etc.

Apache marathon – for older children! * *

Teams stand one behind the other. At whistle, the first person runs to touch the wall at the front of team, while the team quickly sits down, legs together as in ladders, pointing to left. Player runs up row of legs and touches back wall while team quickly change legs to right hand side. Player runs down over legs and touches wall at front again while team quickly stand and spread legs and the player crawls up legs to back. Then the next person goes. When all the team have had a turn and finished, the team sits quickly down with arms folded and legs crossed and shouts “How!” – (or if you don’t mind the noise, they can “Indian war whoop” with hands over mouths)

Bananas (for slightly older children) *

Divide the children into two teams and each team lies on the floor in a long line head to toe. The persons at the bottom of the row are given a firm banana (or thin balloon) to hold between their feet and the object of the game is to pass the banana to the top of each team’s row feet to feet by each person lifting their feet over their head to pass to the next person’s feet. The person at the top of the row stands up and runs with the banana back to the bottom of the row and passes it up again. It’s a race between the teams for each player to have “run” and the game is over when the first person is back to the bottom of the row again.

Chair game. * *use items from box

Children divided into teams and sit one behind the other with a chair a few paces away at the front of the team and one a few paces behind. 5 different objects are placed on the front chair e.g. Ball, beanbag, skipping rope from box plus a paper cup, paper napkin, balloon, and paper and pencil for drawing things. The children are given numbers. Then the leader calls out a combination of any number of the objects to be put on either the front or back chair with the other objects on the other chair and a number. The child with that number jumps up and puts the correct items on each chair and the first to finish gets a point or bean for their team. Then another number is called. The team with the most points wins the game.

Dressing up race * *22

Divide the children into two teams. Each team needs a set of dressing up clothes, e.g. hat, scarf, gloves. Each team member takes a turn to dress up, run to the end of the room and back and then pass the clothes to the next team member. The teams race until each has had a turn.

Obstacle Races. * *2, 3, 4

These can involve skipping, dressing up, throwing bean bags into hoops or buckets etc.

Relay races. * *2, 3, 4

These can be running, skipping or passing objects backwards and forwards.

Hunting Games.

Treasure hunt * * *

Hide loot around the grounds and give them clues to find it. This is also a good way of having them put together their own party bags if you hide small toys and sweets and they make up their bag as they go along and at the end of the party you just need to hand out the birthday cake! (Loot could be lollipops, Easter eggs - anything “waterproof” and not likely to be damaged by being outside.). Have a quick get-together at end to make sure that everyone has found something and that nothing is left outside!

For older children, the hunt could be with clues leading to the next place (the playground is good for this!) with the loot hidden where the last clue points.

Hunt the rabbits * * *15

You will need about 30 small rabbits cut out from coloured card using a stencil and labelled with boys and girls names. These are spread around the grounds so that they are visible but perhaps slightly obscured under a leaf etc. Give each child a pencil and paper and send them to find how many girls, boys, each colour and names depending upon the age of the children and whether they can write. Adults or older children could be paired with younger ones for this game. Everyone gets a sweet for finding as many as possible. Don't forget to collect up the rabbits after the game!

Odd Man Out Hunt. * *

Similar to rabbits, but use household items from kitchen etc instead of rabbits e.g. ladle, wooden spoon, reel of cotton, tin of beans, oxo cube etc. but nothing sharp. Children write down as many as they can find.

Scavenger Hunt. * *

Children go out into grounds to find things such as four different shaped leaves, a round stone, a feather, two twigs, a dandelion flower etc. Children must be told only to pick things from the grass area and not the flower beds and not to pick up rubbish! Finds could be used in groups to make a picture.

Wool Game. **

Prepare game by cutting up oddments of knitting wool into 15cm lengths and spread all over grass in grounds. Divide children into three or four groups. Children then find the wool and each group ties it together to form a line. The group with the longest line is the winner. In summer, this could also work making daisy chains with older children.

Granny McPhees Quilt. * * *12

This is similar to the wool game. You will need oddments of coloured materials cut into small squares and spread around the grounds. The children put the pieces together on the ground to make a “quilt”. The group with the biggest quilt/most pieces wins.

Another version of this game is to have two identical pieces of each material. One of each piece is spread about the grounds, the others are given to the children, one at a time and they have to find the matching piece. They keep both pieces and are given another piece to look for. You will need three or four pieces per child. Finish game as above.

Hunt the Thimble/Toy car/ doll etc * * *11

This can be played in two ways. Either one person is chosen to leave the room while the rest hide the object. Then the “seeker” returns and they all say “warmer” or “colder” depending upon how close the seeker is to the object until it is found, or everybody except one person leaves the room and that person hides the object and then everyone else comes in and looks for it. The person who finds it is the next “hider”.

Find the Bomb * *

As hunt the thimble but using a loudly ticking alarm clock well hidden while they are playing another game or out of the room.

Jigsaws or Messages. * * *19

Children are divided into teams. Each team has the pieces of a distinctive jigsaw or a coloured, cut up message to look for. These are scattered about the room except for one piece of each. The teams are given the remaining piece and at the blast of a whistle or “GO!” they run about finding all the other pieces. They then have to assemble the jigsaw or message and the first team to do so wins.

General/ Boisterous Games.

Blind-man’s buff * * *7 – also scarf in box

Choose a “blind-man” to be blindfolded and attempting to touch the other players without being able to see them, while the other players scatter and try to avoid the blind-man. Once touched, they are out. The last person left becomes the next blind-man.

Alternatively, the blind-man wears the blindfold and stands in the middle of a circle of children standing. Everyone then walks slowly closer. At anytime the person in the ring can take off the blindfold and if they see anyone moving that person is out. The last person left or the first person to get to the blind-man wins and they become the next blind-man.

Touch Three Walls * *

The children stand in the middle of the room. The leader/adult calls “Touch three walls and find a partner!” The children do this and finish holding a partner by the hand. The leader then calls out a criterion such as “the tallest/shortest, the one with the longest/darkest/lightest hair, the one with most/biggest pets, a brother/sister etc.etc. Nothing upsetting! e.g. Thinnest/fattest but you could get away with who has the biggest shoe size! The one who most meets the criterion gets a bean. If both are the same, they both get a bean. Repeat the game calling “Touch three walls and find a different partner!” The winner is the one with the most/least beans – you choose!

Cindy Dolls and Teddy Bears. –or anything you like, really! * *

Divide children into two teams which make lines facing each other at sides of room. Leader/adult calls out “Cindy Dolls one pace/hop /big step/ jump forwards – or backwards - or the other side,-maybe two times for one side etc then when the teams are nearly together the leader calls “Cindy Dolls” – or Teddy Bears”- charge!!” and the identified team has to chase the other across the room and catch members of the other team. The walls are “home base and if you are touching you can’t be caught. Anyone caught joins the other team, and the game finishes when everyone is in one team.

Pirates. * * * 4

Divide the children into three or four teams, depending on numbers and put each team into a corner of the room with a chair in front of them facing towards the centre of the room. Number the children in each group. Put a chair in the centre with about eight bean bags on it. Call out a number and at a whistle or "GO" the children with that number run to the chair and take a bean bag and put it on their corner chair, then run back to get another. If they are all gone, they can steal the bags from other chairs and the rest of the teams can't stop them, but they can only take one at a time. They must stop at a whistle or "STOP!" and the team with the most bags is given a bean and all the bags are put back on the centre chair. Another number is called. The winning team finishes with the most beans.

Mummy Rabbit, Daddy Rabbit, Baby Rabbit. * * * 4

This can get quite rough but its great fun. Children in a circle with one bean bag (the carrot!) in the centre. The adult goes round the circle making each child a mummy, daddy or baby rabbit in groups of three but keep going if there are "spares". The adult then calls "Mummy/daddy/baby" rabbit and the ones named leave the circle run round it and in through **their** hole made when they left it and the first to pick up the carrot gets a bean.

The winner is the one with the most beans.

Tag / Chain Tag /Stuck in the Mud. * * *

There are lots of different versions of this game.

One player is chosen to be "It" and has to chase the others until he touches one and shouts "Tag!" The person touched either becomes "It" and the game continues. In "Chain Tag" the two join hands and run together to catch the next person.

In "Stuck in the Mud" the person caught must stand still with legs apart and arms held out until they are released by another player either crawling between their legs or under their arm – or maybe by just touching their hand – which of course makes them more easily caught. This game is often played with more than one "It" depending upon numbers as they don't change roles in this version.

Port and Starboard. * *

Children start in the middle of the room. The leader briskly shouts out commands and the children must run to obey. The last one is out or given a bean and at the end either the remaining child or the one with the most beans is the winner. A good idea is to start slowly to get them used to the orders or have a few "blind" goes" until everyone knows the ropes.

The Commands are:-

"Port!" - players run to touch left wall.

"Starboard!" – players run to touch right wall.

"Bow!" - players run to front wall.

"Stern!" - players run to back wall.

"Boom coming over!" – players duck down

"Hit the Deck!" – players lie flat on tummies.

"Climb the Rigging!" – players pretend to climb.

"Captain's coming!" – players stand to attention and salute.

"Stormy Weather!" – players sway from side to side.

"Man the lifeboats!" – players make pairs, sit down and row.

"Submarine!" – players lie on backs with one leg in the air.

Craft Ideas. * *

Paper Planes.

Each child is given a sheet of paper and coloured pencils or felt pens and asked to make a paper plane and decorate it. They then fly the planes to see whose design goes furthest. Younger children might need help with this activity.

Easter Bonnets.

Each child is given at least one sheet of newspaper and provided with felt pens, pritt sticks and coloured scraps of paper, cloth and ribbon and asked to make a hat to wear. You can then have a parade and don't forget to take a photo!

Tallest towers. *

Children divided into small groups and given up to three newspapers per group along with selotape, paperclips and a small pair of scissors and asked to make as tall a tower as they can. The tallest which will remain standing is the winner but photos should be taken and all rewarded for effort

Placemats, Paper Hats, and Doggy Bags.

Each child is provided with a small piece of paper for the place mat, a strip of card to make a crown, and a plain paper bag or piece of paper big enough to fold and staple into a bag. Children then decorate their bags, hats and mats with felt pens, and small pieces of coloured paper and cloth, stickers, ribbon etc, not forgetting to put their names on them. The place mats and crowns are then used for the party tea and the bags are filled during the party with goodies to take home at the end.

Theme Parties.

All the above games can be tailored and renamed to fit in with a theme such as "Animals" or "Pirates" or "Spies" or "Detectives" etc.

Here is an example of how games can be tailored to fit in with a theme.

Halloween.

As well as the traditional bobbing for apples (no ducking and keep a towel to hand. Have two or three goes then allow hands!) and hanging donuts (messy! Ring donuts hung on line at mouth level and must be eaten with hands behind backs) ...try

Torch tag/statues. * *

Tag played in the dark with those caught in the beam standing still until released by another player.

Queen of the Night. * * *

Played in the dark. Children run about and leader calls "The Queen of the night is coming!" and covers one of the children with a large cloth or curtain. The lights go on and the children have to guess who is under the cloth.

Flying Witches. * * (templates) 23

(but can be butterflies or birds or fairies etc.)

You will need quite a lot of newspaper for this. Cut out one witch shape for each child. Make a fan out of newspaper for each child. The children then race the witches by fanning them up the room, either individually or in teams.

Witches Glue Pot. * * *

Another name for tag! The witch is the catcher.

The Mummy game. *

The children are divided into teams. You will need a toilet roll for each team and a whistle. Each team chooses one person to be the “Mummy” and they stand facing their team. When the whistle blows, the first person runs to the “Mummy” and starts to wrap the toilet roll around their feet and work up the body. The whistle is blown at frequent intervals when the next member of each team must take over. The wrapping is only allowed up to shoulder level. The game finishes when the first toilet roll is all used.

Allow the other teams to finish and then take a photo. Then at a whistle all the “Mummies” can burst out of their wrappings and chase the others. You will need a black bag and some helpers to clear up after this game but it is great fun! Only suitable for outdoors if **all** the mess is cleared up afterwards!!

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