

99 theatre games for communities of all shapes and sizes

In Place of War (UK) and Big Circle (Sri Lanka), February 2005

The theatre games in this collection come from a wide variety of sources and are played in different formats all over the world. This collection is provided by **In Place of War**, a three year theatre practice and research project based at the University of Manchester (UK)¹ and **Big Circle**, a network of applied and social theatre practitioners in Sri Lanka.² It was put together in response to a request from theatre practitioners in Sri Lanka for resources to support group work with communities affected by the Tsunami of 26th December 2004.

Theatre games are enjoyable and interactive activities that can stimulate imagination, energy, activity and participation. Games can provide a safe space for social interaction, personal and social skill development, release of energy and imaginative exploration. They are also good fun!

Some tips for leading games:

- Make sure you know the game before playing it with a group
- Give clear instructions
- Show how the game is done rather than describe it with words
- Introduce the game in stages – a game should gradually build energy and focus in a group
- Ask the group what the game is for at the end

1. Cross & Circle

Participants form a circle while seated on their chairs. Ask them to draw 'a circle' as large as possible with their right hand. Stop! Now ask them to draw 'a cross' as large as possible with their left hand. Stop! Ask them to do both at the same time. Repeat this with each leg. Now ask them to 'sign' their name with their right leg. Now ask them to draw 'a circle' with the right hand, 'a cross' with the left hand and 'sign' their name with their right leg at the same time. You can try other combinations too.

2. Fruit Salad

Everyone sits in a circle. Decide what fruits are to be used in the making of our fruit salad. For example: banana, mango, pineapple. Each person in the circle calls out

¹ Contact details for In Place of War are provided at the end of this document

² Thanks to Zafarullah Hassim, who compiled the original list of games for the Big Circle Training Manual

the fruits in order. After each one has been assigned a fruit, make sure everyone remembers their fruit by calling each fruit and asking them to raise their hands. The facilitator stands in the middle of the circle. Now we have to mix the fruits. When the facilitator calls out a fruit everyone of that fruit has to exchange chairs. In the mean time the facilitator in the middle tries to sit on a vacant chair. Someone new ends up in the middle. Now the new person calls out a fruit and so the game goes on. The person in the middle may call out two or three fruits at a time. If the person in the middle calls 'fruit salad' then everyone switches chairs. If there are less than 20 participants there should be three fruits; less than 10, two fruits. If there are no chairs and people are sitting on the floor or standing, on the call of the fruit there should be an objective like touch the door, run to the tree or equivalent. The last person to return then goes in the middle to call the next fruit.

3. Sunshine

A variation on 'Fruit Salad'. Everyone sits on a chair in a circle with a volunteer in the middle. The volunteer thinks of something some people in the group have in common, for example, people who are wearing white shirts, and says, 'the sun shines on people with white shirts', and all those wearing white shirts exchange places. In the meantime the person in the middle tries to get a seat. The next person thinks of something new, for example, 'the sun shines on people with short hair' and so on. Common characteristics include: wearing black shoes, wearing red shirts, coming from Colombo, over twenty years old etc. This game will give you some basic information of the group.

4. Common & Uncommon

Form pairs facing each other, either sitting or standing. Each person has a conversation during which they find things and qualities that are common to both of them and that are uncommon to both of them. Specify a number of qualities, for example, between 3 to 5 depending on the size of the group. Start in pairs, then join up pairs (to make a group of 4 people) and then discover something uncommon/common to the group that hasn't already been mentioned. Finally do it in two halves – and the opposite team have to guess what the other team all have in common. While this quiz is going on the only responses from the group that has the answer should be 'yes' or 'no.' Each team has ten opportunities with questions to guess the answer.

5. Stop – Go - Forward – Backward

Play this game in pairs. One person is the instructor and the other follows the instruction with his or her eyes shut. The instructor should guide the other person with only three instructions – forward, go, backward, stop. The purpose is to guide the other person around without crashing into others. Now switch over roles and repeat. Once this is done try to do it by following the opposite of the instructions. Stop when 'go' is instructed and go when 'stop' is instructed. The game can be repeated with eyes open as a whole group. The facilitator can shout out the instructions, the right way at first, then participants must do the opposite.

6. Three wheeler

The above game could be done by replacing the verbal orders with touch. The person closing the eyes and obeying orders is the three wheeler and the person giving orders is the driver. A touch in the middle of the back between the shoulders indicate that they should go forward, a touch on the right shoulder means right turn, on the left shoulder for a left turn, and on the head to reverse. If the hand is removed at any time, this means the three wheeler must stop. After you have played for a while, and there have been many accidents, you can add the instruction that if you touch the ears, the three wheeler person makes the sound of a horn.

7. Keeper of the Keys

Sit in a circle. A volunteer is seated in the middle blindfolded. Keep a bunch of keys in front of that person. Now anyone in the circle can go and attempt to take the keys. The task is to take the keys back to the circle without the knowledge of the keeper. If the keeper of the keys points at the person approaching, that person returns and someone else has a go.

8. Touching backs

Everyone walks leisurely around the room. The facilitator explains that on a given instruction each person must stop and touch one other person's back. They will do this fairly easily. Next, they are asked to move again. This time ask them to stop and touch two different backs at the same time. Move again. Finally they should stop and touch three different backs at the same time. The exercise now becomes a challenge to discover how it is done.

9. Touching the ground

Make pairs. They should perform together as one unit. Say 'touch the ground with two legs and one hand'. 'Touch the ground with three legs and three hands' etc. In each combination there should only be the body parts announced by the facilitator touching the floor between the pairs. Think of difficult variations and see how the group copes. You cannot get help from other objects. The exercise should gradually become more challenging. For example, 'four hands' – the pairs do handstands. 'No hands, no feet!'. This can be the final instruction. Eventually someone will discover that if they both jump off the ground at the same time, they will complete the instruction.

10. Image building

Divide the group into small teams of 6-10 according to the size of the group. Give them images to form from their bodies, for instance, a circle, a triangle, a square, a football, a fork, a plate of rice, an elephant etc. Instruct them to create one image after the other, moving from simple to complex images. Everyone in the team has to be part of this image. Give one point for speed of completion and one point for

beauty of the image. This game can be done after a walking round the room game which asks people to get in to groups of certain numbers as quickly as possible. The final instruction could be groups of say 6; these groups then become the teams for the image building exercise.

11. Snap snap

Everyone sits on the ground in a circle (if possible with their legs crossed). Call out numbers starting from 1 to the last. Each person should remember their number. One person starts with the following rhythmic actions. Pat the right thigh with the right hand – pat the left thigh with the left hand - snap your fingers with the right hand in the air while saying your own number – snap the left hand in the air while calling out someone else’s number randomly. Then that person whose number was called follows the same pattern. Note that all these actions must be followed rhythmically. You could use the names of persons instead of numbers.

12. Pass the Pulse

Form a circle standing or sitting with everyone holding hands. The facilitator gently squeezes the hand of the person to the right. As soon as that person’s hand is squeezed he or she squeezes the next person’s hand, just like a current of energy. This is done until the pulse comes back to the facilitator. See how quick it has been transmitted around the group. Then the facilitator could be out of the circle and time the transmission of the pulse. You could allot a specific time for the pulse to pass one round. For better concentration you may try this with everyone’s eyes closed. When playing this with children, the first person can be called ‘the light switch’ and final person ‘the bulb.’ The objective is to light the bulb up as quickly as possible.

13. Pass the Clap

Form a circle with everyone standing or sitting. One person turns to the right and presents a clap to the person on the right. That person at the same time claps to receive the clap and passes it onto the next person. Each person actually claps twice, once to receive and once to give. The clap is passed around. When done properly this should sound like continuous applause.

14. West Side Story

Make two groups and line them facing each other. This is a rhythm game according to the tune on the musical – West Side Story. It goes la la la, la la la, lá, lá, lá; la la la, la la la, lá, lá, lá. Now you have to clap and stamp to the rhythm of this tune. It goes: clap, clap, clap, clap, clap, clap, stamp, stamp, stamp. The beat is 6 claps with hands and three stamps with feet. The feet stamps are twice the length of the hands – so it goes clap, clap, clap; clap, clap, clap; stamp, stamp, stamp. The exercise can be done as a ‘round’ with two teams. When one group is doing their three stamps the other group is completing their claps. At first, do this in two lines and then ask each group to approach the other, walk around the room and return to

their group, whilst maintaining the rhythm. This song could be adapted to fit songs and rhythms with which the group are particularly familiar.

15. Giant – Dwarf – Magician

Agree upon signs and sounds that symbolize the giant, dwarf and magician. The rules are that the giant defeats the dwarf, the dwarf defeats the magician and the magician defeats the giant. Divide the group into two teams, each team goes to opposite sides of the space. Each group decides upon one of the three figures they are going to depict without letting the other group hear their decision. Then the two groups form two lines facing each other in the middle of the room. There should be about five steps between the two lines. When the facilitator signals 'go', each line counts aloud '1, 2, 3' while taking three steps towards each other. They stop after three steps and waving their hands to each side call out, 'Ker Bish – Ker Bash' three times. At the end of it all they do the action of the dwarf, magician or giant. The members of the group that defeat the other can catch hold of one person of the defeated team and take him or her to their group. The defeated team should run back to their wall before they could get caught. If both groups depict the same image, then all of them go back to their walls bent in half and mumbling. Repeat the game until one group swells. The same game can be played with the rabbit, the wall and the hunter. The rabbit can scale the wall, the hunter can shoot the rabbit.

16. Crumbs and Crackers

Divide the group into two and send them to opposite ends of the space. One group would be crumbs and the other group crackers. If the facilitator shouts 'crumbs', the crumbs have to catch the crackers. If the facilitator shouts 'crackers' the crackers have to catch the crumbs. The people from the team being caught should run back to his or her team before he or she is caught – if you are touched by a member of the opposite team you have to join that team. The facilitator creates tension by stammering with the first letter 'C' which is common to both crumbs and crackers, before calling out. Change the name to suit the group, for example 'koli and kottu' and 'paan and parippu'.

17. Grab the Shirt

Two teams are placed in two lines facing each other a distance apart with a shirt (or a rag) placed in the middle (or held by the facilitator). Each member of a team counts out and takes on a number from 1 to last. They have to remember their number. When the facilitator calls out a number, the task of each person of the two groups carrying that number is to get to the middle and take the shirt to their own group before the other person touches him or her. One person can touch the other only when the other has the shirt in hand. If one person brings the shirt home that team gets one point. If the person carrying the shirt is touched by the other before getting home the opposite team gets a point.

17. Bear Hunt

A volunteer becomes the bear and leaves the room. The others are woodcutters and can be busy doing various things. When the bear enters the room and roars loudly everyone freezes in whatever positions they are and are motionless pretending they are dead (it is preferable if they don't close their eyes). The task of the bear is to make the people move or laugh without touching them. If someone move or laughs then they become the victims of the bears and are converted into bears. After a short while the bears and those newly converted into bears return to the forest. The people start to move again until the bears enter and start again and the game ends when nearly everyone has been converted into a bear.

18. Slow Race

Get everyone into a line. Have a race to the other end of the room. The person who is last wins the race. Remember that each one has to be constantly moving once the race is on and the movements have to be large, as if they were running a real race.

19. Islands

You need large sheets of paper (newspaper) to be spread out on the ground - they are islands. Get everyone to stand on any island. When the facilitator says 'go', everyone must leave the island and swim around avoiding the islands. When the facilitator shouts 'sharks' they have to jump on the islands. If parts of their bodies are touching the ground the sharks can eat them! Gradually take away the sheets of paper so that the group work out a way for everyone to be safe on smaller islands.

20. Stone Thief

Each person gets a stone and keeps it on the palm of the hand (without clutching it). Then everyone must place their hand behind their backs (open). The task is to walk around the room and while trying to retain your own stone, collect as many stones as possible from others with the other hand and placing it on the open palm behind your back.

21. Grandmothers Steps

One person stands facing the wall (grandmother) with his or her back to the rest of the group. The others stand at the opposite wall facing grandmother. The task is to go forward and touch grandmothers' back. It's not that easy, because if grandmother turns back and sees someone moving he or she calls those people's names and they have to go back to where they started. Whoever succeeds in touching grandmother's back gets the chance to play grandmother.

22. Touching objects

Everyone forms a circle as small as possible in the middle of the room. The facilitator gives a list of simple things to do (e.g. touch one chair, one wall, two windows; shake a hand, say 'hello' to everyone in the room etc.). At the command everyone performs the list and gets back to the circle as soon as possible. Repeat with a new list of things to do while increasing the number of tasks to perform each time.

23. My kind of music

Ask each person in the room to produce a rhythm or melodic sound. Choose one person as a conductor, who will listen to the sounds. Now the conductor with a gesture of the hand or with the help of a baton asks each person to produce their corresponding rhythm or sound. They must be quiet when the conductor does not require their sound. The conductor produces a piece of music to his or her liking. Everyone can take a turn being a conductor.

24. Knots

Form groups of about 12 persons in each (perhaps about 6-8 to start with) and ask them to stand in a circle. Ask each one to hold the hand of the person standing opposite to him or her with their right hand. Now with their left hand they should hold another hand. Now ask them to undo this knot without letting go their hands to reform the circle.

25. Find the Spot

Everyone moves around. Freeze them. Each one picks a spot or object in the room. Close the eyes, and at the command, go to that spot or touch the chosen object. At the end analyze how far each one is from their chosen object.

26. Trust Walk

Make pairs of 'A' and 'B'. 'B' closes their eyes (and keeps eyes shut throughout), stretches one hand out and keeps the other hand behind the back. 'A' holds the hand of 'B' and leads him or her through the room. After some time of roaming they go back to where they started and swap roles. 'A' and 'B' each chooses a sound for themselves and sounds it to each other. Now do the above exercise of leading the other with the sound only. The person with the eyes closed moves towards the sound and stops when the sound stops. After some time, go back to the place where you began and swap roles. To make it harder the facilitator can ask the sound maker to stop making the sound, move to a different position in the room and then start again, and see if their partner can find them.

27. Identify the sound

Form a circle holding hands. Each one produces a sound. Now listen and familiarize yourselves with the sounds of the person to your right and your left. All move freely

around the room. Ask everyone to close their eyes and produce their sounds. Guided by the sounds re-form the circle.

28. The blind hug

Get participants to form pairs. Move around the room randomly without your partner. Freeze everyone. Each person turns toward his or her partner who may be anywhere in the room. Stretch your arms to hug your partner. All close eyes. Now move towards your partner and hug him or her with eyes shut.

29. Handshake

Form two rows facing each other. Each person shakes hands with the person in front and freezes the handshake. All close their eyes and keeping their hands in that frozen position takes three steps back. At the command, with eyes still shut they take three steps forward and reform the handshake. Open eyes and analyze success.

30. Bombs & Shields

Ask the group to walk around the room and select one other person without letting them know that they have been selected. This is person 'A'. Ask the group to keep moving around the room, while keeping as much distance as possible from 'A'. Select another person as person 'B' and move around the room keeping as close as possible to person 'B'. Now ask everyone to assume that their person 'A' is a bomb and 'B' a shield who can protect them from the bomb. Their task is to move as far away from person 'A' as possible and make sure their shield is between them and the bomb at all times. Freeze the game at any given moment and see how people fared. Ask what people felt during the game. The focus of this game is the concept of fear and protection. The metaphors used in this game should be changed according to the situation.

31. Shoe Game

Everyone sits in a circle with a shoe in his or her hand. The tune of the song is the song of the dwarfs in 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs'. The song is sung while the participants pass the shoe in hand around the circle to the rhythm of the beat.

They begin with learning the rhythm. All say the words: "pass, pass, dummy, dummy, pass". Now they learn to pass the shoe to that rhythm.

"Pass" – pass shoe to your neighbor on the left.

"Pass" – pass shoe to your neighbor on the left.

"Dummy, dummy" – tap your shoe to your left in front of your neighbor (first dummy) and then tap it to the right, (second dummy)

"Pass" – pass shoe to your neighbor on the left.

Once the rhythm is familiar you can incorporate the song to the same action.

"Hi ho" - pass shoe to your neighbor on the left.

"Hi ho" - pass shoe to your neighbor on the left.

"It's off"- tap your shoe to your left in front of your neighbor and do a dummy (fake) pass.

"To work"- tap your shoe to your right in front of your neighbor and take it back.

"We go" - "Hi ho" - pass shoe to your neighbor on the left.

"With a shovel, a pick" - pass shoe to your neighbor on the left.

"and a candle stick" - pass shoe to your neighbor on the left.

"Hi ho" - tap your shoe to your left in front of your neighbor and do a dummy (fake) pass.

"Hi ho" - tap your shoe to your right in front of your neighbor and take it back.

"Hi ho" - pass shoe to your neighbor on the left.

32. The shivering countdown

Form a large circle. With the same tune everyone shakes their right leg ten times counting out loud 10,9,8,7,6,5,4,3,2,1 then they do the same with the left leg, right hand, and left hand. Then they shake the right leg nine times counting out loud 9,8,7,6,5,4,3,2,1 and follow same pattern until we end with one shake of each leg and hand.

33. Tap tap

Everyone forms a circle and lies on their stomachs with their shoulders touching each other. Each one passes his or her right hand over the left hand of the other person. Now one person starts with taping the floor and the tap passes around. This could be done in such way that if someone taps twice, then the direction changes.

34. Passing the Ball

Everyone stand in a circle and counts from 1 to last, and remembers their number. No.1 gets the ball. Everyone moves around the room. Now no.2 shouts 'two' and the ball is passed to no.2. No.3 shouts 'three' and no.2 passes the ball to no.3. This continues until the last person gets the ball. All the time the group is moving around the room. If someone drops the ball they must start from the beginning. When you get to the last, start counting down from that number to '1' in the same way.

35. Alarm Clock

Form a circle with everyone holding hands. Break the circle at one point and rotate the group in such way to form a spiral. Everyone squats on the ground holding hands. Starting from the outer corner one by one everyone sounds the tick of the clock - 'Tick Tick'. As the tick reaches the last person, in the middle of the spiral everyone jumps in the air to sound the alarm.

36. The laughing centipede

A game suitable just after a heavy meal. One person lies on their back. The next person lies across with his or her head on the first person's stomach. The third

person lies across with the head on the second person's stomach. Go on until everyone has formed this pattern. Then the first person makes a sound 'Ha', the second person sounds two ('Ha...ha') and the third person three ('Ha...ha...ha') and so on. If someone laughs then start all over again. You could do it with a burping sound too, if you wish!

37. Count & Clap

Form a circle. Decide on a number to count up to, for example, up to 50. Now the facilitator calls out a random number between 2 and 10, for example 5. Now starting randomly from anywhere the group start to count up to 50, but number 5 and multiples of 5 do not say the number but clap once (for example, 5,10,15,20,25,30,35,40,45,50 do not say the number but clap once). If the person who should clap, does not clap or pronounces the number, the group has to start again, from any point in the circle. If a person who should say the number claps, or it someone says a wrong number, start all over again, from any point of the circle.

38. Count out

The group stays in any position they like. The purpose of this game is that without any guidance they have to count from 1 to 10. Anybody can start and any one can say the next number. But, if two people say a number at the same time, start all over again.

39. Grouping

The group stands at random or keeps moving around the room. The facilitator shouts out a number and the group should form teams as quickly as possible with that number of members in the team. Again they move around. Repeat with variation. When you need to divide the group into smaller units you could use this game. As an extension of this exercise, ask the group to form objects. For example, 3 circles, or a more complicated one, 1 circle and 2 squares.

40. Believe your ears

Make small groups of 6-10 persons standing in a circle. Stretch right hand sideward at shoulder height with palm open towards the person at the right. Now turn your head towards the left person and move your nose as close as possible towards the open palm of the person at your left. Now break the group at one point and ask the leader to move around the room. Everyone follows, of course maintaining there noses as close as possible to the palm of the person now in front.

41. Unity Clap

Everyone sits or stands in a circle. Keep hands in front of you in a position to clap. The purpose of this game is that without anyone leading and in total silence

everybody should clap once at one and the same time. Repeat exercise until you are successful.

42. Shout out a sentence

Divide the group into two teams. Each team decides on one sentence of no more than 7 words, which they are going to repeatedly pronounce loudly to the other team. Once both teams have decided on their sentence get both teams to stand in a line facing one another. When the signal is given both teams at the same time shout out aloud the sentence they had agreed upon. Now ask each team to guess what the sentence the other team had pronounced was. Repeat this again with other sentences. Ask each group to guess again. Ask them if it was easier or harder to guess during the second round.

43. Magic mouse

Ask for two volunteers. Get the rest of the participants to divide into groups of 4 or 5 and join hands in a straight line. Now all of these small lines consisting of 4 or 5 should form a large circle with each line facing the backs of the other line. One of the volunteers will be the cat and the other the mouse. The objective of the cat is to catch the mouse. The mouse will run for it's life, and if caught will transform into a cat. Now the small lines could either assist the mouse or the cat as they wish, but they cannot let go of their hands. If the mouse catches hold of the hand of the person at one end of a small line then the person at the opposite end of that same line will be transformed into a mouse, and now the cat has to catch the new mouse.

44. Five gestures

Ask anyone to present a certain gesture along with a corresponding sound. Ask the rest of the group to remember it and follow doing the same. This will be gesture number 1. Now ask for four more gestures and get the group to remember them in the order of the number presented. Now the facilitator asks everyone to move around the room and as soon as a number is shouted the group has to present that particular gesture. Now try doing two combinations at a time; then three combinations at a time; four at a time; five at a time.

45. Target

Divide the group into two teams. Ask each team to secretly decide on five people on the opposite team who are going to be their target. Once this is done the two teams face each other and one person of each team steps forward. The team decide in which order to send their participants. If the person who steps forward is not a person on their target list then a pre decided gesture is shown and the person returns to their group. If the person stepping forward is on the target list the team shoots that person down. The team that shoots their five targets first, wins. Use the same principles of the game and change the words and attitudes of the game in creative ways.

46. House the goats

Divide the group into teams of three with one volunteer being free. Now two persons of each team of three join their hands sloping high to form a house and the other person who is the goat takes shelter under this house in a crouching position. When the volunteer who is free shouts 'house' only all those who are forming houses should change their positions and reform houses over the people who are acting as goats. The volunteer who was free tries to take position of a house now, leaving another person free. If 'goat' is shouted, then the houses stay still and only those depicting goats should change position. If 'earthquake' is shouted then all depicting goats and houses change.

47. Colored balls

Two or three balls of different colors are needed. All stand in a circle. Someone starts and names a partner and remembers his or her name, then that person names another partner and so on. Now there is a sequence of names with a beginning and end. Start passing the ball from the beginning to the end in order of the sequence. After a brief moment pass the second ball and after another brief moment pass the third. All two or three balls must pass through each person from beginning to end. Try this moving around the room.

48. Goodbye

The objective is for everybody in the room to shake hands with every other person in the room and say goodbye. But the condition is that each one has to be holding another person's hand at all times.

49. Golden egg

All walk around the room with arms folded and eyes closed. The group leader touches someone on the back and they become the Golden Egg. If someone bumps into another they must say quietly 'Golden Egg?' If that person is the Golden Egg they do not reply and the person who asked sticks onto them. If they are not the Golden Egg they reply 'no' and the person moves on. Once you are stuck to the Golden Egg you too become a Golden Egg and therefore people can now stick to you. The game ends when all are stuck in the middle together.

50. Pass the ball

Ask for a volunteer who will be in the middle closing his or her eyes while the rest of the group will stand in a circle. A ball will be passed around and the person in the middle will clap hands. The person who clapped will tell the person in whose hand the ball is at the moment of the clap to enter the circle and do a certain task. The person who did the task then takes the ball, closes their eyes and the game continues.

51. Forming figures

Everyone walks around the room. The facilitator shouts out various formations that the group has to make in smaller groups. Encourage them to be innovative in creating forms and add sounds to the form to bring it to life. For example, 'form one palm tree, one umbrella and rain', 'form a cat, mouse and dog' and so on. Try to connect each form in some way, for instance ask the cat group to chase the mouse group and the dog to chase the cat.

52. Chair race

This is done in two groups. Each group has about 4 or 5 chairs, and forms a line opposite the other group at one end of the room. Ask each member of the group to stand on the chairs. There should be one or two less chairs than the number of people in each group so they are tightly packed on the chairs. The objective of the game is to take this line of chairs with the group on them to the other end of the room with no one touching the ground. The group that reaches the end of the room first wins the race.

53. Sticky paper

Begin the game in pairs. Each pair should have a piece of paper that will serve as sticky paper. One person in the pair sticks the paper on his or her partner and attaches his or herself to it. Once everyone has done this ask them to walk around the room. Do the same thing in groups of three or four and even in two groups. The same game could be done in a circle. Ask a volunteer to come into the middle of the circle. Ask someone else to come in and stick themselves to the first with sticky paper. One by one everyone comes in and forms a large image. You can introduce some movement and sound to the image.

54. Behind the veils

Divide the participants into two groups. Ask each group to sit facing each other and place two people in the middle holding a veil (or cloth) in such a way that no person from one group can see anyone in the other group (the veil should not be transparent). Each group should decide on one person who will move to sit as close as possible to the veil, facing the opposite group. The two chosen people are separated by the veil. When the facilitator counts to three they guess who they are facing just before the veil is dropped. The group whose chosen person guesses correctly get a point. You can consult with group members before counting starts.

55. Whose leading?

Everyone stands in a circle. Ask a volunteer to leave the room. Among the rest, find someone to lead the group in doing whatever action he or she wishes. The volunteer comes back into the room and the leader leads the group, subtly changing the movement over time, without giving away who is leading. The volunteer must guess

who is leading – they have three chances to guess correctly. If the volunteer guesses right the leader then leaves the room and so on.

56. Horseshoe rhythms

Ask the group to arrange themselves in a horseshoe formation, on the floor. Someone starts a rhythm which must travel right round the horseshoe to the other end. Then the person at the other end starts another rhythm and it goes back in the other direction. Each participant will always be in the middle of doing one rhythm till this person replaces it with the rhythm that arrives on his right or left. You can use background music for a richer performance.

57. Balance the pen

Form pairs. Each pair should stick a pen between their foreheads and walk around exploring the room without the pen falling off. They cannot use their hands to support the pen. This can be done with an apple or an orange or a small ball.

58. Scaling

Select one corner of the room as one extreme and the other corner of the room as the other extreme and the line in between these corners would be a gradient of variations from one extreme to another. Now give some statements and request the participants to show their belief (or not) in the statements by placing themselves along this line. For example, 'mangoes are my favourite fruit', 'I find it difficult to get up in the morning', 'HIV can be caught by kissing someone', 'violence is never justified'. If you want to, carry out snapshot interviews with people along the line to find out more about their views and stimulate discussion.

59. One word story

Everyone sits in a circle. The story begins with one person saying "Once", the next person says "Upon", the next person says "A "... And so the game continues with each person in the circle adding a word onto the story going in a clockwise direction. The facilitator can prompt the group with beginning/middle/end of the story, or with a theme.

60. Story, story, story

Ask three to five volunteers to line up facing the group. The facilitator points to an individual in the line up who tells a story until the facilitator points to another person. That next person adds onto the story until the facilitator points to one of the other individuals. If there is too long a pause, then that person would sit out. The game continues until only one or two of the individuals in the line up remains. The

facilitator could instruct the group to tell a fairytale, or to mime actions while telling the story.

61. Sound / mover

Ask the group to get into pairs. One person becomes the sounder, the other becomes the mover. The sounder makes any kinds of sounds – churps, gurgles, alarms, etc. with his/her voice while the mover responds through movement. After a few minutes, switch roles.

62. Sculpture garden

Ask the group to get into groups of three. Each individual has a number, either 1/2/3. Number one will first direct or sculpt the group, putting him/herself into the sculpture. After the sculpture is complete, take turns sharing with the other groups. Next, number 2's will sculpt. The facilitator can give the groups a theme to explore through their images.

63. Cooking beans

The group will perform the following short skit, using different genres.

Actor 1: (mimes stirring beans)

Actor 2: (enters) What are you cooking?

Actor 1: Beans

Actor 2: Can I have some?

Actor 1 (hands mimed spoon) Sure

Actor 2: (plays like she/he is falling ill, collapses to the floor)

Actor 1: Is there a doctor in the house?

Actor 3: I'm a doctor (improvises a cure, for example, feeds medicine, casts a spell, other tactics)

Actor 2: (pops up) I'm cured!

Act this out like a western movie, opera, silent movie, rock concert, etc.

64. Spitfire Cannon

Everyone stands in a circle. One person does a large movement with a sound, the movement goes clockwise in the circle quickly until it passes the person who started the movement. The next person in the circle does a sound/movement in rapid succession. The rhythm/pace of the actions around the circle should not lose momentum.

65. Three changes

Ask the group to form pairs. Pairs identify themselves as either 'A' or 'B'. A stands in front of B and has 30 seconds to observe their physical appearance and clothing. A turns their back to B. B has thirty seconds to change three things (for example, roll up trouser leg, take out an earring, button a shirt, flip hair to other side). A turns back around and will try to guess what three things were changed. Switch players.

66. Abaco/labaruna/undalay

This is a call and response game. When the caller says ABACO, the audience claps once. Ask the group to demonstrate this. When the caller says UNDALAY, the audience claps four times. When the caller says LABARANA, the audience claps ten times (with a louder accent or emphasis on the 1st, 4th, 7th, and 10th claps). Switch back and forth between ABACO, UNDALAY, and LABARANA.

67. Emotion exchange

The group forms two parallel lines facing one another. Partners are created by who is standing across from them in the line. One person in the first line begins by demonstrating an emotion with a movement/sound walking towards their opposite number in the other line. This person walks towards their partner trying to mimic the movement/emotion exactly. The two partners circle one another until the movement/emotion is exactly synchronized. When they have achieved synchronicity, the rest of the individuals in the line clap to let them know that they have achieved their goal. The partners separate and go to the end of the two lines. The next two partners at the front of the lines take a turn, etc. until everyone has had a turn.

68. Doggy doggy where's your bone

A good game for younger children. One person is the dog and sits on a chair with their back to the rest of the group. A bone, or object is placed under the chair. One of the members of the group sneaks up to steal the bone and then hides it under her/his back. Once the bone is hidden, the rest of the group calls, 'Doggy, doggy where's your bone? Someone stole it from your home!' The 'dog' turns around and tries to guess who took the bone (possibly through detection of where the sound of footsteps was coming from, or facial expressions). The 'dog' has three guesses. The person that took the bone has a turn as the dog, and the game continues. You could instruct young people to play as an animal, moving like that animal and making responses to accusations in character. The game creates strong listening and focus.

69. Across the room if/stand up if

The group is seated. The facilitator instructs that when he/she says, 'Stand up if...' and then describes something. Participants stand up in agreement if they have that trait in common. For instance, 'Stand up if you like chocolate'. All those that like chocolate will stand. The group sits down again after each question. The exercise can be used for discussion. For instance, 'Stand up if you think students should wear uniforms to school.' For those standing, you can ask why they made that choice.

The exercise can also be used to find out about participants. Example, 'Stand if you are a member of an NGO, Stand if you are a member of the University, etc.'

70. Rainstorm

Explain to the group that together you will all simulate the sound of a rainstorm coming into and then leaving the room. Have the group sit in a circle. Explain that you will begin a movement and each person in turn must continue this movement when it reaches them in the circle. When the first movement has gone around the circle and has reached you again, begin the second movement, and likewise send it around the circle. No-one should stop doing a movement until the next one reaches them in the circle. Continue this until you have sent around and received back the following list of movements:

- rubbing hands
- clicking fingers
- clapping hands
- slapping thighs
- stamping feet
- slapping thighs
- clapping hands
- clicking fingers
- rubbing hands

71. Puppets

The group gets into pairs. The pairs label themselves 'A' and 'B'. A is the puppet and B is the puppeteer. B must move A as a puppet that is attached to imaginary strings. They imagine that a string is attached to the puppet's head, arms, legs, back and stomach. B takes A on a short journey around the space gently pulling the strings of the puppet and the puppet must move according to the string being pulled. After a while, A and B change roles and continue.

72. Palm to Nose

The group forms pairs. The pairs label themselves 'A' and 'B'. A places the palm of their hand a few inches away from B's nose. A begins to lead B around the space with their palm and B follows using their nose. After a few minutes A and B change roles.

73. What are you doing?

Everyone sits in a circle. One volunteer goes into the middle of the circle and begins doing an action, for example, eating. A second volunteer goes into the middle of the circle and asks the person doing the action; 'what are you doing?' The person doing

the action replies that they are doing something different to the action they are actually doing, for example, 'I am singing'. The second volunteer begins to do the action the first volunteer claimed to be doing (singing) and the first volunteer sits down. The game continues with in this way with people going in to the middle of the circle when they choose to.

74. Clay

Everyone sits in a circle. The first person picks up a piece of imaginary clay and begins sculpting a present for the person sitting next to them. Once they have completed making their present they hand it over to person next to them and the group must try to guess what it is. The next person then makes the clay into something else and gives that to the person next to them. The game continues in the same way around the circle.

75. Facial expressions

Everyone sits in a circle. The first person makes an expression with their face. As if that face is a mask they pass the expression from their face to the face of the person sitting next them. That person must make that same expression once it is placed on their face. They then change to a different expression and pass it as a mask to the person sitting next to them. The game continues in the same way around the circle. Ask the group to add a sound effect for each new face they create as the group continues.

76. Colours

Everyone sits in a circle. Each person assigns themselves a different colour. A caller goes into the middle of the circle and calls out a colour three times very quickly. The person who is that colour must say their colour before the caller has said it three times. If the person does not say their colour in time, they become the caller in the middle of the circle. The caller continues to stay in the middle until this happens. You can do this with names, fruit etc. too

77. Through the rushes

This is a good game at the end of the day. The group forms two lines facing each other. The distance should be far enough for outstretched arms to reach each others hands. The hands of the people standing opposite should be placed gently on top of each other. The pair at one end breaks off. The first person closes their eyes and walks through the two lines of people. The people in the lines should allow their hand to gently separate and guide the person to the end. When the person has walked through the two lines, they open their eyes. The next person in the pair does the same. When they have walked through the lines they form a pair again. The next pair at the other end of the line breaks off and in the same way walks through the lines. The game continues until all of the pairs have walked through the lines.

78. This bottle is not a bottle

Everyone sits in a circle. A plastic bottle is placed in the middle of the circle. A volunteer goes into the circle, picks up the bottle and uses it as another object, for example, a cricket bat (the bottle can be anything except a bottle.) The group guesses what object the bottle is. Another volunteer goes into the middle and repeats. The game continues in the same way.

79. The band

This game can be played by the entire group or by dividing the group into smaller groups. Everyone sits in a circle and chooses a musical instrument they will be. One person in the group is the music conductor and goes into the middle of the circle. The conductor points to people in the circle and they begin to make the sound of the instruments. The conductor can signal louder or quieter volume, and point to certain instruments to stop and start playing at different times. The game continues in this way. After a while give other people a chance to be the conductor. The instruments can change places if they would like to.

80. Popcorn

Starts with everyone moving around the space. The leader shouts a number and there is a race to get into groups of that number. Once the groups have got the right number they have to jump up for that number (groups of 6 do 6 jumps) and then shout "Popcorn!" before they can sit down. It doesn't matter if the groups don't divide evenly. The group with the 'wrong' number just has to jump up for the number of people in the group and shout "Popcorn!" too before they can sit down.

81. Matchbox tag

This is suitable for a quiet space as it means a lot of listening. Everyone moves around the space with eyes closed (or with eyes covered with scarves). Give everyone some time to get used to this and have a few people at the edges of the space for safety. The leader then gives one person in the group something that makes a small noise. A box of matches is ideal or a little box of gravel. That person is then the chaser and they have to shake the box at all times to show where they are. The rest of the group are trying to escape. Once they have been touched they move to the sides and help the people on the edge. When there is only one or two people left the people at the edges can reduce the space to maximise the tension! The game ends when everyone is caught.

82. Song tag

The same as above except that instead of a box of matches everyone must sing a song very quietly. The group agrees before the game starts which song the catcher will sing and when the leader chooses a catcher they start to sing that song. The game ends when everyone is caught.

83. Building a shed

The group forms a circle and one person goes into the middle and starts a simple mime of building a shed (for example, hammering nails or sawing wood) The next person goes in and says "What are you doing?" and the person in the middle replies "I'm building a shed". This is the only dialogue but the rule is that the person who has started has to reply in the same way as the person who asked the question. This works best if the voices are very exaggerated. The third person comes in with a different voice and asks the second person the same question. Everyone stays in the circle and the mime continues until everyone has had a go.

84. Stand still...walk...run...lie down.

Give the following instructions to the group – 'stand still', 'walk', 'run', 'lie down'. Explain that these instructions will always happen in the same order. The group moves around the space and after a while the leader just says 'now' to change from one to the other and the group change the action, but keeping to the same order. The final stage is when each individual decides when to move for themselves, still keeping the same order. This can be used to build up short stories with the leader shouting 'freeze!' when they see an interesting image being created by the group.

85. Hospital tag

Just like normal tag but when someone has been 'tagged' by the catcher, they must hold the spot on their body where they have been touched. Each person has three 'lives' before they are out of the game.

86. Behind the knee tag

Like the game above but the catcher must touch people on the back of the knees to catch them. This can also be played in pairs.

87. Sword fight tag

Like the above but everybody keeps their left hand open behind their back and makes a "sword" with their right index finger (or with their left if they are left handed). The catcher can only catch the rest of the group by 'stabbing' their open palm. This game can also be played in pairs.

88. Eel, salmon, trout

Ask the group to get into three groups. The groups are Eels, Salmon and Trout (this can be changed to more local names if necessary). Ask the groups to form one circle. The leader shouts out one of the names and all that group get up and start to walk round the outside of the circle in a clockwise direction. When the leader shouts 'River's turning' they change direction. 'River's racing' means they start running,

'River's turning back' means that they go back to their original places without changing direction. When the group gets good it is possible to have two or even three groups up at the same time going in different directions. Usually descends into chaos!

89. Rabbit game

The whole group stands in a circle. Every person in the group is a rabbit, and must stand with their fingers stretched out from the top of their head to indicate their long ears. Each rabbit has a number, from '1' to however many are in the group. Rabbit number 1 starts the game by saying 'rabbit number one, rabbit number one to rabbit number...' passing on to the rabbit number of their choice, for example, 'rabbit number 5'. Rabbit number 5 takes up the game by continuing, 'rabbit number 5, rabbit number 5 to rabbit number...' If anyone pauses or slips up they are out of the game. After a while say that the rabbits on each side of the rabbit who is 'on' must show respect to that rabbit by holding their hand behind their ear to show they are listening carefully as the rabbit who is 'on' receives and passes on the call. If the rabbit either side fails to do this, they are also out of the game. Continue until there is a clear winner.

90. If I had a million (pounds, rupees etc)...

A chance to imagine, good as a warm down game and for memory. Ask the group to get into a circle. A volunteer starts by completing the sentence, 'if I had a million pounds I would...'. Use local currency where appropriate. The person next to them then starts, 'if I had a million pounds I would...' and says what the first person said and then adds an idea of their own. The third person says the first, then the second person's idea, then adds their own. And so on, until you get to the end of the group.

91. Name, a fact and a lie

A good starter game. Ask the group to form a circle. Each person in the group takes a turn to tell the others in the group their name, a fact and a lie or mistruth about themselves, for example, 'my name is Jenny, I got up at 7 this morning and I flew to work...'. The rest of the group have to identify the lie. The game works better when the lie is less obvious...

92. Bat and moth

Everyone stands in the space. A volunteer plays the bat – and the bat is blindfolded. Another three volunteers (could be two, depending on numbers in the group) are the moths. The rest of the group stand round the edges of the room and ensure the bat does not walk into a wall. The bat must catch one of the moths, and the moths try not to be caught. The bat (blindfolded) detects the moths by saying 'bat' upon which the moths must immediately reply 'moth'. After a while, trees can be added – they respond 'tree' when the bat calls 'tree' but cannot move. Any bat that runs into a

tree is out. Take turns being the bat...someone can keep score by counting how many moths each bat has caught.

93. Whose story is it?

This game can take a good half an hour and is better with groups that do not number more than 10 people. Divide the group into two. In each small group individuals tell short stories from a moment in their lives that they want to share with the group. Once everyone has told a story, the group select one story to tell the other group. When both groups are ready, the line up and face each other. Decide which group starts the game. Each individual in the group chosen must briefly tell the selected story to the other group. They must tell the story as accurately as possible. The listening group then can ask each individual one question about the story. The listening group must then guess who the story belongs to.

94. 123

The group is split into pairs. Ask each pair to decide who is 'A' and who is 'B'. Person 'A' begins by saying '1', person 'B' responds with '2' and person 'A' replies with '3'. Carrying straight on person 'B' this time starts with '1', person 'A' with '2' and person 'A' with '3'. Speed it up to make it more difficult. Gradually replace the numbers with an action and/or a sound.

95. Oil slick

Everyone moves round the space at a fast pace. When the group leader shouts 'oil slick' the group must try and occupy as much space as possible, leaving no gaps. However, each person in the group must have one part of their body in contact with another participant.

96. Presents

A good warm down and/or preparation for imaginative work. Everyone sits in a circle. The group imagines that there is a large pile of presents, of all shapes and sizes in the middle of the room. Each person in turn chooses a present for the person sitting next to them, then goes to the centre of the circle and carries it to them (miming the present's shape, size, weight etc). The receiver of the present must thank the giver, carefully unwrap their package and show us what is inside by miming a response or using the object in some way.

97. On the river, on the bank

The group forms a line. In front of them is an imaginary line (you can use a rope to show the line). One side of the line is the river and the other side is the bank. If the leader shouts 'on the river', the group must jump over the line to the river, and vice versa if the leader shouts 'on the bank'. The leader tries to catch the group out by repeating the same instruction a number of times, speeding up etc.

98. Animal kingdom

The group is sitting in a line of chairs in a semi-circle. Decide which end of the line is 'the king of animals'. Each member of the group must then decide which animal they are – they must choose an animal and invent a sound and small movement to show which animal they are. The group show each other their animal sound/movement. The game starts by the king of the animals doing their sound/movement and then the sound/movement of someone else in the group. The person whose animal the king chooses must repeat their own sound/movement and then pass onto someone else by doing a different animal sound/movement. And so on. If someone hesitates, they must go to the bottom of the line of chairs and everyone who was below them moves up one place. The objective of every animal is to be the king of animals at the top of the line.

99. Your game!!!

Give a name for a game and ask the group to invent a game that would be suitable for that name.

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