

# SOCIAL DISTANCING GAMES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH



# WELCOME

Here are some ideas for games and activities which will work in a socially distanced setting with your children and youth groups. Let us know how you get on or send us your other ideas to [youthchildren@salvationarmy.org.uk](mailto:youthchildren@salvationarmy.org.uk).

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## THE RESOURCE

Games for Children and Youth is split into the following seven categories:

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**Disclaimer:** Games included in this pack will need to be risk assessed for your own group. Some games may not be suitable for every group or situation. Remember to get any parental permissions required and to carry out sessions within The Salvation Army's 'Safe and Sound' Guidelines.

# INTRODUCTION

Ensure you check the latest government guidance for your area.

Before running any activity ensure risk assessments are completed and submitted and check with your local Salvation Army leader. The National Youth Agency (NYA) also has relevant guidance and advice on running activities safely and in a Covid secure way. <https://nya.org.uk/>

Remember to consider the space you have available and the number of participants taking part when planning. Many of the games included are chosen so that only one young person uses resources and they can be cleaned before another user needs it or games have limited touch points throughout.

Remember to mark out social distancing spacing on the floor; clean surfaces and equipment regularly and ensure young people wash their hands at regular intervals.

We suggested a number of other games in our earlier released booklet of online games, many of which can be easily adapted for use in socially distanced way.

We haven't duplicated these here so make sure you download both resources from <https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/youth-and-children>



## 21

In each round the group must count to 21. The counting must be in sequence from 1-21. Each young person takes a turn and can call out up to 3 numbers each time - they can choose less - until they get to the young person who would say '21'. That young person would then be out.

Remember each participant can choose to say up to 3 numbers at a time but may choose to say only the next one or two numbers.

The game can be played until two young people are left where a duel can take place to determine the winner.

The rules can be adapted so if one number is said the count continues in order, if two numbers are said the count reverses direction, and if three numbers are said, the count skips the next player.

## DETECTIVE

Get the young people to stand in a circle, then nominate a "detective" to leave so they can't hear what's going on. The host can pick a leader who will start initiating movements (like scratching your head or funny dance moves) that everyone else will copy. Then the "detective" returns and stands in the middle of the circle. They have to try and figure out who's the leader of the group in three guesses! Next game, the leader becomes the detective and the game continues.

## DESTINATION IMAGINATION

Ask each young person to think of a city or country they would like to visit or have visited and think of three clues to share with the other players so they can guess the destination. Instead of young people being able to just say their clue, you could request each clue must be acted. Keep score of which young people can guess the most destinations.

## FISH BOWL

First, everyone writes down a few words or phrases on "cards" that will be guessed later. The group will then randomly be split into two teams!

Players from each team will alternate turns, giving clues to their team to guess as many cards as possible against the clock. There'll be 3 rounds, and cards will get recycled after each round!

**Round 1: Taboo.** Use words to describe the word or phrase on the card, without any acting or gestures. You cannot use any part of the word or phrase!

**Round 2: Charades.** Without words or sounds, act and use gestures to communicate the word or phrase on the card.

**Round 3: Password.** You can say exactly one word to describe the word or phrase on the card, no more! You'll rely on your team's memory and association.

## LOOK UP, LOOK DOWN

Get young people to stand in a circle and look down. On your instruction of 'Look Up' all young people look up directly at someone else in the group. If two young people are looking directly at each other they are both eliminated and sit down. The leader says 'Look down', - pause - then 'Look Up'. Keep playing until only two young people are left and win.

## PACK OF CARDS BUILD

Gather together lots of packs of cards or ask each young person to bring their own. Set challenges e.g. talent tower, widest bridge, take the weight of ...

Make sure every young person has a stable surface to work on which can't be knocked by others.



# ON THE SPOT

## CONTINUED

### HONEY IF YOU LOVE ME, SMILE

Get young people to sit in a circle. Choose one young person to move around the circle and say, 'Honey if you love me will you please smile'. The young person who is being spoken to must reply and say without smiling or laughing, 'Honey you know I love you but I just can't smile'. If they laugh or smile, they swap with the person in the middle.

### RAPIDOUGH

Pictionary with dough. Each participant has their own ball of clay/dough/plasticine. Give each young people their own word to model and then ask each young person to share in turn while everyone else writes their guess.

### STONE-FACED

Split the young people in to two teams. The two teams face each other. In turns, the teams are given one minute to make members of the others team smile and laugh. Those who do are eliminated. Players cannot close their eyes or look away.

### ZIP, ZAP, BOING

Ask everyone to get into a circle. One person begins and must quickly pass on the energy to another person. They can pass it on in three different ways, shouting:

'Zip!' - the energy passes to the left with an arm sweep /  
'Zap!' - the energy is beamed to someone else in the circle by pointing both hands like an imaginary ray gun / 'Boing!' - someone repels the energy by raising both arms and it goes back to the person who sent it, who then has to pass it to someone else.

If players are too slow or use the wrong words, they are out!



# LOTS OF TALKING

## CLOSE YOUR EYES

Ask one young person to close their eyes and then get members of the group to ask them questions about their surroundings. E.g. Where is the clock? What colour is ... jumper? Who is sat two places away from you on your left?

When they get question wrong, move to a new player. Questions will get harder as players become more aware of their surroundings.

## DESERT ISLANDS DISCS

Tell the young people they are going to be stranded on a desert island, which 6 pieces of music, which one book and which luxury item do they take and why. You could have the young people choose who they would like to be stranded on an island with given their choices. Or ask young people to make their choices anonymously and then the group have to guess who they think made each list.

## I LOVE PIZZA

Ask all young people to think of things they 'love'. In turns young people must profess their love for whatever they have chosen and the rest of the group either agree by standing up or disagree by sitting down. There is no in between option. Play several rounds. Discuss did anyone 'love' things which everyone else did? Did anyone 'love' things which no one else did?

## LIKES AND DISLIKES

Everyone writes down a like and a dislike. The leader reads them back and young people have to debate which choice belongs to who.

## PANCAKES OR WAFFLES

Present young people with choices for round one: pancakes or waffles. Ask young people to discuss and debate which they would choose and then vote. Whichever option loses the vote, is eliminated. Move to round two and add a new choice. It could be anything e.g. waffles vs. films. Give young people time to discuss and debate again and then vote. Whichever option loses the vote, is eliminated. Move to round three and add a new choice. e.g. Films vs dogs. You can vary how long you keep playing for.

## RIGMAROLE

A game of memory skill and counting with alliteration.

Players sit in a circle and the first player chooses a three-word alliterative phrase starting with the number 'one'. E.g. One old onion.

The second player repeats the first phrase and then adds a new alliterative phrase for number two. E.g. Two terrible twins.

The third player repeats the first two phrases and then adds a new phrase for number three. E.g. Three thirsty trees.

Keep playing until the number ten is reached and then start back with one again.

## THE TOP TEN

If you have a whiteboard, write the numbers 1 to 10 down the side, suggest a category e.g. films, crisp flavours, sports etc. Young people have to advocate for and agree a top 10 list.

## THE MOO GAME

Blindfold one young person. Can they guess who it is by the sound of their 'mooo'. Change the animal sound and see how creative your group can be.





# LOTS OF TALKING

## CONTINUED

### MULTI-COLOURSWEETS GAME

Give young people their own supply of colourful sweets. Assign categories to each colour e.g. favourite film, happiest memory, whatever fits your theme. Tell young people to take a sweet and be ready to share. You could change the colour assigned to each category each round so young people do not always take the same colour.

### WORD DIS-ASSOCIATION

You've probably played word association. The first person begins with a word, the next player suggests a synonym of that word or one which links, the next player does the same and so on. In Word Dis-association, the first player begins with a word, the next player has to say a word which has nothing to do with the original word. You'll need to appoint a judge to ensure fairness and players can't repeat a word already said.

### WORD SUBSTITUTION

Choose a substitute word as a group e.g. broccoli. Ask one young person to wait out of earshot of the rest of the group. Ask the group to decide on an action e.g. running. Ask the young person to come back and ask questions to guess what the action is. E.g. Can I broccoli at the moment? How often do people broccoli a day? When was the last time you broccoli? See if the young person can guess the action in 20 questions.

### THE TOP TEN

If you have a whiteboard, write the numbers 1 to 10 down the side, suggest a category e.g. films, crisp flavours, sports etc. Young people have to advocate for and agree a top 10 list.

### UNPOPULAR OPINIONS

What are your unpopular opinions? How popular are your unpopular opinions?

To get the game going, the leader could have a ready-made list of 'unpopular opinions'. E.g. pineapple does belong on pizza, dark chocolate digestives are better than milk chocolate digestives, showering at night is better than showering in the morning etc.

Share the statement with the group and discuss views, take a vote on each. When young people get use to the game, have them contribute their own suggestions.



# A HOTCHPOTCH OF GAMES

## BEETLE DRIVE

The instructions need a little more space than a quick paragraph but put 'Beetle Drive Game' into a search engine and you'll have a competitive game that will entertain young people.

## BUBBLE WRAP RACE

Who can walk across the bubble wrap making the least number of pops?

## GIANT Pictionary

Instead of Pictionary, why not try Giant Pictionary and give every young person flip chart paper and each draw giant images to show.

## GRAB THE...

Players stand in a large circle and the leader places an object in the centre e.g. a cup. (The size of the object could vary depending on age of players and what you have available.)

Give young people time to look and then choose a player to close their eyes and walk to pick the object up. They cannot swipe or feel around, they must simply walk and pick up. If they miss, they return and choose a new player. (Remember to clean the object each time it is touched.)

## LADDERBALL

You can purchase this game ready-made or use chairs, poles etc to create a series of 'ladder rungs' at different heights. Assign each step on the ladder a different number of points. Give each young person 2 small balls linked with string. Young people throw the balls and whichever step it wraps too, they receive that number of points. You could play to a target number.

## NOUGHTS AND CROSSES

Play noughts and crosses either side of a window by using chalk pens.

## PICTIONARY RELAY

Group young people into socially distant teams. Sit in lines. The first person comes to the leader and sees part of the image to draw. They share this with the next player who shares with the next – depending on how many are in each team.

### Example:

Instruction 1 may be, 'draw a circle on the left side of the page near the bottom.' Players pass this instruction on.

Instruction 2 may be, 'draw a circle on the right side of the page near the bottom.' Players pass this instruction on.

Keep going until the image is drawn and the player drawing must guess what it is.

Change the artists. Move onto a new image.

## ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS - SUPERHEROES!

Get the group to choose three superheroes and decide on actions for each. Decide who beats who and then compete against each other.

## SELFIE SEARCH

Ask the young people to take selfies around the building with different backgrounds. Take turns with young people sharing their images and others guessing where the image was taken.





# A HOTCHPOTCH OF GAMES

## CONTINUED

### REACT AND ACT

Write down scenarios, pick and share with young people.  
They react and act their response.

E.g. You've burnt your pizza. You've slipped on a banana skin.  
You've won 'guess the number of sweets in the jar'.

### SCRIBBLE

Someone draws an identical scribble on 2 whiteboards/  
flipchart paper. Players then have to turn the scribble into a  
work of art that the rest of the group then votes on.

### SLIDING PUZZLE

Set up using tape or cones a 3x3 grid with each box at least  
2mx2m. Number each square in the grid 1-9. Instruct 8  
young people to stand in one square each in the grid, leaving  
one square empty. Explain that you will give an instruction  
e.g. the person in square 1 must move to square 9. In moving  
there, players must only move into an empty square, one  
square at a time. When complete, change the players or give  
new instructions e.g. players in even number squares must  
move to odd numbers, players 2 and 4 must swap places etc.

### THE PRICE IS RIGHT

In advance of game night, take a trip to a shop and buy a  
selection of cheaply priced items. (Try to avoid everything  
costing 50p or £1.) Show young people each item in turn and  
then taking turns, so each young person can go first, ask  
them to reveal their price. They cannot say the same price as  
someone else. Whoever is the closest gets to keep the item.

### TRUE FALSE SPRINT

Have a series of True/False statements ready to give to young  
people. Label one end of the room 'True' and the other  
'False'. Play a few warm up rounds where young people  
can run from one end of room to the other - depending  
on whether a statement is True or False. As you play more  
rounds, eliminate those who run the wrong way or take too  
long.



# GET CREATIVE WITH PAPER

## CHATTERBOX

Think of some interesting questions and turn your piece of paper into a 'chatterbox'.

## JUMPING FROG RACES

Teach young people how to make a paper jumping frog, set a starting line and then get racing.

## PAPER BALL

Show the young people how to make an origami paper ball and then play a game of keepy ups with hands or feet.

## PAPER BOAT RACES

Model a few origami boats, use a piece of tarpaulin and a hose to create a water flow and get racing.

## PAPER AMERICAN FOOTBALL

Look up the origami instructions for creating your 'ball' and then have young people compete to score the most points. Two players sit either end of a long table. Each player gets four attempts to slide the 'ball' across the table. A touchdown score is by getting the 'ball' to finish partly on and partly off the end of the table. If a player scores, they get one attempt to flick the football through their opponent's goal, made by placing their wrists on the end of the table, touching their thumbs and pointing their index fingers up.

## PAPER AEROPLANE CONTEST

Model a few examples for young people to try (or ask them to share their designs), set a starting line and then fly those planes.



# GET ACTIVE

## CHAIR FOOTBALL

Mark a young person's space with tape on the floor and place a chair in each area. Players should be positioned across the playing area. Set up a goal at each end. Young people can only kick the ball around the space to score a goal. They must remain seated. If the ball becomes unreachable then a leader puts the ball back in play.

## CRAB SOCCER

Put a goal at either end. Crab soccer requires each young person to place their hands and feet flat on the ground and lift their back off the ground. They can only kick the ball using their feet. No hands allowed. In this version, young people need to stay in their marked area and try to pass the ball between players on their team to score.

## CRAZY GOLF

Use resources from around your building to set up a crazy golf course (think tubes, slopes, obstacles, hoops, etc.) Plastic hockey sticks and mini sponge balls can replace traditional golf clubs and balls. Keep score as young people play their way through the course.

## CROQUET

The object of the game is to hit your ball(s) through the course of six hoops in the right sequence in each direction and finish by hitting them against the centre peg.

Set up your own simple croquet course using chair legs as hoops and use whatever clubs you have available.

## CROSS THE RIVER

Give the young people something to represent stepping stones and an object to safely move from one end of the room to the other. They could work independently or in socially distant teams to transport the object from one end to the other without stepping off the stepping stones. Make this even more challenging by adding further criteria such as 'the ball must always bounce' or 'the object must stay balanced on your head' or 'don't stop hopping'.

## DARTS

Give each young person the materials to create their own dart board (cardboard, scissors, pens, etc). Have young people make their own images. They could split their circle into 4 quarters and a centre circle. Instead of darts, use the sticky figures that throw and stick to walls. Set up a tournament.

## FOOT BOWLS

Bowling using feet instead of hands. You could play the equivalent of 10 Pin Bowling or Bowls.

## FOOT GOLF

Sponge balls, plastic balls, tennis balls if you want to make it challenging. Use hoops, chairs, obstacles to set up a golf course but young people can only kick the ball.

## HUNGRY HIPPOS REVERSE

Mark out a 2m box for each young person. Pour a hundred ball pit balls in to the playing zone. Start the timer, and the young people need to kick as many balls out of their zone before the timer ends.

## IN THE RIVER

Get all the players to line up along a long line/rope. Be sure there's enough space either side for players to safely jump over the line/rope.

Explain to the young people that the side of the rope where they are stood is the 'bank' and the other is the 'river'.

When the leader calls the word 'river', players must jump over the rope and into the 'river'. When the leader calls 'bank' they must jump over the rope and back onto the 'bank'. The game leader can call 'river' or 'bank' in any order, as many times as they choose.

If a player jumps into the 'river' or onto the 'bank' when they are not supposed to, they are out of the game. You can also make it so that players are also eliminated if they take too long to jump. The last player remaining is the winner!

CONTINUED....





# GET ACTIVE

## CONTINUED

### OBSTACLES COURSES

Be as creative as you can to keep challenging young people to safely work their way through. Use blindfolds and young people to work with a partner using voice commands only to help them through.

### ON THE SPOT RELAYS

Split group into teams for the relay and spread out in lines. Give actions for each team to pass e.g. 10 star jumps, 5 sit ups, 8 floss dance moves. You can give one at a time or a sequence of commands for young people to do.

### PING PONG BOUNCE

Have a selection of containers, boxes, etc set up around the room and lots of ping pong balls. If you can get coloured ones then young people will always know which are theirs. Set up bouncing lines and keep score as young people try to score as many points as they can as they make their way around the course.

### SPORTS DAY

Set up a mini sports day by creating a variety of activity stations.

You could try: improvised hurdles for jumping, hula hooping, skipping, discus throw, egg and spoon balance, sack jump etc.

To make this competitive, set a time challenge before moving onto the next station.

### FOOT POOL

A large space, a lot of sponge balls, a few buckets on their side for pockets.

### SOCK SPORTS

How many sports can you do with a pair of socks? Try each activity for one minute.

**Sock Basketball** – Put a container an equal distance from each young person, how many times can they throw the socks in in one minute?

**Sock Skittles** – Set up some bottles or tubes as pins – how many pins can they knock down in a minute?

**Sock Keepy Uppies** – How many times can they kick the socks up without them touching the ground?

**Sock Throw** – Choose a starting position – what's the furthest throw they can do?

**Sock Jump** – how many times can you jump back and forth over the socks?

**Rainbow Sock Throw** – how many times can they throw the socks between their hands in one minute?

**Sock Shot** – Place the socks on the spot – how many goals can you score?

**Sock Scramble** – how many times can you put the socks on and off in one minute?

**Sock Jump** – Put your socks on and how far can you jump?



# PARTY GAMES

## BEANS

Leader calls out different beans and young people have to do an action associated with it. Do the wrong action or be the slowest and you are out. Examples: runner bean (run on the spot), baked bean (Lay and sunbathe), broad bean (spread arms out to the side).

## EGG AND SPOON RACE

It's up to you if you want to brave using real eggs!

## LIMBO

The young people take turns going under the stick without touching the stick, bending their knees and leaning as far back as necessary. No hands may touch the floor. Don't start with the stick too low.

## MUSICAL STATUES

Set up so each young person dances in their own space.

## PIN THE TAIL ON THE 'DONKEY'

Choose your image depending on the theme of the party. Give each young person their own 'tail' to pin.

## SLEEPING LIONS

Make silly noises and actions from a distance to see if you can make any young person smile or move.

## WINK MURDER

Gather young people in a circle. Ask one young person to be the guesser and move out of earshot of the group. One player is secretly designated as the murderer and has to wink at others in order to eliminate them from the game without being seen. Invite the guesser back. They have 3 guesses to guess the wink murderer.



# IN THE OPEN

## 4 CORNERS

In a large space, label the 4 corners: 1,2,3 & 4. The leader closes their eyes and shouts 'go' and young people need to run to one of the corners. The leader calls out a number and opens their eyes. All young people in that corner are eliminated. Keep going until one young person wins.

## BACK TO BASE

Choose a person to be 'on' and select a base, like a bench or tree. The person who is 'on' counts to 30 while everyone hides. They shout 'back to base' and start to look for people. The others have to sneak back to base without being spotted. Each person who is spotted is eliminated; the first person back undetected is the winner.

## FRISBEE GOLF (FROLF)

Set up a course around a large space using hoops as golf holes. Give each player their own frisbee, players then move around the course seeing how many throws it takes to get the frisbee in to the hoop.

## HIDE AND GO SEEK

One player closes their eyes and counts to 100 while the other players hide. The seeker opens their eyes and tries to find the hiders; the first one found is the next seeker, and the last is the winner of the round.

## NOODLE TAG

Choose someone to be 'It' and give them a pool noodle. On go, this person must tag others with the end of the pool noodle.

## SCAVENGER HUNTS

Challenge young people to search for different coloured nature objects. There are many themes you could base your hunts around: colours, numbers, spell a word etc. Decide what objects they should search for based on the location. To add a collaborative element, young people could work in (distanced) teams. Each is responsible for specific objects, so there shouldn't be any need to handle or pass anything to one another.



# SOCIAL DISTANCING GAMES

FOR CHILDREN  
AND YOUTH



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