

PARENT-CHILD ACTIVITY: Mom & Dad, we love it when you play with us! Play is 'heavenly joy' for all players!

When adults are filled with the spirit of play, it creates an atmosphere that takes children right out of themselves into the important business of the hour, whole-hearted, whole-souled fun, says Edna Geister in "Let's Play". Play is the best means for all children to learn. They learn the character of things and they learn the **joy** of things. But joy predominates and we ought to value play for this alone, says Mary Reed Newland, who also reminds us, "Joy is a reflection of Our Father Who is in Heaven. It is a tasting of heavenly joy"!

Dads and Moms with newborn infants never tire of gazing into their eyes, smiling and cooing near their face, urging any sign of response to their rapt attention. When a parent evokes the smallest response, they discover this heavenly joy. By the time their infant is a few months older, parents begin to elicit smiles and squeals of happiness from their little one by playing Peek-a-Boo, Pat-a-Cake and This Little Piggy went to Market. The infant's delight alone is pure joy to Mom and Dad. And as they grow, the games and the joy increase.



Our family sang "Old MacDonald Had a Farm" and "I See the Moon," we played Open-Shut Them, Hide-and-Go-Seek and Ring Around the Rosie, we rhymed, danced to lively music, read and told stories, played dress-up and pretended everything, we wrestled on the living room rug, chased around the table, made forts everywhere--out of anything. We engaged in rough-and-tumble play, had cocoa-tea parties, held races, played card and board games, games of catch, kick ball, took nature walks, treasure hunts and scavenger hunts and made great messes in the kitchen. These games between parents and their young children are rich with learning and importance—but most of all they are filled with the joy of heaven.

The list above may not be your family list, but it might remind you of the games you knew as a child and remind you of more ways to play at your house. Here are some new "old" games that you may have forgotten. Play them together and you will arouse the spirit of play in yourself and bring out heavenly joy in the give-and-take of family relationships. And you will be tasting of heavenly joy.

New "old" games you may have forgotten

- **Button, Button, Who's Got the Button?** The beginning player conceals one large button in folded hands and passes in front of the seated players, sliding his or her folded hands inside the folded hands of all players seated in a row, the leader secretly drops the button into the folded hands of only one person but pretending to drop the button to each player. The game is for the players to guess who is the one secretly holding the button. The correct guesser becomes the next button-giver
- **Drop the Hankie** is fun for a group but will also work with only 3 players for young children. Make a circle on the floor. The lead player walks behind those who are seated and drops a hankie behind one. When the seated player discovers the hankie behind their back, the player picks up the hankie and chases the player who dropped it to catch him before he sits in the vacated place in the circle. The player with the hankie drops it for the next round.
- **Duck, Duck, Grey Duck** is like Drop the Hankie except the lead player touches the head of each seated player saying "duck" to each head she touches until she shouts, "Grey duck!". That is the signal to chase the first player around the circle to the empty space left by the chosen grey duck.
- **Hide the Thimble**, or any small object, anywhere and the one who finds it, gets to hide it next. To make it easier to find, the hiding player can tell the seekers if they are hot (Near the hidden thimble) or cold, (getting far away from the thimble).
- **Simon Says**, tap your head. Simon says, wiggle your fingers, Simon says, hop up and down on one foot. Clap your hands! The other players follow all the commands of the lead player (Simon) UNLESS it is the command without the words, "Simon says" If you followed the command without hearing the words, "Simon says," you are out.
- **Blue Bird, Blue Bird Fly Through My Window**. Form a large circle with all but one player holding hands and lifting hands up, making a window or arch for others to go under arms. One player chooses a "friend" while weaving under the arches of arms, while everyone is singing the song: "*Bluebird, bluebird, fly through my window, Bluebird, bluebird, fly through my window, Bluebird, bluebird, fly through my window, Oh, Johnny what a day!*" The song continues: "*Find a friend and tap her on the shoulder, Find a friend and tap her on the shoulder, Find a friend and tap her on the shoulder Oh, Johnny what a day!*" Meanwhile, the friend gets in line behind the first child, with hands on the shoulder of the front player, continuing to weave in and out under the arches while choosing new friends to join the string of bluebirds.
- **Captain May I?** The lead player stands in front of a finish line. The other players form a row facing the lead player. The object is to reach the finish line first by following the commands of the Captain or lead player. "Joe, you may take 3 giant steps forward; Abrie, you may take 6 baby steps forward; Joycelyn you may take 2 bunny hops forward," etc. The command must be followed by "Captain, May I?" which is followed by the captain saying, "Yes, you may". If the player fails to say, "Captain, may I?" he or she may not advance the steps or hops given. The first to reach the finish line wins to become the next captain.
- **I Spy** is a game for waiting and riding in the car. Spy some object and give one or two hints so others can guess what object you are spying, for example "I spy something that is small, brown and has wings." The player who guesses correctly, is the next Spy.



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By Joanne Foley

The moment that you become aware that joy is present, return a simple, silent, heartfelt prayer of thanksgiving to the source of all Joy, the Father in Heaven who is pleased that you may receive it from Him and return to Him your joy and gratitude.

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