



## Creating Sure-Fire Song Games with Children

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Do you have a song you want to teach but no game to go with it, or are you tired of using the same song game ad infinitum?

If your answer is yes to either of these questions, it might be time to explore the rewarding process of helping children in your classroom create new song games.

We have discovered that the song games our students ask to play again and again are the ones that have been created by children. It was with this awareness that we decided to give our students an opportunity to create their own new song games.

Following are the steps for creating new games that we have found to be successful with students in grades three through five. Before beginning these activities, be sure students know the song to be used.

### **Process:**

Divide your class into groups containing six to eight students.

With students, recall the games they have played since kindergarten.

Facilitate students sorting of games into categories such as chase, guessing, partner, small group, and whole group.

Discuss what makes a game successful. For example:

- How many people get to be "it".
- How many people are actively involved in the movement and playing of the game?
- What kinds of games are fun and why?

Each group appoints a facilitator to take notes, make sure everyone's ideas are heard, and maintain a cooperative atmosphere. The group then begins to brainstorm ideas for a new song game.

As the group has finalized the plans for its game, they practice playing the game and then play it for the teacher. This can take from one to three 30-minute class periods.

Each group demonstrates its game to the whole class. If needed, extra players can be included.

As each game is demonstrated, both observers and creators of the song game identify problems with the game. Suggestions are accepted and tested. This process continues until a finished product emerges.

The class votes to see which game is its favorite and that game becomes the new “song game.” Sometimes the final game incorporates parts of ideas from each group.

One of the most rewarding aspects of this process is to collect, with the students, the skills they used in creating a new game. Examples our students have offered are: communicating, cooperating, compromising, sharing ideas, accepting all ideas as worthy, being creative, and fitting the game to the song.

Another process we have used to create a new game is to brainstorm with the whole class while the teacher acts as facilitator. This process can provide a model for creating song games in small groups. We have found, however, that the small group structure give the students ownership of the game and allows more students to participate in the decision-making process.

Although it can take from three to five class periods to create a finished product, we believe that the time is well spent because the children are learning and practicing life skill such as:

- Creating new ideas
- Solving problems
- Communicating and cooperating with others in a group activity
- Facilitating group activity
- Explaining ideas
- Practicing the democratic process in making decisions

Through all of this, the students feel a great sense of accomplishment, AND they have given us another “SURE-FIRE” GAME!

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