

## PASS A SOUND, A GESTURE & A PHRASE AROUND THE CIRCLE

**Notes:** This game is quick, and can be done as a team building exercise or simply as a point of transition during the day. It can evolve into many other theater games and is a playful way to develop self-control and group discipline. Laughter is a natural by-product of this activity. It can also present an opportunity to discuss strategies for helping students stay focused and on task – even while laughing and having fun.

**Object of the Game:** To pass a sound, gesture and phrase around the circle, from person to person, quickly and consistently.

**Recommended for:** Groups in Grades K- Adult

**Time needed:** 5-10 minutes

**Room set up:** A cleared space with room for group to stand in a large circle.

**Skills Development:** Cooperation, Focus, Intentionality, Participation, Self-control and Release, Team building

### How To Play:

Begin by passing a simple sound to the right. (*I often begin with a simple sound or word such as WOW- exaggerating the owww sound.*)

Instruct the group to imitate your sound as closely as possible, copying the tone, intensity and volume.

**COACHING NOTE:** I like to say, right at the onset of leading this exercise, that I am looking for them to imitate me. If I make a big, loud sound [AARGH], I want them to make a big, loud sound [AARGH]. If I make a silly, squeaky sound [eek], I want them to make a silly, squeaky sound [eek]. I tell them that there will be many opportunities for them to show me how creative and original they can be, but that right now I'm asking them to show me how well they can imitate my actions and fully engage in the activity. I'm looking to see if they are willing to "go there" with me and be silly. In order to do this they'll need to let go of their "cool" and be silly in a controlled way. Comedy is serious business, and it's hard to do. By saying this, I am letting them know my expectations. As you might imagine, this can be both challenging and liberating for teens.

Encourage participants to make eye contact with the person to whom they are passing the sound (this is often a challenging part), and to pass the sound as quickly as possible!

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Written by Priscilla Kane Hellweg  
ENCHANTED CIRCLE THEATER  
[www.enchantedcircletheater.com](http://www.enchantedcircletheater.com)  
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Challenge them to keep their focus and not to get lost in laughter. Instead, you want them to be able to learn to work with the laughter.

When the sound makes its way back to you, change the sound, and the direction in which it travels.

**COACHING NOTE:** I like to work with opposites at the beginning, to go from a big sound, to a small one, a silly sound to a scary one. As the group advances in skill, you can make more subtle changes.

After two or three turns around with sound alone, add a hand gesture to the next sound you pass. (Sound: Whoa! Gesture: Hands fly up above head.) Try passing a short phrase and a gesture together. Try a whole sentence.

As your students get the hang of this game, encourage them to lead off the sounds.

When you bring the game to a close, lead a brief discussion on the purpose of this game. What might be a good reason to play this game? What skills are being developed? One part of the discussion can center on the importance of keeping your cool, and not falling apart in giggles. Actors have to be able to control themselves on stage - and this game is really excellent training for young people for developing self-control in their lives.