

# CREATIVITY

Much recent research has shown that everyone is born with a rich ability to create and imagine. Think of the children you know—their fascination and wonder, their curiosity, their constant attempt to make sense out of words and actions and objects.

Adults tend to lose the creative spark because they get into habits and do things the same way, over and over. The opposite of creativity is sameness.

If you are parents, join your children in these games without reservation. Let your creativity roam free!

One caution. Be careful about criticizing the creations in this section of games. Creativity in children is squashed by comments like, "I never saw a blue tree before;" or "You didn't stay in the lines;" or "I think your story would be better if you ..." These reactions discourage a child. First enjoy your creations together. Then talk about them. Let the child discover new and better ways to do things.

When parents emphasize the value of creativity, they raise children who can solve problems, appreciate things around them, and think for themselves. Creativity is far more than paint on paper. It's a whole approach to life.

## 1) IMAGINATION

**Materials:** Pad of paper and pencils.

**Method:** Creative people aren't locked into one pattern of thinking. Ordinarily, bricks are used for walls, and tires for cars. But they also have other uses. This game allows you to push your thinking into new areas. The ability to create several alternatives before solving a problem increases the chance of a successful solution.

Choose an object from the following list: a block of wood, a tire, a cup, a brick, old newspapers. Then ask each person to list as many possible uses for the object as possible. Let your imagination run wild. After five minutes, share your lists with each other. Discuss possible applications of this process to everyday family life.

## 2) THREES

**Materials:** None

**Method:** Choose a category, like animals, songs, friends, colours, characters, etc.

The person who begins the game mentions three examples from the category. If animals are the category, for instance, he might mention dogs, cats, and elephants. The next person must also mention three animals, but he can't repeat any animals already mentioned. Continue around the circle, allowing no animal to be repeated.

Stop the game when someone gives up or can't think of three examples in 30 seconds. Then choose a different category and repeat the process.

### **3) PICTURES**

**Materials:** Lots of old magazines with pictures.

**Method:** Clip a few pictures from the magazines. Put them in a stack. Take turns drawing the top picture from the stack.

The person who draws a picture must tell an imaginary story about the scene.

What happened just before the picture was taken?

What happened just after it was taken?

Be as creative as you can.

Continue the process until you run out of pictures, time, or interest.

### **4) IN THE CLOUDS**

**Materials:** Crayons or paint and paper.

**Method:** Each person makes a cloud that looks like some other object. Each drawing should look like a cloud and the other object. Let your imagination go!

Hang the drawings in the kitchen when you're through. Discuss how things aren't always as they appear. Each person brings a unique view to each circumstance in life.

### **5) FINGERPRINTS**

**Materials:** An ink pad and several pieces of paper.

**Method:** There are many ways to draw a picture. This activity requires you to use only your fingerprint and an ink pad. Draw lines by lining up your fingerprints in a row.

**CAUTION:** Wear very old clothes and spread newspaper under your work! Provide sponges and paper towels to clean your fingers as you work.

Hang the pictures in a prominent place.

## 6) TRADITIONS

**Materials:** Modeling clay or paper and crayons.

**Method:** Every family has traditions although they're not always identified or appreciated as such.

Ask each person to think about the habits or traditions in your family. The tradition may involve food, vacations, recreation, or any other activity. Each selection should be kept secret. Then invite the family members to illustrate their selection with modeling clay or drawings on paper. Give a time limit of three minutes. Then the rest of the family tries to guess what tradition each work of art illustrates.

## 7) SIMILES

**Materials:** Pad of paper and pencils.

**Method:** Similes and metaphors have a long history. They provide new ways to look at old ideas. Examples: white as snow, unstable as water, melted like wax, etc. Here's a list of phrases that need to be completed. Ask each person to write them on a piece of paper.

1. Time is like money.
2. Life is like an airplane.
3. Ambition is like love.
4. People are like watermelons.
5. Hate is like a spider.
6. Women are like the sun.
7. Wishes are like clouds.
8. Advice is like water.

Now invite the family to write out an ending to each simile. An example is this quotation by Josh Billings: "Money is like promises. Easier made than kept."

Or this one from Seneca: "Life is like a play; it's not the length, but the performance that counts." After working for a while, share your results.

## 8) COMPREHENSION

**Materials:** Paper and pencils.

**Method:** Ask the family members to each write the word COMPREHENSION at the top of a piece of paper. Now invite them to write as many new words as they can, using only the letters in the word COMPREHENSION.

Give a time limit of ten minutes. Then share the lists. Notice that each person's list contains words not on any other list. Apply the principle to life.

(Other words from which many different words can be created include "decoration," "United States," and "automobile." )

## 9) JUST SUPPOSE

**Materials:** Paper and pencils.

**Method:** Choose one of the following phrases and ask each person to write it at the top of a piece of paper:

"Suppose we didn't have to sleep."

"Suppose we had eyes on the back of our heads."

"Suppose people never got sick."

"Suppose cars ran on air instead of gas."

Ask the family to pretend the idea was true. Write as many consequences of this event as possible. Examples: If we had eyes in the backs of our heads: we'd never have to turn around to see behind us; the world would need twice as many glasses, etc.

Creativity happens when we can break out of the usual mold of seeing and thinking. Talk about ways we lock ourselves into patterns.

## 10) **WISDOM**

**Materials:** Any of the following: cup, sponge, paper napkin. Bar of new soap, toy tractor, pencil, a glove, an apple.

**Method:** Great teachers use common objects to illustrate their wisdom. Almost any object can teach a lesson, if we're creative enough to see it. For example: a sponge is like our brain, able to absorb knowledge but if not constantly used it can become dry and brittle.

Choose one of the above objects, and place it so everyone can see it. Ask the family to think of lessons this object might teach us. Think of as many different lessons as you can. Change the object when the family begins to run out of ideas.