

1. Parachute Ripples: Have children hold onto the edge of the parachute and billow it up and down on the ground. You may want to pretend that you are creating ocean waves, sand dunes, a pizza bubbling with cheese, bubbles or balloons to pop, etc.
2. Parachute Ride: Have preschool children sit on the center of the parachute and take them for a ride with adult helpers pulling it in a circle. Repeat in the other direction. Allow the children to choose what ride they want to take: motorcycle, boat, car, bus, taxi, bike, etc. Act out each part: putting on the helmet, a seatbelt, or a life jacket, paying a fare, turning the keys of the ignition, etc.
3. Parachute Popping: Have children and adults seated around the edge of the parachute, with their legs underneath. Have everyone pull the parachute toward them so that it is taut. Throw lightweight balls (beach balls would be best), onto the parachute and watch them pop.
4. Parachute Launch: Have the children lift the parachute up above their heads and down with a quick fluid motion. Practice first and then throw balls on top. Watch them launch into orbit and see how far or high they go.
5. Parachute Peekaboo: For infants and toddlers, have them lay, sit, or stand underneath the parachute. Have adults play a game of peekaboo on their knees by hiding their faces momentarily with the chute and surprising the children.
6. Parachute Colors: For preschool and elementary children, assign them a color ahead of time. They can also choose their favorite color. Have everyone on the outside of the circle, slowly billowing the parachute up and down. Call a color when the parachute is lifted up and have the designated colors run under to cross to the other side before the parachute goes down.
7. Parachute Favorites: This is an adaptation of Parachute Colors and a way to get to know the children in your ministry. Pick categories of favorites such as favorite animals, pets, food, sports, teams, Bible individuals, book genres, flavors of ice cream or types of pizza toppings, etc.
8. Parachute Hot Air Balloon: Have students and adults billow the parachute up and down. On the count of three, have them step under, pull the parachute down in back of them, and sit on it to seal off the edges. You can sing songs once inside. With imagination, the balloon could also be a tent, house, a fort, the shade of a tree, or a cave.

9. Parachute Cat and Mouse: Everyone sits on their knees and billows the parachute up and down. One child is chosen to be the cat; another child is chosen to be the mouse. The mouse tries to make it all the way under the parachute by crawling, without getting caught. Meanwhile, the cat is on top of the parachute, trying to find the mouse.

10. Parachute Fly: Inform everyone that on the count of three, you will fly the parachute away. Pull it quickly towards you so that it looks like it's flying.

11. Parachute Pinwheel: Have everyone standing on the outside of the parachute and quickly pass it in one direction so that the colors spin. Repeat in the other direction.

12. Parachute Keep Off: Have some children stationed around the edges of the parachute and others in the surrounding area. Place balls on the chute. The children holding onto the parachute need to work together to toss the balls off. The children in the surrounding area work together to throw the balls back on.

13. Parachute Lean: Have everyone stand around the edges of the parachute and hold on. All at the same time, have children lean back while still holding on. Everyone should be leaning back, fully supported by the parachute and the team.

14. Parachute Tug of War: Roll up the parachute and separate the children into two teams. Have each team at either end, holding on. Use the parachute to play tug of war.

15. Parachute Jump: Have most of the children kneel or stand around the edges, billowing the parachute up and down. Say, "If your name is _____, _____, or _____, jump into these bubbles!"

16. Parachute Air Conditioning: With everyone standing up, simply lift the parachute up and down and enjoy the cool breeze that it gives everyone! This game is perfect for a hot day!

17. Parachute Friends: Partner your students up with another child and have them go to opposing sides of the parachute. Everyone can billow the parachute up and down. While it's going up, yell out, "Friends _____ and _____!" Upon hearing their name, the children run under the parachute, give each other a high five as they cross paths, and find their way to the outside again.

18. Parachute Talk: Similar to the wordless book idea, go through each of the colors on your particular parachute and adapt as necessary. Have students sit on red, the color of Jesus' blood that was shed for our sins. Have students find a seat on green, the color of growth once Jesus comes into our hearts. Have them sit on yellow, representing heaven. Discuss what the Bible says about heaven. Have them scramble for a seat on blue, which represents baptism. Use the parachute as a teaching tool.

MUSHROOM--A GOOD WAY TO INTRODUCE THE PARACHUTE!

1. Children evenly spread out in a circle --while holding the edge.
2. Pull the parachute taut and then lower it between knee level and the ground.
3. On a signal-all raise the chute upwards; it will fill with air and rise up like a giant mushroom (In the winter-call it an "IGLOO")

Tip #1: to get it as high as possible, all participants take a couple steps towards the center as the chute rises.

Tip #2: Practice together so the children can learn cooperation and working together as a group.

VARIATION OF MUSHROOM: Once the basic play is mastered, experiment!

1. Mushroom and then all children runs to the center while still holding the chute.
2. Mushroom and then have all children let go of the chute at exactly the same time.

If there isn't any wind, the chute will retain its perfect puff shape and rise straight up into the air.

This is especially fun outdoors on a windy day. Indoors it may go up to the ceiling.

WAVES

While holding the parachute tightly, participants move their arms up and down to make small and large waves.

TREASURE UNDER THE SEA

Place a variety of 'treasures' (anything you want) into a treasure box under the parachute. Make waves (above) as if in a Sea Storm. Send divers to retrieve called out items one by one from the box.

CATHEDRAL or CIRCUS TENT

1. With the parachute lowered, players raise their arms (and the chute) as high as possible.
2. Once the chute is high, on a signal-all take 3-4 big steps towards the center.
3. Still holding the chute tightly, children sit down at the edge of the chute-under what should appear to be a cathedral

THUNDERSTORM

1. Start off on the floor with all children sitting calmly and grasping the parachute-this is a gentle breeze.
2. Pretend that it starts raining. As it rains have the children stand.
3. Oh-oh...the rain is now turning into a THUNDERSTORM! All children start shaking the chute as hard as they can to simulate the storm.

PARACHUTE TAG

Lift the parachute high overhead.

Call one child's name and have him/her run to the other side before the parachute comes down and tags them.

Variation: You can alter the game by having children skip, crawl or twirl to the other side.

ONE HAND RUN

1. Have each child hold the parachute with one hand-with the opposite arm extended straight out for balance.
2. Run clockwise in one direction and then change to counter clock .

Tip: Use music to cue children for changing direction; every time the music stops, direction is changed.

NUMBER SWITCH

You need a large chute for this activity.

Depending on the amount of children playing, going around the circle, number the children.
Example: 1-2-3-4-5, 1-2-3-4-5, etc.

Call a number such as "3" and all the "3's" switch places by running under the chute. Loud with running excitement but fun!

MERRY-GO-ROUND

Turn the body so that the chute is held with only one hand.

Walk, hop, jump, or skip around holding the chute.

It looks like a merry-go-round!

SHOE SHUFFLE

Number around the circle 1 or 6 (or adapt numbers according to group size).

All the number one children remove a shoe and throw it under the parachute.

On the third lift--all those missing a shoe go into the middle, retrieve their shoe and return to their place.

Continue with the other numbers!

SHAKE HANDS

Have all the players hold the parachute way up high above their heads. Call out two names and have these two players run underneath the parachute, shake hands, then run back out before the parachute comes down. Continue doing this until all the players have had a chance to run under the parachute.

CAT AND MOUSE

Everyone holds the chute stretched out at about waist height. Someone becomes a mouse and goes underneath. Someone else becomes a cat and goes on top. The rest of the group try to hide the mouse by moving the chute up and down.

THE FLYING PARACHUTE

Swing the parachute upwards and let it go~

Try to keep the parachute floating as long as possible.

FRUIT SALAD

Each player is given the name of a fruit such as pear, apple, or strawberry.

When the facilitator calls out the name of a fruit, everyone with that fruit name changes places by running under the parachute. When fruit salad is called out, everyone must swap places with the players on the other side.

GOING TO THE HAIR STYLIST (This can also be a science demonstration of static electricity!)

1. Have children hold the edges of the parachute-with one child sitting under it.
 2. On signal, the children pull back and forth on the parachute as if they are washing hair.
 3. The child's hair beneath the parachute becomes statically charged because of the rubbing.
 4. On signal, swing the parachute up so the child's hair goes up and stays up!(Static charge)
 5. The more often the hair is "washed"--the more 'charged' the head of hair becomes.
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USING VARIETY...

PARACHUTE WITH POEMS OR SONGS

THERE WAS A MAN!

Holding onto the parachute, children walk around in a circle.

As they walk they say-

There was a man in our town

Who went for a WALK one day

But the wind blew so hard

He turned around

And WALKED the other way.

Variation: Add to the fun and change the action words to-skip,hop, run, etc.

WHEN THE PARACHUTE GOES UP SONG

Sung to: "If your happy and you know it"

When the parachute goes up

Stomp your feet-

When the parachute goes up

Stomp your feet-

When the parachute is high

And floats up in the sky

When the parachute goes up

Stomp your feet.

Additional verses:

Lift one leg...

Shout hooray!...

Bend your knees...

Wiggle your bottom...

Shake your head-and so on...

NAME GAME

As the song is sung, have children raise the parachute above their heads.

When a child's name is called--- they run under the parachute. The parachute is slowly lowered in an attempt to trap the child. Play until all children that would like to try-- have had a turn. Sung to: Row Row your Boat

Up, up, up it goes

Down, down, down it comes

If your name is----- (put in a child's name)

Now's your turn to run

PARACHUTE GAMES USING BALLS, COTTON BALLS, BALLOONS, JUMP ROPES, BEAN BAGS OR POM-POMS Most games using balls are good for children from 5 to 11...

POPCORN #1

Start with all players holding the chute stretched out. Throw as many soft balls as you have onto the chute-the more the better!

Holding the chute tightly, have children bounce the popcorn (balls) as quickly as they can off of the chute.

Variation: Play this game in two teams. One side of children try to bounce the balls off the chute, while the other side works at keeping the balls on the chute!

POPCORN #2

Place a number of beanbags or cotton balls on the chute. Shake the chute to make them rise like popcorn.

Variation: IN THE WINTER USE COTTON BALL AND CALL IT 'FALLING SNOW'.

BALL ROLL

Have the children try to roll balls into the hole in the center of the parachute.

DON'T DROP THE BALL (Team Play)

Place a soft ball of any size in the center. The object of the game is for each team NOT to let the ball fall off on their side.

ROLLER BALL

Have all players holds the chute stretched tightly.

Place a large ball near the edge.

The object of this game is to try to make the ball roll around the edge of the chute.

To do this someone starts the ball rolling. As it comes towards you, you lower the edge you are holding, and as it goes past you raise your edge.

When all the players do this smoothly, a wave is created that goes round the edge, pushing the ball in a steady circle. It can not be done without concentration and co-operation!

Tip: This game also needs practice and co-operation. When mastered it can be a lot of fun! If you've done this try speeding up - or change direction.

Variation: Roll the ball at different speeds or change direction.

ROLL A BALL TO A FRIEND

Place a ball on top of the parachute and have the players roll the ball back and forth to each other. For example, you could tell a specific person to roll the ball to someone that you name. This game encourages cooperation, as the players will have to work together for the first player to get the ball to their friend.

THE CATAPULT

Place a ball on the parachute and catapult it as high as possible!

BALLOON FLOAT

While the players are holding onto the parachute, place several balloons on top of the parachute. Count to 3 and then say "up". On the word "up", all the players raise the parachute up over their heads as fast as they can and then bring the parachute down as quickly as possible. Where are the balloons? Keep repeating this game to see how high you can get the balloons to go, or how far you can get them to travel.

PARACHUTE GOLF

While the players are holding onto the parachute, toss a plastic golf ball onto the parachute. Have the players maneuver the parachute to try to get the ball through the hole. When the ball is in the hole, have a caddy go under the parachute to retrieve it and start over. Count the number of waves (golf strokes) it takes the players to get the ball into the hole. Keep track on a scoreboard.

FLEAS

Need several small balls such as plastic balls, tennis balls, or table tennis balls...

Put the fleas (balls) on the parachute and challenge players try to get the fleas to jump higher and higher.

The fleas are successfully taken care of at the end of the game-- when they land outside the parachute!

POM POMS

Put various sized pompoms in the top of the parachute and try to get them into the middle pocket.

Variety: form teams with different colors of pom-poms and challenge them to see which team can get the most of their color into the middle pocket in an allotted time.

SNAKES (OR WORMS)

Place four to six skipping ropes on the chute. By shaking the chute, the children try to shake them off.

We learned this from one of our wonderful music therapists and it reminds me of conducting an orchestra! Here is how we interpret this for the Itsy Bitsy Spider:

The Itsy Bitsy (side to side)

Spider (up and down)

Went up the water (side to side)

Spout. (up and down)

Down came the (side to side)

Rain...and (up and down)

...washed the spider (side to side)

out. (up and down)

Out came the (side to side)

sun...and (up and down)

...dried up all the (side to side)

rain...so (up and down)

...the itsy bitsy (side to side)

spider (up and down)

went up the spout (side to side)

again. (up and down)