

SCREAM

American

PRONUNCIATION: Skreem

TRANSLATION: Shriek, screech, yell, howl, shout, bellow, bawl, cry out, call out, yelp, squeal, wail, squawk.

SOURCE: Dick Oakes learned this game from Sanna Longden, creator of Parpoular. It was introduced by Robin Nelson of Minneapolis at the 2004 Pourparler.

BACKGROUND: "Scream" is an amusing and useful icebreaker game for many folk dance situations. The name "Pourparler" comes from the French word "to speak," and connotes a get-together or a chat. Pourparler is an annual gathering of community dance leaders, and "Scream" is considered to be the Pourparler's national game.

MUSIC: No music is needed.

FORMATION: A circle of people, all ages, sizes, genders – everyone, facing center, and can be of any number, but works best if the number is an odd one. Players are close together, but not touching.

METER/RHYTHM: No meter or rhythm; just lots of fun!

STEPS/STYLE: Smile.

MOVEMENT DESCRIPTION

THE GAME

- 1 All bow heads and close eyes.
- 2 The leader chants "1, 2, 3!"
- 3 On "3!" all raise heads, open eyes, and attempt to stare directly into the eyes of someone else in the circle – straight across, to one side, next to – anywhere.
- 4 If that someone is staring back – if eyes are boring into eyes – both scream loudly. Many pairs of people may be screaming at once.
- 5 The pairs of screamers back out of the circle and the circle closes tighter. Those who have backed out stay involved with the action in the circle by hovering behind and helping with the counting.

- 6 Those who do not make visual connections remain in the circle until they lock eyes with someone in another round.
- 7 The game continues until one person is left in the circle. This person is the "winner," although for many, the fun of the game is locking eyes and screaming.

NOTES An embellishment by Marian Rose, Vancouver and Quebec, is to make the scream as dramatic as possible, ending with a fall to the floor. (A teacher reports that her students call this the "drop-down dance" and request it often.)

Susan Michaels, Los Angeles, goes a bit further and suggests performing a Shakespeare-like death scene with the scream, which keeps the interest of teens and the eliminated players.

Those who would rather win than scream might delay their scream or look between people.