



Colonial Games at Liberty Hall Museum

What kind of toys and games do you play with at home? You probably play with Legos or Barbies. Maybe you play with a soccer ball or a football? Perhaps you play games on your computer or phone, like Minecraft. Children during the colonial era did not have computers to play on—they had to make most of their own toys themselves. Children would often create games that did not require any special tools. Have you ever played tag, hide and seek, or ring-around-the-rosy? Children have played many of these games since before the American Revolution.

Liberty Hall has been the home to numerous children. These children made and played with many different kinds of toys. One popular toy they may have played with is called a **Cup-and-Ball**.

How to Play:

Cup-and-ball is a traditional children's toy. A small wooden ball is attached to a wooden handle by a string. The handle has a small cup at the top. Children would try to toss the ball and catch it in the cup. This game has been around since the 16th century, and has been made by children in almost every culture around the world.



Cup-and-Ball from the American Colonies



Bilbo Catcher from Spain



Kendama from Japan

Are you ready to make your own **Cup-and-Ball**?

What you will need:

- 1 paper cup
- 1 piece of string (about 9 inches long)
- 1 piece of tin foil (about 3"x3")
- 1 popsicle stick
- Tape
- Pair of scissors



Steps:

1. Lay the piece of tin foil out flat on a table.



2. Tape one end of the string in one corner of the tin foil.



3. Roll the tin foil into a ball. Make sure the string hangs out. If needed, put a piece of tape around the tin foil ball.



4. Use the scissors to poke a hole in the bottom of the paper cup, just big enough for the popsicle stick (Children: have your parents help you with the scissors!)



5. Poke the popsicle stick through the hole in the bottom of the cup. Use some tape if the hole is too big.



6. Tape one end of the string onto the outside of the cup, on the bottom of the cup.



7. You are ready to play! Enjoy!



Want to do more?

- Pretend you were a child during the colonial times. Write a story about your life as a child playing with your Cup-and-Ball.
- Invent your own game! Use craft supplies at your home, come up with the rules, and play the game with your family.
- Read your favorite book about children during the Colonial Era! Some of our favorites include:
 - *Homespun Sarah* by Verla Kay
 - Youtube Read Aloud: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WeceoYyeAZM>
 - *The Ox Cart Man* by Donald Hall
 - Youtube Read Aloud: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L6KVw09oGaU>
 - *If You Lived in Colonial Times* by Ann McGovern and June Otani
 - Youtube Read Aloud: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q8NNx5-I7j0>
 - *John, Paul, George, and Ben* by Lane Smith
 - Youtube Read Aloud: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0zjmv_oqtj4
 - *The Dreadful, Smelly Colonies: The Disgusting Details about Life in Colonial America* by Elizabeth Raum
 - *Magic Tree House #22: Revolutionary War on Wednesday* by Mary Pope Osborne
 - *Midnight Rider* by Joan Hiatt Harlow
- Looking for other books?
 - Check your local library's digital collections
 - Free Audio Book Guide from Scholastic:
 - <https://www.scholastic.com/parents/books-and-reading/raise-a-reader-blog/free-audio-books-and-why-you-should-try-them.html>
 - Audible Free Audiobooks
 - <https://stories.audible.com/discovery>

Tag us on Social Media!

If you had fun creating your own cup-and-ball, we'd love to hear about it! Please share your stories and pictures of your colonial games adventures by emailing the museum or posting on our social media pages!

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- Facebook: libertyhallmuseum
- Instagram: @libertyhallmuseum

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