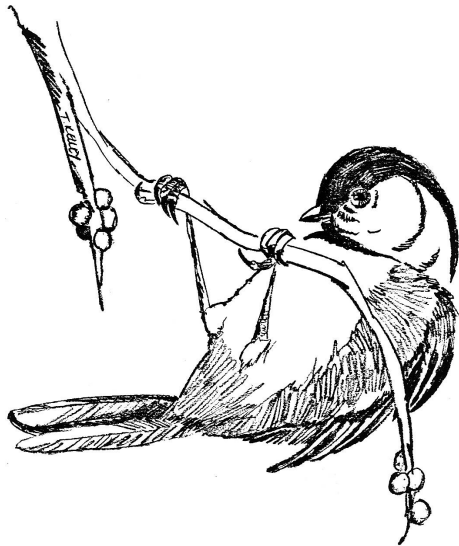


Chickadees Know Better Than You

By Eleanor Tursman



Acknowledgements

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You are a Flock of Ungrateful Forest Chickadees

You are also know-it-alls of the highest caliber. Animals gather from all over to ask you their most burning questions. What wisdom will you bestow upon them?

This is a larp for one flock of chickadees. A flock is usually 3 to 18 birds, most of which are chickadees but might also include a few other small social birds, such as nuthatches, woodpeckers, or warblers. The larp is meant to run for 30 minutes to a few hours at most, depending on how many questions you answer. No additional materials are required to play.

Play consists of making your chickadees, doing a workshop to practice your chickadee moves, playing several scenes where you'll answer questions, then wrapping with a short debrief. Read these instructions aloud as you work through the larp.

Safety

This game is designed to be light and goofy while gently touching on existential topics. Player safety is important! Go over the following tools as a group:

The door is open: Any player can leave the game at any point, for any reason, no questions asked.

Cut and brake: If a player says "brake," play continues but does not get more intense. If a player says "cut," play stops until that player is good to continue.

Chickadee Creation

To make your chickadee, pick a name and a specialty, or make your own.

Names

Junior	Shadowhawk	Werther's Original	Jingle
Guts	Kitten	Shale	Nightshade
Raven	Butter Bean	Sprout	Crispy
Baseball	Pebble	Snickerdoodle	Doc
Two-Eyes	Sprocket	Moondust	Zipper
Totinos	Glimmer	Apollo	Blueberry
Pringles	Toothpick	Senior	Speck

Specialties

Pinecone taxonomist	Food critic (berries)	Fire enthusiast
Plant taste-ologist	Food critic (human junk food)	Fungus historian
Hawk anthropologist	Cloud philosopher	Snowflake collector
Bug soothsayer	Chickadee psychologist	Bee wrangler
Feather stylist	Frog therapist	Dewdrop sommelier
Moss gardener	Breadcrumb entrepreneur	Slug conspiracy theorist
Branch manager	Storm singer	Sunbeam chaser

How-to-Chickadee Workshop

The chickadees are resolving an internal debate before they start accepting questions from their fellow forest creatures. In this workshop, you'll practice each of the chickadee moves and will end by answering the question: "Which is best, berries or seeds?"

Go around in a circle introducing yourselves with your name and specialty. The first chickadee introduces just themselves. The next chickadee repeats the first chickadee's info, then adds their own name and specialty. The chickadee after that repeats the first two responses, then adds their own. Mistakes will inevitably be made! When your name or specialty is forgotten, use the **Excuse me** move.

Excuse me

Chickadees have a lot of important things to think about, so if someone forgets your name, loudly remind them who you are and your specialty, starting with "Excuse me, I am..."

Once you've finished introductions, it's time to catch up with one another! Mill around and make small talk about the kinds of things chickadees care about. While this is happening, practice coming in and out of play using **Gotta jet!** and **Hey, Chickadees!**

Gotta jet!

Chickadees are flighty and are liable to come and go over the course of a meeting of the minds. If you need to leave for any reason, say "Gotta jet!" and then exit the play space.

Hey, Chickadees!

If you are returning to or have just joined the game, say "Hey, Chickadees!" to announce yourself. Feel free to be disruptive—everyone needs to know you're here!

Now it's time to debate the merits and faults of both berries and seeds. Discuss rigorously, forming small and large groups as appropriate. As chickadees, you are inherently social and love to ask questions to one another. Anything a chickadee says is true, especially about their specialty. Always "yes, and" or "yes, but" your fellow chickadees. Take things your fellow chickadees say and spin them into wild tales, with details from your own specialty. If your specialty does not feel relevant to the question or conversation at hand, it is especially important for you to chime in and make it relevant using your know-it-all knowledge.

Whenever you realize you have something very important to say, use **Did you know?** and **Tell Me!** to share your insight with the entire flock at once.

Did you know?

Chickadees love to brag about what they know. When you have important information to share with the flock, loudly ask "Did you know?" and wait for a crowd to form. Share your insight and then answer any follow-up questions.

Tell Me!

When you hear another chickadee say “Did you know?” respond with “Tell me!” and crowd in close so that you don’t miss anything. Chickadees love to ask questions, so ask some follow-ups.

After you’ve practiced ***Did you know?*** a few times, have one player initiate ***We have an answer!*** to finish the workshop. You do not need to feel like you’ve reached consensus to initiate this move—in fact, it’s probably best if you haven’t.

We have an answer!

Chickadees always have an answer, no matter how tricky the question. When you think it’s time to share what you’ve figured out, start the chickadee call, saying “Chicka” then “Dee,” “Dee,” “Dee.” When you hear another chickadee start the call, join in by repeating “Dee” (in unison or chaotically) and arrange yourselves in a circle facing one another. Stop your “Dees” once you’re all in position. (Listen to an [example of chickadee call chaos](#) for inspiration.)

Starting with the initiator of the call and moving clockwise, form a collective answer by saying one word at a time. Circle fully at least once, so that everyone contributes. Every chickadee gets a say, even if (especially if) the answer is already a complete statement.

Once you have an answer the scene is over. Your answer is final and conclusive, not worth discussing any further. Take a quick break (you’ve earned it). You are now ready to put your towering intellects to the task of answering questions from your woodland neighbors.

Time to Chickadee!

For each scene, take turns picking a question from the list below. Debate the question by both mingling in large and small discussion groups and by using your chickadee moves. End the scene by using ***We have an answer!*** to resolve the question. Take a quick break. When you’re ready, pick a new question for the next scene. Play as many scenes as you’d like, making sure to end with the final question.

To begin play, circle up and read the know-it-all chickadee oath (approximately) in unison:

*We are the mighty chickadees
We’re fun, we’re cute, we’re cool as bees
Why, you love us and we do too
Here’s some wisdom, from
Us
To
You!*

Questions

A kindly family of field mice ask...	"Where do acorns come from?"
A turtle asks...	"What are mushrooms made of?"
A posse of bully bluejays ask...	"How many chickadees is too many chickadees?"
A bobcat asks...	"Why does it get colder at night?"
A baby racoon asks...	"What food will make me the strongest?"
A snake asks...	"What's wrong with the moon?"
A doe asks...	"Why do leaves turn red in autumn?"
A hare asks...	"How do I win the turtle's heart?"
<i>(Final)</i> An elderly owl asks...	"What is the meaning of life?"

Ending the game

After you collectively determine the meaning of life, your know-it-all meeting has ended! Circle up once more and read the adjourning clause (almost) in unison:

*We've heard your questions, small and tall
Bequeathed our knowledge unto all
But now we set each other free
Chicka, chicka
Dee
Dee
Dee*

Debrief

Going around in a circle, take turns each answering the following:

Remind everyone of your chickadee name.

Introduce yourself with your human name.

What's one thing about your chickadee you'd like to take with you?

What's one thing about your chickadee you will leave behind?