

## Fishing game

Seasonally known as: “Fishing for love”, “Leprechaun Fishing”, “Easter Egg Fishing”, “Fishing for cake”, Flag Fishing”, “Fishing for Pumpkins”, “Turkey Fishing”, or “Fishing for Christmas”.

For 2 to 10 players or teams aged about 2 to 10. (More players for older children with patience, less for younger kids)

### Materials needed:

1. ‘Fish’ of some shape. They should be relatively light and have a small paperclip or magnet attached.
2. Age appropriate ‘poles’. Younger children should have small short poles something like a straw or pencil. Older children will have more fun with larger poles. The fishing end of the pole should have either a paperclip or magnet, the same as the ‘fish’.
3. A ‘pond’. This can be as simple as a flat piece of paper that the ‘fish’ are in/on and the kids are not, or something more complex like a large cardboard box decorated appropriately.
4. OPTIONAL: An assistant to ‘grab the bait’. This can be an adult or older child who is hidden in or by the ‘pond’. If you use paperclips this is a must so that the assistant can clip the ‘fish’ to the ‘bait’.
5. OPTIONAL: If you use paperclips and an assistant, you might want to have ‘bait’ for the ‘hooks’.

### Directions:

1. Explain where the kids can fish from and where the ‘pond’ is so they can stay dry. (And therefore in the game)
2. Show the children how to cast. If you have an assistant hidden tell the kids its NOT fly-fishing so your assistant doesn’t get hit on the head! Instead let the children gently place their line into the ‘pond’.
3. Allow the children 2 or so at a time to ‘bait’ their hooks, and place them in the ‘pond’.
4. For the assisted game remind the children that fishing takes patience, and tell them not to jerk if they feel a tug, but to slowly ‘tire the fish out’. (Meaning let them gently tug and then release so your assistant can put the ‘fish’ on and remove the ‘bait’). If you decide to use magnets then make sure the kids can see the ‘fish’ so they can try to get their magnet to the ‘fishes’ magnet. Smaller children might require assistance ‘pulling the fish up’.
5. If inclined you could award prizes for the most ‘fish’, biggest, smallest, fastest catch, etc. Alternately you could have numbered ‘fish and give favors based on the number, or color for the very young.

Ideas to make 'ponds':

If you do not have an assistant, simply cut a large sheet of paper or cardboard in an appropriate shape and color accordingly. (Better yet get a kid or two to do the coloring!) If you use paper you may wish to cover it in contact paper so it won't get ripped should anyone happen to 'fall in'.

If you do have an assistant you could use: A large cardboard box tall enough so the kids cannot see over the sides, a large box cut to form a screen, a 'chair tent' (set up 4 chairs in an approximate square covering the outsides in blankets to that the assistant can hide under the chairs and blankets reaching out to the middle to place 'fish' on the 'hooks'), a porch with room for the assistant under it (and of course a way for the assistant to reach the fishing line), A table set on its side and covered with a blanket or sheet, or anything else your imagination comes up with.

Ideas to make 'poles':

Get enough sticks to allow 2 to 4 kids to 'fish' at one time. They could be new pencils (It becomes an instant party favor), straws, or if you live near woods try actual sticks of roughly the same length. Attach some sort of 'fishing line' yarn or string works well. If you are using magnets try not to let the line be longer than the child's arm. IF you have the assistant then make sure the line is long enough to reach the bottom of your 'pond'. Tie a magnet or a paperclip to the other end of the line.

Ideas to make 'fish':

The kind of fish you want to use depends on the season and reason for playing the game. For example if you were having a valentine's game you would want heart shaped 'fish'. Conversely for Halloween you would want pumpkins. Whatever the shape you chose make enough so that every one can 'catch' at least one preferably two 'fish'

If you are using magnets try to keep all the fish 2 inches or less. You can make the fish anywhere from 2 inches to 6 inches, if you are going to use the paperclips. Regardless the 'fish' should be out of lightweight paper. You can cover the paperclip 'fish' with clear contact, so that you can reuse them. Unfortunately most magnets are not strong enough to pick up a contact coated 'fish' so the magnet game will require frequent replacing of the 'fish'. To attach the magnet, use small amounts of glue or tape. For the paperclips poke a small hole in each fish then thread the 'fish' onto the clip.

Ideas to make 'bait':

'Bait' only works if you have an assistant. For Thanksgiving you might want to use birdseed if you are 'fishing' for turkeys. For the non-seasonal game if you really use fish for the 'fish; then the 'bait' could be worms. Whatever designs you chose, make them out of lightweight paper. Obviously the 'bait' should be smaller than the 'fish' that is going to 'eat' it! Attach a paperclip to the 'bait' in the same manner as you did for the 'fish'. Try to make sure you have extra 'bait' in case your assistant removes the 'bait' but is unable to affix a 'fish' before the child becomes too impatient and pulls their line up.

Ideas for introduction stories:

It might seem a little silly to go fishing for Easter eggs (or pumpkins or hearts or any of the other seasonal 'fish') so you need a story to explain why you're playing the game. You can sit down and write one before the party if you're good at that sort of thing. You could try researching at the library if you enjoy that sort of thing. Or you could get the kids at the party to figure out the story (with your help).