The Little Englishman Dance

DEN LILLE ENGLÆNDER – TRADITIONAL DANISH FOLK DANCE

TYPE OF ACTIVITY Energizer & Team-building Activity

TARGET GROUP 👫 Any age, no dance experience needed 👥 Minimum 6 people (works best with 8-20)

DURATION ⏱️ 10-30 minutes (depending on group size & enthusiasm)

PREPARATION

✅ Big space – indoors or outdoors, flat surface recommended

✅ Music – rhythmic folk tune (traditionally Den Lille Englænder, but any upbeat music works)

✅ Optionally – show a quick demo video beforehand: Watch here

✅ Optionally – learn the dance together with 1-3 other people beforehand to demonstrate before starting

IMPACT / GOAL

✓ Bring joy & playful energy

✓ Show that traditional dances can be FUN, not just "old-fashioned"

✓ Wake up the body & get people laughing

✓ Boost endorphins & creativity for the next activity

✓ Strengthen group connection & reduce social barriers

✓ Practice rhythm, coordination & following instructions

✓ Celebrate cultural traditions together

INSTRUCTION

1. Quick Introduction

“Let’s wake up our bodies and connect with each other through a playful Danish folk dance! No stress — it’s all about fun and trying something new. This dance is called Den Lille Englænder, which means The Little Englishman. Nobody knows the full story, but people say it was inspired by English sailors or travelers who visited Denmark long ago — and locals made this playful dance to mimic their way of moving. It became a fun tradition to bring people together, and now we dance it just to enjoy and celebrate that old connection.”

1. The dance

(1 person is instructing the participants. You can show a quick demo video or prepare beforehand and show the dance together with 1-3 other people who know it. If you and the group are more skilled, you can join the dance together with the participants. If you are not skilled and doing it for the first time — better just show, instruct, observe, and support.Set-Up: People stand in front of each other in 2 rows. People in the same row hold hands.

Step to the Middle & Back
➤ Take 2 steps towards your partner
➤ Take 2 steps back
➤ Repeat once
Circle Around Each Other
➤ Release hands
➤ Walk towards your partner and give your right hand to them, walk around each other, and return to your place in 8 steps
➤ Repeat with your left hand
➤ Repeat with both hands
Do-Si-Do
➤ Walk towards your partner and pass them by the right shoulder, walk around back to your spot (first couple stays together).
First Pair Jumping Side Steps
➤ The first pair holds hands (The others stand and clap along)
➤ The first pair jumps together with 8 quick side steps to the end of the row
➤ The first pair umps back to the starting position
The Bridge & Tunnel
➤ Each row holds hands again
➤ The first person in each row leads the whole row walking to the end of the row
➤ The first pair stops & makes a “bridge” with their raised hands
➤ All others walk under the bridge
➤ The second couple becomes the new “first couple”

✨ The dance starts again with the new leaders!

DEBRIEFING

How do you feel now?

How did you feel during the dance?

What was fun or surprising about it?

Was it hard or easy to follow?

How does it feel to do a traditional dance together?

Do you think dancing like this brings people closer? Why?

LINKS

The dance example video — https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uMh1B8x0RRI

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