**Icebreakers & Theater games**

**Rock Paper Scissors with Fans** *(An energizer/icebreaker)*

Start in pairs. Each pair plays rock paper scissors and who ever looses becomes the winner’s biggest fan, cheering for them as they play with another winner. Eventually the fan base grows very large and there are 2 people left to play with a bunch of fans cheering for them. One person will win and everyone will cheer for them.

**Changing Places** *(An energizer/icebreaker)*

We’ve used this many times with farmworkers. Since it is done in silence, it is great to use with a group where there are language barriers.

Form a circle with one person in the middle. The person in the middle’s goal is to get into someone’s spot in the circle. The people in the circle make non-verbal gestures to each other to change places (a wink or nod), as they run to change places with each other the person in the middle tries to take their spot. Who ever doesn’t succeed in changing places ends up in the middle of the circle.

**Night at the Museum** *(A game of senses and awareness)*

We did this game once with farmworkers and they really enjoyed it. A senior farmworker played the night guard and used a soda can as a flashlight. His co-workers would sneak up behind him and scare him.

The museum has come to life but don’t let the night guards see you or you’ll be removed from the display and sent to storage. One person plays the night guard, they can use a flashlight as a prop. Participants spread out in the space and “become” a museum artifact/display in a frozen position. As the night guard begins to walk around the space, the displays (participants) change position. The object is for the participants to continually change positions without the night guard seeing them. As the night guard sees participants move, they are removed from the display floor.

**Zip, Zap, Zop** *(A game of focus and concentration)*

Have small groups stand in a circle. Facilitator begins by clasping their hands together pointing at someone else in the circle, saying, “Zip” and making eye contact with that person. That person clasps her hands together, says, “Zap” and points at and makes eye contact with someone else in the circle. That third person clasps her hands together, says, “Zop” and points at and makes eye contact with someone else. The pattern then repeats and continues. Try to move the motion around the circle as quickly as possible without pauses.

**Colombian Hypnosis** *(A game of concentration and body movement)*

From Games for Actors and Non-Actors by Augusto Boal

Divide in pairs one person will be the hypnotizer and the other will be the hypnotized. The game is done in silence. The hypnotizer holds his hand a few inches away from the person’s face who will be hypnotized. The distance must be the same at all times. The hypnotized must follow the hand as if she was hypnotized. The hypnotizer should try to manipulate the hypnotized into all sorts of positions, using forgotten muscles, in order to use her body in a different way. Hypnotizer starts a series of movements, to left, right, back, front, up and down etc. After a few minutes, switch roles.

**The Opposite of Myself** *(A game of improvisation)*

From Games for Actors and Non-Actors by Augusto Boal

Each person gets a piece of paper in which they write characteristics they would like to possess, a characteristic completely different from their actual personality. For example, someone timid who
wants to be outrageous, someone outgoing who wants to be shy, someone very nice who wants to be mean, etc. The sky is the limit, this is the opportunity to discover what it would be like if you had a different personality. Participants pair up and dialogue with each other in front of the rest of the group. They have to act out one of their new personalities for a period of time. The facilitator will instruct them to alternate back and forth from their normal behavior to their opposite self. After a few minutes, the group watching the dialogue should try to guess what personalities were being portrayed.

**Story Times 3 (A game of improvisation)**
Participants will choose what kind of scene they improvise, for example, a man breaking up with his girlfriend. Give the actors 3 minutes to improvise the scene. After they stop (or facilitator stops them) they will improvise the scene 2 more times but in different genres, comedy, drama, horror film, music video etc.

**Character Interviews (A game for character development)**
Have actors sit in the middle of the room. They must embody the character that they will portray in the play, have them introduce themselves and do a three minute interview with them. They must respond as the character. Allow them to use costumes and props if you have them. You can ask some of the following questions: How old are you? What is your favorite activity? Are you in love? Tell us about your family. What is your profession? What is your biggest fear?