

Dance of Creation



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Meditative Dances for Adults and Children

Choreography by Bernadette Raischl

Konrad Raischl, born 1969

Musician, composer, pastoral team member and theology teacher, has produced several CDs of instrumental music, especially for school children and young people in parishes. Konrad is married with two children.

Bernadette Raischl, born 1965

Nurse, psychotherapist, dance therapist, trainer of creative dance, works with individuals and groups, for example hospice staff and patients, teachers, nurses, and with physically and mentally challenged persons. She is married to Josef Raischl with three children.

These dances are designed for children from age 4 to 104 with a special focus for groups. These meditative dances involve very simple movements, whose goal is not a technically perfect dance but an inner and outer personal experience for individuals and groups.

The descriptions of these dances serve to enhance the imaginative creativity of both leaders and participants.

First some key words to explain elements of the dances which appear repeatedly:

V-hands	one dancer stands beside the other with joined hands, arms hanging down loose
W-hands	one dancer stands beside the other with joined hands at shoulder level
Simple step	one foot goes right, left or forward, and the other foot lands next to the first
Cross step	right foot moves right with the left foot passing behind the right, right foot again moves right with the left foot passing in front of the right, right foot again moves right

1. Dance of Growth and Blooming

Structure:	Introduction part A (2X 8 measures) part B (2X 8 measures) part A part B part A
Time signature:	4/4
Interpretation:	The music invites you to an imaginative dance. From a tiny seed a large plant grows, giving life to others. In movement we experience the growth and blossoming of creation.
Starting position:	Dancers choose a comfortable place, sitting down while making themselves as tiny as possible. In individual movement they follow the leader's instructions.

Description:

Introduction: Imagine yourself as a tiny seed.

Part A: The morning sun is rising, warming up the earth. Slowly and gradually from the tiny seed a very small sprout emerges growing larger and larger. First there is one leaf, then another one, till finally many leaves form a huge circle. In the center of this circle we see a bud. The sunrays gradually make the bud blossom, a bright yellow, shining blossom warmed by the sun and watered by rain.

Part B Time is transforming the yellow dandelion blossom into a flower to be blown away with its tiny seeds. The wind blows, rocking the flower back and forth, carrying away one seed after the other and whirling them through the air till they fall to the earth where they can rest and begin to grow and sprout again.

Part A Repeat above process by varying the type of plant.

Dancers repeat parts B and A as seen above.

2. Circle Dance

Structure: Introduction (8 measures)
part A (2X 12 measures)
part B (4X 4 measures)
part A
part B
part C (32 measures)
postlude (8 measures)

Time signature: 4/4

Interpretation: This dance can be compared with a string of pearls symbolized by the individual dancers, holding and supporting one another, looking with respect at each other.

Version A 12 or more participants

Starting position: Two circles facing each other with persons joining both hands with opposite circle.

Description:

Introduction Dancers remain stationary.

Part A

Measures 1-4 4X simple step
outer circle moves right, starting with the right foot
inner circle moves left, starting with the left foot.

- Measures 5-8 Simultaneously 4X simple step
outer circle moves left, starting with the left foot
inner circle moves right, starting with the right foot
- Measures 9-24 Repeat pattern above 2X.
- Part B V-hands in separate circles
- Measures 1-8 Outer circle, turning right, moves 16 steps forward
counterclockwise, while inner circle, turning left, moves 16
steps forward clockwise.
- Measures 9-16 Circles reverse directions, so outer circle moves 16 steps
clockwise, while inner circle moves 16 steps
counterclockwise.
- Parts A and B Repeat sequence above.
- Part C with postlude Dancers repeat parts A and B.

Version B less than 12 dancers

Starting position: circle with V-hands facing right

Description:

Introduction Dancers remain stationary.

Part A

Measures 1-2 Beginning with right foot dancers move 4 steps
counterclockwise.

Measures 3-4 Releasing hands dancers circle around in place to the right
counting 4 steps.

Measures 5-24 Dancers repeat measures 1-4 5X.

Part B Dancers in circle facing center.

Measures 1-8 Beginning with right foot dancers move counterclockwise in
8 simple steps.

Measures 9-16 Beginning with left foot dancers move clockwise in 8 simple
steps.

Part C and postlude Dancers repeat parts A and B.

3. Spiral dance

Structure: Introduction
part A (2X 8 measures)
part B (4X 10 measures)
part A
part B
postlude (about 20 measures)

Time signature: 4/4 with increasing speed

Interpretation: There is a time for moving to the center, and a time for leaving the center. There is a time to return to the origin, and a time to move forward. There is a time for staying together, and a time for separation.

Starting position: Dancers form a linear open circle with V-hands, leader guiding the dancers in spiral motion.

Description:

Leader moves counterclockwise in circular motion counting 52 steps.

Then leader reverses direction of the spiral clockwise.

Optional alternative ending for postlude: Close circle in V-hands
 Dancers move 8 steps towards center, gradually assuming W-hands position.
 Dancers move reverse direction away from center, gradually assuming V-hands position.
 This pattern is repeated until music ends.

4. Canticle of the Creatures

Structure: Introduction
 Refrain, interlude
 Verse one, refrain, interlude
 Verse two, refrain, interlude
 Verse three, refrain, interlude
 Verse four, refrain, postlude.

Time signature: 4/4

Starting position: Circle facing the center, hands at one's side.

Description:

Introduction Dancers remain stationary.

Refrain Höchster allmächtiger glorreicher Gott
 As refrain starts, hands in front of abdomen forming a bowl are lifted up slowly.

du hast alles geschaffen, Lob und Dank sei dir
 As above words are sung, arms are stretched out and brought down to one's side.

Lob und
 with the right arm make a large half circle, from inside, outside

Dank sei
 with the left arm draw a large half circle, from the inside, outside

Dir
in four steps circle around in place with hands at shoulder
height, palms upward
Lob und Dank sei dir
repeat above

Interlude and the verses 1 to 4

Dancers bring symbols to the center representing each verse
of the canticle.

Alternative: pick one or two elements of each verses inviting
dancers to translate them by free movement. Example:
„How would you describe Sir Brother Sun by the movement
of your body?“

5. On a Journey

Structure: Prelude
part A (2X 24 measures)
part B (2X 8 measures)
part A
part B
part A.

Time signature: 3 /4

Interpretation: Life is movement, like walking down a road on a journey.
Though rest in between can be very helpful, it is important
to continue. On our journey we can guide and support one
another.

Starting position: Dancers standing in a circle, hands at their sides, facing
right.

Version A

Introduction Dancers remain stationary, legs apart, knees loose.

Part A and B Dancers sway in place, right - left - right -left, with their
arms swinging in front of them, snapping their fingers. As
dancers are swaying, one member of the circle dances in a
slalom motion, weaving in and out around each member of
the circle, ending in original position. Each dancer follows
in turn.

Version B more experienced dancers

Introduction Dancers remain stationary.

Part A see version A

Part B Dancers face center.

Measures 1-6 Dancers move to the center by 6 diagonal steps:
Zigzagging 3X to the right, 3X to the left, lightly dragging
the other foot behind, arms swinging and fingers snapping.

- Measures 7-8 Remaining stationary dancers stamp their feet 4X.
 Measures 9-14 Reverse measures 1-6.
 Measures 15-16 Remaining stationary dancers stamp their feet 4X.
 Dancers repeat part B.

6. Communal Circle Dance

- Structure: Introduction
 main part (4X 8 measures)
- Time signature: 4/4
- Interpretation: With extended left arm, we draw energy, safety and security from the center and pass it to the person in front of us with the right arm. This connectedness helps us feel at home with God, almost being held by God as well as by the circle of people around us.
- Starting position: Circle moving counterclockwise, each person places right hand on the shoulder or back of the person in front, leaving the left hand free to point to the center, palm up.
- Description:
- Introduction Dancers remain stationary.
- Measure 1 Begin moving, left foot forward, right foot forward.
- Measure 2 Pivoting on right foot, while left foot steps towards the center, the left hand points to center as well.
 Then switch weight to the right foot.
- Repeat sequence for the entire dance.

7. Star Dance

- Structure: Introduction
 part A (2X 8 measures)
 part B (2X 8 measures)
 part A
 part B
 part A
- Time signature: 4/4
- Interpretation: As a person I am part of a whole, like a star is part of a galaxy. I am moving through light and darkness, through the tides of life. Gates are opening up, and I myself become a gate for others.
- Starting position: Dancers are standing in a circle, hands at their sides. Beginning with the leader they alternate naming themselves „moon“ and „star“. Candles may be put into the center of the circle, the room dimly lit.

Version A

- Introduction Dancers remain stationary.
- Measures 1-2 Beginning with the right foot the „moons“ dance 4 steps towards the center. At this point W-hands. „Stars“ remain stationary.
- Measures 3-4 Simultaneously the „moons“ dance back 4 steps, W-hands, while the „stars“ pass beneath the hands of the „moons“ 4 steps towards the center assuming W-hands position at center.
- Measures 5-6 Simultaneously the „stars“ dance back 4 steps, W-hands, while the „moons“ pass beneath the hands of the „stars“ 4 steps towards the center assuming W-hands position at center.
- Two circles move like waves into one another. Repeat sequence for the entire dance.

Version B

- Preparation: Each participant holds a candle in the right hand.
- Description:
- Measures 1-2 Beginning with the right foot the „moons“ dance 4 steps towards the center. „Stars“ remain stationary.
- Measures 3-4 „Moons“ and „stars“ are swaying in place, right - left - right -left.
- Measures 5-6 Simultaneously the „moons“ dance back 4 steps, while the „stars“ dance 4 steps towards the center.
- Measures 7-8 „moons“ and „stars“ are swaying in place, right - left - right -left.
- Repeat sequence for the entire dance.

8. The Cross Dance

- Structure: part A (8 measures)
part A
part B (8 measures)
part A
part B
part A
part C (16 measures)
part A
part B
part A

Time of signature: 4/4

Interpretation: The cross is not necessarily an external object, for we carry it within us. Extending one's arms the human body appears cruciform. We are stretched out between heaven and earth, between family and strangers, between light and darkness, between peace and war, between love and hatred, between God and creation.

Starting position: Dancers are standing in a circle, hands at their sides.

Version A

Description:

Measures 1-8 Dancers are stationary while listening.

Measures 9-10 Joining the palms of their hands (prayer position) in front of their bodies, dancers extend arms with palms joined upwards.

Measures 11-12 At furthest reach they separate palms bringing them down to one's side.

Measures 13-16 They assume V-hands position and beginning with the right foot they dance 6 steps counterclockwise, making a quarter turn on the 7th and 8th step facing the center.

Repeat sequence of measures 9-16 for the entire dance.

Version B: for more experienced dancers

Description:

Measures 1-8 Dancers listen in a stationary position.

Measures 9-10 Joining the palms of their hands (prayer position) in front of their bodies, dancers extend arms with palms joined upwards.

Measures 11-12 At furthest reach they separate palms bringing them down to one's side.

Measures 13-14 They assume V-hands position, and counterclockwise beginning with the right foot they dance right foot, left foot, right foot, pivot back (step back) on left foot.

Measures 15-16 Beginning with the right foot counterclockwise they dance right foot, left foot, making a quarter turn facing the center again dancing right foot, left foot on the 3rd and 4th step.

The sequence of measures 9 - 16 is repeated to the end.

9. The Rainbow Dance

Structure: Introduction
part A (2X 16 measures)
part B (2X 16 measures)

part A
part B
part A

Time of signature: 3 / 4

Interpretation: The individuality and uniqueness of each participant creates a refreshing variety that may be compared with the beautiful colors of a rainbow.

Starting position: Dancers are standing in a circle, hands at their sides, holding colorful crepe paper in both hands.

Version A

Description:

Introduction Dancers remain stationary.

Measures 1-4 Dancers move 4 steps to the center starting with the right foot. With each step the opposite arm (left arm with right foot) circles from front to back.

Measures 5-8 Dancers move 4 steps backwards, starting with the right foot. With each step the opposite arm (left arm with right foot) circles from front to back.

Measures 9-12 Dancers remain stationary for 4 steps while continuing to circle their arms.

Measures 13-16 Dancers circle in place for 4 steps, while continuing to circle their arms.

Dancers repeat measures 1 - 16 to the end.

Version B: For more experienced dancers

Starting position: Dancers are standing in a circle, hands at their sides. Participants are split into 2 or 4 smaller groups. A dancer of group one stands next to a dancer of group 2 and so forth. Designed as a „round dance“ .

Description: Each group dances Version A, entering into the dance as follows:

Measure 1 group 1 begins Version A.

Measure 5 group 2 begins Version A.

Measure 9 group 3 begins Version A.

Measure 13 group 4 begins Version A.

10. Halleluia

Structure: Prelude
refrain, interlude, verse 1
refrain, interlude, verse 2

	refrain, interlude, verse 3 refrain, interlude, verse 4 refrain postlude
Time signature:	4/4
Interpretation:	Life is a miracle, full of wonder, surpassing our human understanding. We are able to live with God's creation using all our senses— smelling, savoring, touching, hearing and seeing. What is left is to be silent, in respectful awe and simple praise.
Preparation:	Reflect in small groups how to translate the following verses into movement. 1. The fish in the water, the wind swaying the trees, for all you have created, we thank you, Lord! 2. The rising sun, the blossoms in springtime, the playful child, the person one meets, for all you have created, we thank you, Lord! 3. The fragrance of flowers, the beauty of trees, for all you have created, we thank you, Lord! 4. So let us join hands in wonder and dance respecting and loving all life.
Starting position:	Circle, hands at one's side.
Description:	
Introduction	Dancers remain stationary.
Refrain	In stationary position dance 4 steps, while clapping hands 4X. Dancers circle in place by 4 steps, simultaneously raising arms to shoulder height palms up. Repeat sequence 3X.
Interlude	Dancers, V-hands, remain stationary, swaying from right foot to left.
Verses	While dancers continue interlude position a group of two to four participants interprets a verse by movement.

11. Centering Dance

Structure:	Introduction part A (2X 16 measures) part B (2X 16 measures) parts A, B, A, B, A
Time signature:	3/ 4
Interpretation:	The focus of the dance is the center. We approach the center, rest in the center and receive new energy from the

center. Thus refreshed, we can journey on a path whose direction invites us to turn around here and there .

Starting position: Circle with V-hands.

Description:

Introduction Dancers remain stationary.

Part A

Measures 1-4 Dancers move 4 steps to the center: right - left - right - left, and gradually raise their arms to W-hands.

Measures 5-8 Dancers sway as they face the center: right - left - right - left.

Measures 9-12 Dancers move 4 steps away from the center: right - left - right - left, lowering their arms to V-hands.

Measures 13-16 Dancers repeat measures 5-8.

Part B

Measures 1-8 Dancers circle counterclockwise 8 steps, starting with the right foot.

Measures 9-16 Dancers circle clockwise 8 steps, starting with the right foot.

Dancers repeat measures 1-16.

12. Dance of Rejoicing

Structure: Introduction
part A (4X 4 measures)
part B (2X 8 measures)
part A and B
postlude (2 measures)

Time signature: 4/ 4

Interpretation: Joy enlivens us, making us want to dance. As we begin a journey, we open up to one another, walking with and towards each other where joy is awaiting us.

Version A

Starting position: Concentric circles, with partners facing each other.

Description:

Introduction Dancers remain stationary.

Part A

Measures 1-2 Dancers remain stationary.

Measure 3 Dancers move 4 steps towards the partner.

Measure 4	Dancers clap hands of their partners 4X.
Measure 5	Partners move 4 steps backwards to their original position.
Measure 6	Dancers remain stationary while clapping 4X.
Measures 7 - 14	Repeat measures 3 to 6 2X.
Measures 15 - 16	Dancers move 4 steps towards the partner and clap hands of their partners 4X.
Part B	V-hands within the concentric circles.
Measures 1-4	Simultaneously inner circle dances 16 steps clockwise, while outer circle dances 16 steps counterclockwise.
Measures 5-8	Simultaneously inner circle dances 16 steps counterclockwise, while outer circle moves 16 steps clockwise.
Measures 9-12	Simultaneously inner circle dances 16 steps clockwise, while outer circle moves 16 steps counterclockwise.
Measures 13-16	Simultaneously inner circle dances 16 steps counterclockwise, while outer circle moves 16 steps clockwise.
Postlude	Dancers remain stationary and clap.

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