

Charlie Over the Ocean

Informant/Performer:
Group of children
East York School, East York, AL, 1950

Source:
Harold Courlander
*Ring Games, Line Games and
Play Party Songs of Alabama*
Folkways FC 7004, 1953

$\text{♩} = 72$

Clapping: ✕ ✕ ✕ ✕ etc.

Solo 3 3 *Group* 3 3

Char - lie o - ver the o - cean, Char - lie o - ver the o - cean.

Solo 3 3 *Group* 3 3

Char - lie o - ver the sea __, Char - lie o - ver the sea __.

Solo 3 3 *Group* 3 3

Char - lie caught a black - bird, Char - lie caught a black - bird. (But he)

Solo *Group*

Can't catch me __, Can't catch me __.

Transcribed by Gail Needleman

2. Charlie over the ocean,
Charlie over the ocean.
Charlie over the sea,
Charlie over the sea.
Charlie caught a black fish,
Charlie caught a black fish.
(But he) Can't catch me,
Can't catch me.

* First verse has "Black as me"; subsequent verses have "But he can't catch me."

Game Directions

The children join hands in a ring and skip to their right. The leader, who is outside, skips in the opposite direction. He begins the song and the ring sings each line back to him. As the leader says "Charlie caught a blackbird" he touches one of those in the ring and begins to run around the ring. The child who was touched tries to catch him. If the leader can get around the ring to the empty place, the other child becomes the leader. If not, he remains on the outside. The song continues and all children take part as the leader.

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Game Directions cont'd

This game is almost the same as the more familiar Drop the Handkerchief, but all the children take part, either by their singing or by the more active part of the ring.

(In Drop the Handkerchief the circle does not move.)

Another way of playing this game is for the leader to be in the center of the circle, blindfolded.

On the line "Charlie caught a blackbird," the circle squats, moving about from side to side, as the leader attempts to find one of the children.

--from the liner notes

Editor's note: Courlander noted that in this and other games, the children clap the beat when they are just singing the song, although this is not possible while playing the game.