

How Many Miles to Babylon

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Group 1

How ma - ny miles to Ba - by - lon?

Group 2

Three score and ten.

Group 1

Shall I be there by cand - le light?

Group 2

Yes, and back a - gain!

Group 1

O - pen the gates and let us through!

Group 2

Not with - out a beck* and bou*.

Group 1

There's the beck there's the bou, O - pen the gates and let us through!

Game Directions

The players form into two rows facing each other, each row singing its own line. For the "beck" those in Row 1 bend back, and for the "bou" they bow forward. At the demand "open the gates and let us through!" those in Row 2 form an arch, through which those in Row 1 rush. Row 1 now becomes Row 2, and the players forming the arch become Row 1 and the game restarts.

*bou=bow

Background Information

This game goes back at least to the 13th century, when it was referred to in a Latin sermon as "Quot leucas habeo ad Beverleyham." This version was collected in Scotland. The game exists in many variants in the United States and the British Isles.