



J O K E R



ABOUT US



NATURE



QUOTE



HOME



RESPOND



GET SOCIAL



MIGRATION



GET CREATIVE



TECHNOLOGY



BE PRESENT

J O K E R

Gather Round is a DIY program, which gives you the freedom to invent your own rules. The goal is to have conversations about home, migration, technology, nature and the modern human experience.

Some cards in this deck have actions. Others are quotes to read aloud and respond to in whatever way you like. You can deal hands and each respond to your own or everyone in a group can follow the instructions on each card.

~~Simple games like Memory work well, but we suggest experimenting.~~

For more suggestions visit

HUMANITIESMONTANA.ORG/GATHERROUND

2 ♠



Food is a universal part of human culture. Do you have a family recipe handed down through generations?

**Take a photo of the meal you share
and post online**

**TAG @HUMANITIESMONTANA
#HMGATHERROUND**

3 ♠



“... the Internet is now our collective hearth, the place where our species addictively turns. We tilt toward the screen the way plants twist toward the sun.”

—BILL MCKIBBEN,
“HEARTH”

**How do you feel about the time
you spend online?**



4 ♠



“As Westerners, we take our public lands seriously. . . . They are the lands we graze, mine, drill, frack, log, wander in and recreate on. They are also the lands we recognize as our national forests, seashores, wetlands, national parks and wildlife refuges. Breathing spaces, I call them, in a society increasingly holding its breath.”

–TERRY TEMPEST WILLIAMS
& SARAH HEDDEN,
“A TEA CEREMONY FOR
PUBLIC LANDS”



5 ♠



“Kilauea represents a flux
and flow of lifetimes

It is a place of wordless lessons

Cultivating a spiritual union with
elemental deities

It is a reconnection portal with
ancestral fire-folk

Producing generations of fire names

Therefore a link to ancestral
genealogy.”



-PUALANI KANAHELE,
“KILAUEA CALDERA,
MY HEARTH”

6 ♠



We often learn something's true meaning to us only after its loss. Tell a story about an absence that clarified the value of that thing to you.

7 ♠



“Our hearth is our home in ever-expanding dynamic circles of connectivity—local, bioregional, continental, planetary, solar, galactic, and cosmic.”

—MARY EVELYN TUCKER,
“FROM HOME TO COSMOS”

**What is the cosmic address
of your hearth?**



8 ♠



“I said yes to the summer heat, the fried street food stuffed with cheese, the hams, and ragus inside of large risotto balls. For ten days I curled up and inhabited Catania, a nook on the earth that had captured my imagination, the intimacy and intensity I had yet to feel outside the walls of my old apartment in Washington Heights.”



—ANGIE CRUZ,
“DREAM SHELTER”



“Against these sustaining values, however, must always be considered the divisive aspects of tribalism, its wariness of the outer world, its resentment or hostility toward other ways of knowing, its impulse to banish its own if they do not conform.”

–BARRY LOPEZ,
“FINDING THE HEARTH”



10 ♠



“Despair like Job’s may be understood, whatever causes it, as a falling out of wonder with the world, out of awe, a catastrophic failure of conviction about one’s own miraculous part in the larger scheme of things. Life loses shape and refuses form; the hearth that held you lets you slip.”

–MARK TREDINNICK,
“THE TEMPLE OF THE WORLD”



J ♠



Take 90 seconds to silently observe the gathering you are taking part in. What sounds do you hear?



Who are your people?

What places or communities do you go to when you need to release and restore yourself?

K ♠



**Storytelling around a fire is as
old as humanity.**

**Use shadow puppets and the light of
a fire (or flashlight) to tell a story
about home that begins,**

"I'll never forget..."



Congress created the National Endowment for the Humanities in 1965 with the National Arts and Humanities Act to provide public support for arts and humanities throughout the nation. In 1972, thirteen Montanans founded the nonprofit Humanities Montana as the state affiliate of the NEH.

WWW.HUMANITIESMONTANA.ORG

2 ♦

Take your Gather Round conversations global. What is something important to you that you would like to share with a wider audience?

Post a quote from *Hearth* that speaks to you.

**TAG @HUMANITIESMONTANA
#HMGATHERROUND**

3 ♦



“The primitive desire to nestle for warmth and love is persistent, untiring. The home nurtures personal dignity. Yet there are many whose only home is inside their skulls. . . . I have the security of a home, closeness to nature, the trust and love of my people. But a question gnaws at my happiness: **If all of this is mine, why is it so?**”



–KAVERY NAMBISAN,
“THE RENT NOT PAID”

4 ♦



“When I am home, it doesn’t seem to me as if I talk about the rain all that much. It’s only when I am away—elsewhere, overseas—that my susceptibility to the elements singles me out...I automatically quiz strangers about the precipitation in the place where they’re from. Its frequency and strength, the shapes it takes and the shapes it leaves behind on the landscape. And then I compare and contrast their replies to the temper and nature of my home-rain.”



—SARA BAUME,
“HOME WATERS”

5 ♦



“Pua suggested ways to discover our own hearths. ‘Invite guests to your home, and over a generous offering of food ask them where their hearth is.’ Where do they feel the pull of the earth? Where do they return over and over in body or mind? **What is their sanctuary—their centering ground?**”

—ANNICK SMITH &
SUSAN O'CONNOR,
“KEEPING THE FIRE ALIVE”



6 ♦



Good conversation is
at least half listening.

Ask someone in your group to tell a story about a time or a place where they felt most welcome.

7 ♦



“The first time I lived beyond the epic gaze of the Rocky Mountains was in my early twenties...I drove the 2,643 miles—each one an opportunity to question the reality of being outside the reach of my most beloved rivers: the Satsop, the Newaukum, the Cowlitz.”

—Geffrey Davis,
“Even in the loneliness
of the canyon”



What is the farthest from home you've been?

8 ♦



“Roman soldiers, halting for the night to make camp, referred to the shadowy area between the ground lit by their fires and the outer dark as *inter canem et lupum*, the space between the dog and the wolf.”

–BARRY LOPEZ,
“FINDING THE HEARTH”



9 ♦



“So what endures out of this mysterious adventure called life? What endures, so one can announce with the certainty of a president’s press officer that this lasts forever and will never sputter away like the fire in a hearth struggling to keep the Nairobi July chill at bay?”

–YVONNE ADHIAMBO OWUOR,
“THE FIRE IN TEN”



10 ♦



“There is no beginning and no end to the preparation for a tea ceremony. For a student of tea, her life embodies and reflects her readiness, and yet each gathering presents her with an opportunity to be fully alive at this time, on this day, in the arc of the season.”

–TERRY TEMPEST WILLIAMS &
SARAH HEDDEN, “A TEA
CEREMONY FOR PUBLIC
LANDS”



J ♦



If you are at a gathering with food or drinks, take your next bite or sip with great attention. What do you taste? Does it remind you of anything?

**Take a moment to
compliment the cook.**



**What action, if any,
should we take to protect
or restore a home place?**

K ♦



Draw, paint, or sketch the meaning of hearth to you. It might be a special place, a person, or a significant object. The interpretation is up to you.

**Share with your gathering
or post online.**

**TAG @HUMANITIESMONTANA
#HMGATHERROUND**

A ♦



The humanities concern themselves with the experience of being human—explore it, analyze it, interpret and refine it while at the same time adding to it. At the core of the humanities are questions of value and justification, meaning and interpretation.

-NATIONAL ENDOWMENT
FOR THE HUMANITIES

2 ♣



Think of someone who is not at this event who would like to be part of a Gather Round conversation.

Send them a short message right now: Hey, I'm at a Gather Round event having great conversations and good food. I'd like to tell you about how you can take part in one. Let's talk soon!

3 ♣



“For me, home is always elsewhere, hovering in the liminal zone between two places, in the no-man’s-land and in-between spaces that I have to map over and over each time I want to sort out my thoughts about home or who I am.”

–BOEY KIM CHENG,
“HOME IS ELSEWHERE”



4 ♣



“Had I been shrewder I would have declined the dinner party, sending respectful regrets. And then I could have headed to the boat, but not before sharing sundown with my across-the-street neighbors J.P. and Marilyn, who are the great aficionados of skies, cloudscapes, and sunsets.”

—CARL SAFINA,
“SOUL ON THE TIDE”



5 ♣



“I have often and long written about the borderlands. Having been born and bred there, I consider myself as somewhat of an expert. Though no place on this earth reveals all its history and wonders to any observer, it does help to have lived there.”

–LUIS ALBERTO URREA,
“HEARTH LAND”



6 ♣



Many of the stories in the book *Hearth* contain descriptions of rural or urban settings that inform the characters' sense of self.

Do you consider yourself an urban or rural person?

Tell a story about a time you felt out of your element.



7 ♣



"We should recognize that the intricate world, terrains where humans have thrived, cannot be replicated. Continuing toward ruination is craziness. We should care for and cherish our physical and psychic commons. Encouraging devotion to the homelands we inhabit is necessary, and our responsibility."



-WILLIAM KITTREDGE,
"REFUGE ~~WHAT MAKES A~~
~~PLACE WORTHY OF~~
~~DEVOTION?"~~



“We tell stories that remind us we will resist and insist that our communities be built upon the faith we have in each other, as it has always been—and most importantly the faith we have in these lands that have shaped us.”

–TERRY TEMPEST WILLIAMS &
SARAH HEDDEN,
“A TEA CEREMONY FOR
PUBLIC LANDS”



9 ♣



In a time when there were fewer reliable means of communication, waiting was even more difficult. The one place where she is able to wait, which offers some symbolic signification of hope, is the cooking hearth. For not only does the open fire signify life in the Igbo imagination, it is a life created by her hands, and every time it is lit, her hope is awakened, and when it is quenched, despair returns.



-CHIGOZIE OBIOMA,
"WE WILL WAIT FOR YOU"

10 ♣



“For me the meaning of home is the place where, when you arrive from wide wanderings, you can harbor your heart right where it wants to be.”

-CARL SAFINA
“SOUL ON THE TIDE”





Close your eyes and take a moment to notice sensations. Are you warm, cold, comfortable, itchy?

Do you feel welcome or on edge?

How does it feel to be in the place and time you are in?



Where previously we huddled around a fire and welcomed other people to join us against the dark, what now is the gathering place where we show generosity toward others? Barry Lopez asks, "...Is concern for the fate of others, especially the fate of the stranger, now naive? Has it become impractical and dangerous?"

K ♣



Make a one-minute home movie about your important people, yourself, or your place. It can be a documentary, a nature film, fiction, or a reenactment.

A ♣



Gather Round is a DIY humanities program that recognizes your wisdom and curiosity. We've designed questions and provided readings to inspire discussions about home, migration, technology and nature to help you spark lively conversations around a campfire, over a drink, or at the dinner table.

2♥



Poetry is a way to give form to an idea. Write a short poem describing what “hearth” means to you.

Try a three-line haiku.

**Read aloud to your gathering
or post online.**

**TAG @HUMANITIESMONTANA
#HMGATHERROUND**

3 ♥



“Hearth is time as much as place.
The time it takes for three pine logs
to burn. It is historical context times
birth hour. We are each nonspecific
and utterly unique, scurrying for a
slot in a city or for a patch of
meadow in some untrodden place in
an overcrowded world. Yet
sometimes we long for home.”

-GRETEL EHRLICH,
“TO LIVE”



4 ♥



“Hearthward was the adverb that should have modified everything I said

and did from the first days of our marriage.

Toward, or in the direction of, the hearth, as in: What can I do to help?”

—CHRISTOPHER MERRILL,
“HEARTH”



5 ♥



“Some years ago a friend . . . sent me a poem he found carved on a stone under a tamarind tree. Written by an unknown Vietnamese boat person, it tells how to escape tragedy. ‘Your mind is like a radio that you can dial to a different voice. It depends on you. So do not keep your mind always tuned to sorrow. If you want, just change the channel.’”



—ANDREW LAM,
“ENCHANTMENT”

6 ♥



“I found an email in my spam queue from a name I didn’t recognize. Either an offer of expensive virtual sex, I assumed, or a scam from West Africa. . . I clicked on it, and found a letter from a ninety-year-old woman I’d occasionally seen at Sunday lunches in the hermitage. . . She would be so happy, she wrote, if I might stop by to say hello.”



–PICO IYER,
“MY MOBILE HOME ”

7 ♥



“Making or reading a poem, we can be awakened, through wakeful language, to all the rest of what we’ve forgotten we’re connected to, inside ourselves and beyond.”

–MARK TEDINNICK,
“THE TEMPLE OF THE WORD”

**What is something you do
that makes you feel connected?**



8 ♥



“When I think of hearth, I think of my father holding up the great big rickety world, rocketing back his muscly arm against the darkness that threatens to engulf me.”

–DEBRA MAGPIE EARLING,
“THE GREAT BIG RICKETY
WORLD MY FATHER SAVED
ME FROM”



9 ♥



“For most of human history, rattling on about community and about focus would have been like having a considered opinion on breathing, or offering advice in bipedal locomotion. But all of a sudden our default is in the opposite direction. The Internet, whatever its other vices and virtues, is an anti-hearth, and it is winning. Where our time is spent, there also is our heart.”



–BILL MCKIBBEN,
“HEAARTH”

10 ♥



“The whole concept of home and hearth now seems like a cruel joke. We’ve run out of time to settle down, to make a place for the unborn, to plant a sequoia tree that will live three thousand years, to sire, mother, transmit, pass on.”

—GRETEL EHRLICH,
“TO LIVE”



J ♥



Take a deep breath and observe the gathering you are taking part in. Smells are strongly connected to memory and can conjure vivid details and emotions.

What do you smell?



**What is a recent experience that
made you feel at home?**

K ♥



Music often has deep
associations for us.

**Sing, grab an instrument, or cue your
music app to share a song that
reminds you of home.**



Our Mission

Humanities Montana strengthens communities through stories and conversations. We invite Montanans to explore and reflect on a sense of self and place through conversations with friends and neighbors. The program brings small groups of people together to empower relationships. Positive interactions then ripple outward as each participant is invited to become a host for a new circle of friends.