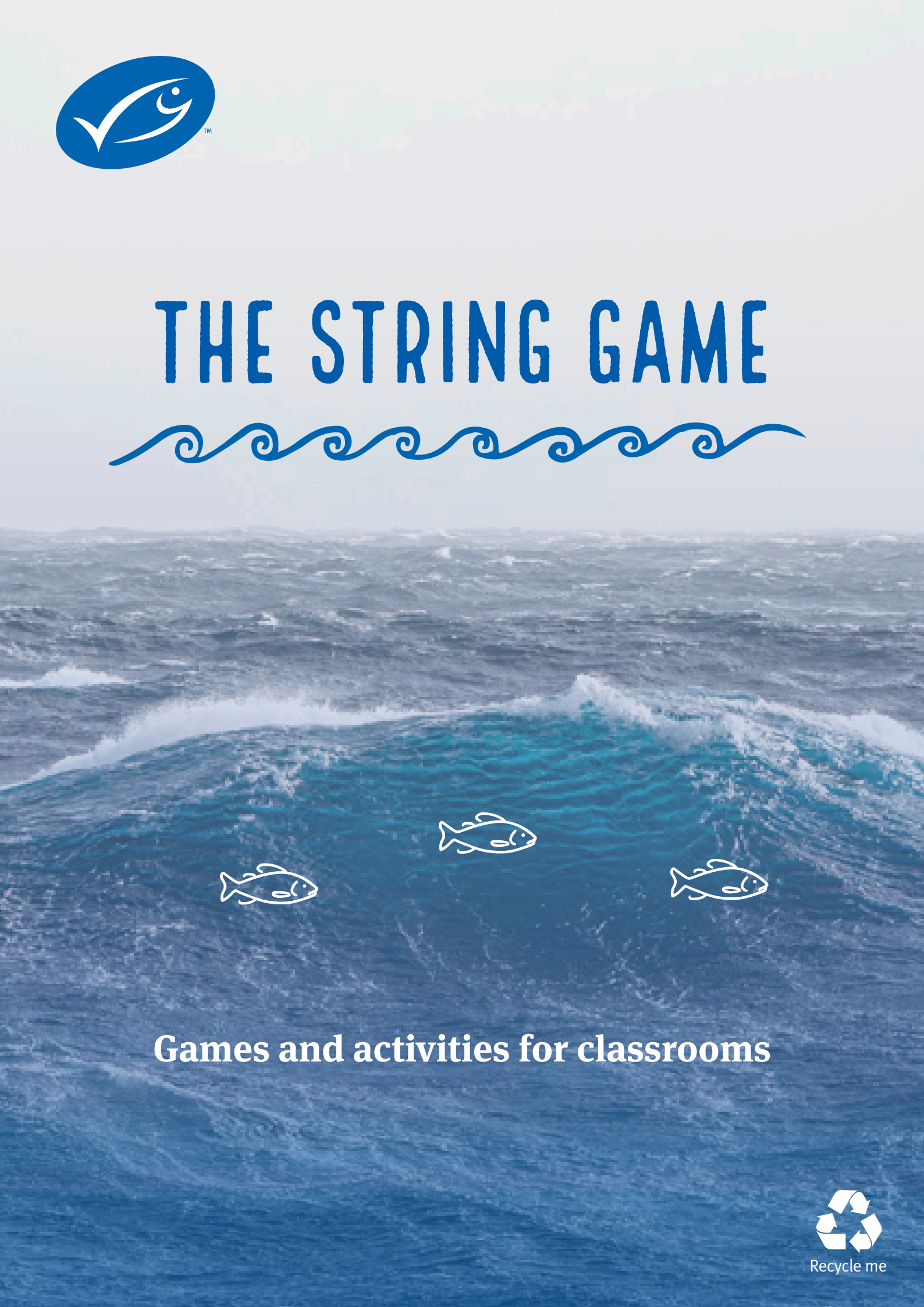
THE STRING GAME



Games and activities for classrooms

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THE STRING GAME

A string game is a great way of introducing the idea of connections between organisms in a food web, and you only need a ball of string and if you have them, some labels so learners can remember which organism they are pretending to be.

The game takes about 15 minutes and is suitable for learners aged 7+.

In this string game, the sea creatures are from North Atlantic waters, but you could create scenarios for other environments too, for instance a coral reef or Arctic food web.

How to play

A group of about 10 learners stands in a circle with others observing. Give each person a sea creature written on paper, which they read to the rest of the group.

One learner holds the end of the string and passes the ball to another they think they have a link in the food chain with, and say why. For instance, the shark might be linked to the seal because sharks eat seals.

This learner then chooses another that they feel they're linked to, and passes the string across or along, while keeping hold of the string themselves. After some time there will be a web of string across the circle.

Ask learners: *What does the web show?*

Learners in the circle keep hold of the string while others read out a few scenarios involving changes to the marine environment, and ask those affected by the change to wiggle the string.

Ask learners: *What happens when one organism is affected? How do they think they are affected by changes?*

Organisms

Orca	Herring
Shrimp	Human
Seal	Tuna
Cod	Octopus
Krill	Zooplankton

Scenarios

Cod are overfished and their numbers go down sharply.
Phytoplankton bloom in the Spring, leading to a sharp increase.
Increased carbon dioxide emissions lead to more acidic oceans, meaning that shellfish find it harder to build their shells.
Quotas for tuna are introduced, meaning fishers take fewer of them and their numbers slowly increase.