Cuica (Laughing Cup)
In this activity, you’ll make a cuica (pronounced KWEE-kah)—a musical instrument popular in Brazil.

What Do I Need?
• paper cup
• pushpin or nail (alternately, the tip of a ballpoint pen)
• cotton twine (or thick string)  • scissors  • paper clip
• flannel or other small piece of cloth (optional)
• cup with water (to moisten the cloth)

What Do I Do?
1. Poke a hole in the bottom center of the cup. Make it large enough to thread your twine through it.
2. Cut a piece of twine about 18 inches (45 cm) long.
3. Poke the end of the twine through the bottom of the cup.
4. Reach into the inside of the cup and pull the twine through.
5. Take the end of the twine that’s outside the bottom of the cup and tie it to a paper clip, using two knots so it’s secure. This functions as a stopper so the string doesn’t pull all the way through the cup.
6. Dunk the flannel in the water and squeeze out the excess water.
7. Using the wet flannel, grab the string inside the cup and rub it along the string to create sound. Try rubbing the string with short strokes, then long strokes to create different rhythms.

http://www.exploratorium.edu/afterschool/activities/docs/cuica.pdf
Variations
Use different cups or other containers to create different sounds. Here are some ideas:
• A coffee can with the plastic lid removed and a hole in the bottom.
• A tin can with the plastic lid on but the bottom metal removed (put the paper clip end on the side with the plastic lid).
• A plastic cup with dental floss instead of twine.
• If you don’t have flannel or another piece of cloth, moisten your fingers and rub your fingers along the string

Decorations
If you used a plain paper cup, you might want to decorate it.
• Add a rooster head to make a clucking chicken cup.
• If you want it to be a laughing cup, you could draw a face on it.
Or….