

Music Month Activities!

Celebrate music in your classroom by encouraging your students to appreciate different types of music and the creative process by which music is created. Try some of these musical activities with your students.

SINGING TELEGRAMS

The first singing telegram was delivered in New York City on February 10, 1933. Ask your students to write and perform their own singing telegrams.

Select a familiar tune such as "Old MacDonald" or "Three Blind Mice." Instruct students to choose a person for which to sing the telegram. Have them write their own lyrics to one of the tunes on the form in this chapter. Let the students perform the singing telegrams in front of the class.

PIANO EXAMINATION

If you have access to a class piano, let your students have a close-up look at how it works and makes music.

Remove the front panel of an upright piano to reveal the complex system of strings and hammers. As a group, count the strings. Ask them to watch the hammers as you press a key. Instruct them to notice what happens when the key is released. Show them that it is the "damper" that presses against the string to silence it.

Let each child take a turn pressing one key at a time. Help the students point out which string is hit.

Bring other musical instruments to class that can be examined and attempted by each child in class.

CLASS-MADE MUSIC MAKERS

Children love making their own music. They also love using instruments they make themselves. Try some of these ideas:

- Decorate an empty coffee can with a plastic lid. Thump the plastic lid to create a drum sound.
- Place a handful of dry beans in two small, empty coffee cans with plastic lids to make a set of maracas.
- Cover two small blocks of wood with sandpaper. Rub them together lightly to make a swish-swish sound.
- A piece of waxed paper wrapped around a fine-toothed comb makes a great instrument. Hold the comb, teeth up, between your lips and hum a tune. The teeth and paper vibrate, creating a kazoo-like sound.
- Hold a pair of spoons, back to back, between your fingers.

Tap the spoons on your knee to create a clickety-click sound. (The secret is to not hold them too loose or too tight.)



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MUSIC VOCABULARY

Write the following musical vocabulary words on colorful paper and give each student one word to research the meaning. Arrange the words, along with the definitions, on the class board and ask students to select six words to include in a musical creative writing assignment.

CONCERT
CHORUS
HARMONY
ALTO
QUARTET
JAZZ
SYMPHONY
CELLO
FLUTE
OBOE
BASSOON
TROMBONE
TUBA

CONDUCTOR
ORCHESTRA
SOPRANO
TENOR
BALLAD
OPERA
VIOLIN
HARP
PICCOLO
CLARINET
PERCUSSION
TRUMPET
CYMBALS

SOUND AND MUSIC

Musical instruments make their sound by vibrating the air. However, each instrument does it in a different way. String instruments have strings that vibrate. Wood instruments have reeds that vibrate. Percussion instruments vibrate when someone strikes them. The vibrations from brass instruments come from the player's lips.

The type of sound created depends on how slow or fast the air vibrates. A low sound is made by slow vibrations. A high sound is made by fast vibrations.

Demonstrate several sounds to your class and ask them to determine if they are low sounds or high sounds.

BODY MOVEMENT NOTES

Teach your youngsters the scale of notes including these body movements.

DO - Touch the floor with your hands.

RE - Put your hands on your knees.

MI - Put your hands on your hips.

FA - Put your hands on your waist.

SO - Put your hands on your shoulders.

LA - Put your hands on your head.

TI - Stretch your hands out and up.

DO - Stretch your hands straight up.

Repeat the scale several times. When the children have perfected the scale and the movements, encourage them to perform it faster and faster.

WATER XYLOPHONE

Make this simple musical instrument and let your students experiment with the various tones.

Begin by using eight identical one quart jars or drinking glasses. Number each of the jars. Fill jar number one with a little water, number two with slightly more, number three with still more, and so on. Arrange the jars in order and strike each one with a wooden mallet or wooden spoon. Use a pitch pipe or piano to set the pitch of each jar. (Add more or less water if needed.)

Let children tap out their own tunes or try one of these old favorites using the numbers below.

"Row, Row, Row Your Boat"

1 1 1 2 3 3 2 2 4 5 8 8 8
5 5 5 3 3 3 1 1 1 5 4 3 2 1

"Mary Had A Little Lamb"

6 2 1 2 6 6 6 2 2 2 6 6 6
6 2 1 2 6 6 6 6 2 2 6 2 1