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About this Resource

All of the activities presented in this book can be taught to preschool and primary students. I've organized the first activities, from "Down by the Station" through "Everybody Do This," as activities appropriate for the beginning of a movement class. The next set of activities, through "Free Dance," should be selected based on your lesson objectives. "Little Birdies" and "Resting" are quiet activities, which can serve as transitions towards reflection or as refreshing breaks between more active segments. "Goodbye Song" can serve as a closure activity and a transition out of the space or be useful at other times of the day or year.

The lessons are presented in the following format:

- ★ Objectives: state the intended outcomes of the activity
- ★ Activity Basics: provide the step-by-step lesson suggestions that match the activities as presented on the DVD
- ★ Going Further: provides additional details for instruction and extension ideas
- ★ Reflection: provides closure and a means of assessing your objectives
- ★ Concepts for Dance, Music, Physical Education, and Early Childhood
- ★ Lyrics

The sidebar includes CD track information, DVD Options, DVD Commentary, and information about visual resources available on the mixed-media CD.

Throughout the book you will see this icon: 

It highlights phrases, tips, and tricks that I use in my everyday instruction.

When you conduct reflection and closure, encourage students to either show (good for kinesthetic learners) or tell (good for verbal learners) in response to reflection questions. This will draw out the non-verbal learners as demonstrators. It will also provide the verbal learners with opportunities to express (in words) what they see modeled (in movement) by a peer.

A word about front-loading

Front-loading means “to concentrate maximum effort (on an activity) at the outset.” Front-loading reveals the activity road map, helping children confidently assume ownership of their movement experience. It clears up misunderstandings and helps minimize the need to backtrack. Use front-loading to clarify movements, interactions, and transitions within an activity. Select the fewest, best points. Then, layer on additional details as children move and dance.

Be sure to front-load musically. When a song and dance go together, I often sing the melody with my own instructing words. This helps children experience the structure of the activity and anticipate the transitions before they even hear the music.

You may find it easier to understand how to front-load an activity for the children if you view an activity on the DVD and read the notes in this book at the same time.

A word about movement terminology

There are different ways to describe movement that is performed in place and that which travels through a space. For the most part, I will use the words non-locomotor and locomotor, respectively, to differentiate these two ways of moving, following the National Standards for Dance (1996). In addition to non-locomotor, in-place movement is also called stationary, axial, personal, or self-space movement. Traveling movement is also called movement through the general (group, shared) space.

Gross motor skills suggest large movement of the limbs and whole body. Fine motor skills suggest small movements of the hands, wrists, fingers, feet, toes, lips, and tongue. Both can be practiced in-place or traveling.

Popcorn and Melted Butter

Objective

- ★ To perform movements with contrasting qualities

Activity Basics

1. Prepare your students for the activity with the following script, showing the movements indicated:



We are going to focus on three movement qualities (also called “energies”) in this activity: smooth, sharp, and shaky. Each of these words starts with the letter “S.” When you do smooth movement, it is like spreading peanut butter. Let’s spread a big “S” in front of us and say “smooth.” Sharp movement is like a robot. Let’s chop a big “S” in front of us and say “sharp.” Shaky movement is wiggly and jiggles around. Let’s shake a big “S” in front of us and say “shaky.”

2. Instruct the student to find a perfect spot and stand tall.
3. Play the music, following along with the prompts as they are given. Remind your students to “Stay on their spot” (if you do the activity in place) or “Move into the empty spaces, so you don’t get hurt” (if you travel).
4. Following the activity, move to a talking circle or seated position to reflect on the experience.

Reflection

- ★ What movements were smooth? (Melted butter, floating clouds, maybe squirmy snakes)
- ★ What movements were sharp? (Popcorn, jumping beans)
- ★ What movements were shaky? (Jell-O™, maybe squirmy snakes)

CD TRACKS

- 16 Guided
- 36 Instrumental

DVD OPTION

- Instruction & Demonstration

DVD COMMENTARY

Notice how we hold the “freeze” during the transitions. We model a traveling version, but the children basically stay in one place in the demonstration. It would be easy to keep this whole activity in one spot.

Concepts

Dance

Energy: smooth,
sharp, shaky

Music

Tempo
Expression
Articulation

Physical Education

Energy
Self-expression

Early Childhood

Math

Popcorn and Melted Butter

Let's move like popcorn, and melted butter.

Popcorn! Melted butter

Popcorn! Melted butter

Popcorn! Melted butter

Popcorn...

Pop!

Now let's move like jumping beans and squirmy snakes.

Jumping beans! Squirmy snakes!

Popcorn ...

Pop!

Time for Jell-O™ and floating clouds.

Jell-O! Floating clouds.

Popcorn...

Pop!

Old MacDonald Had a Farm

We were inspired to create this version of the song when we were helping young children describe the sounds of percussion instruments. In this activity, children name the animals and sounds they hear.

Objectives

- ★ To sharpen listening skills and imagination
- ★ To stimulate curiosity

Activity Basics

1. Show your students an assortment of interesting percussion instruments, including pitched and non-pitched.
2. Play the instruments for the students and ask them to describe the sounds they hear, and what the sound makes them think of.
3. Watch the video.
4. Create your own version, using the instruments you have.

Going Further

- ★ Challenge the students to create found sounds or categorize instruments into family groups (wood, metal, skin).
- ★ Add movement and gesture to the sounds.
- ★ Find a storybook version of the song and assign characters to different students. Bring the book to life through sound and movement.

Reflection

Ask your students:

- ★ What instruments did you hear? What did they sound like to you? Why?

Concepts

Dance

Make connections between dance and other disciplines (music)

Music

Verse/Refrain
Timbre

Physical Education

Tempo
Self-expression

Early Childhood

Language Arts
Fine Arts
Social & Emotional
Development

CD TRACK

17 Guided

DVD COMMENTARY

This is the only performance segment. Everyone can watch and enjoy. What are the animals? You decide!