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Each of the lessons in this book is categorized by a theme. In a typical year, each lesson (with perhaps the exception of the holiday themes) would be repeated a second time. The lessons are not necessarily presented in sequential order. Please implement the lessons to correspond with your classroom units of study as applicable. For your convenience, there is an area for you to record information at the end of each unit. Within each lesson are the following components:

**Name Song**

Our name is one of the most important things about us. Singing provides a positive connotation with one’s own name. Learning the names of the other students in the class is also an important part of connecting in the music classroom.

Starting each class with a song that includes each child’s name creates a social connection between you and each child, between the children in the class, and to the music class experience.

We have included several names as examples in the songs. You will want to substitute your students’ names in place of those we’ve used. Keep in mind you will need to adapt the rhythms to accommodate the number of syllables in students’ names.

Initially, you sing to the children; as they learn each song, they may end up singing with you. Some of the songs are difficult because of the wide range of pitches, and often students join on the parts they can manage. Since the children will have plenty of opportunities to sing, this shouldn’t affect the overall experience. The name songs are about making a positive connection with each child and each child making a positive connection with music.

**Teaching Tips**

- Somethings to keep in mind: Over the years, I’ve noticed students who are on the autism spectrum may have difficulty learning and retaining other students’ names.
- As you sing to each child, make eye contact while maintaining a warm and open expression.
- Try to pronounce names correctly, maintaining proper accents on the correct syllables.

**Shorty**

The warm-up, or shorty, in each lesson comprises rhymes, echo songs, call-and-response songs, and super-short songs. Once the students know these pieces well, they can be used in other contexts as well as to gain the students’ attention, to foster smooth transitions between activities, or any time there is a spare minute or two.

**Teaching Tips**

- Begin a favorite shorty as students line up to leave the room.
- Start a shorty to quiet a chatty class; when the students’ mouths are busy singing, they won’t be talking!
Songs to Sing

There are two “songs to sing” in each lesson. Each of the songs is a traditional children’s song and is written in a key that is appropriate for young children’s voices. It is important to remember the need to sing in a range appropriate for the developmental stage of our students rather than one more comfortable for us as adults.

As you teach the new songs in each lesson, keep in mind that students love returning to familiar songs, too! Revisiting familiar songs not only broadens the children’s repertoire of songs but offers the repetition needed to solidify learning.

Steady Beat

The steady-beat activities in this book are designed for a whole group, a small group, or individual students. In whole-group and small-group activities, everyone is working to establish and maintain a steady beat together. In small group activities, three or four children play together as the other members of the class chant, sing, and listen. Individual steady-beat activities allow one child to control the tempo for everyone else.

Teaching Tips

- Students who are not yet capable of maintaining a steady beat independently will often join a group beat.
- Guide students to critical listening skills (determining if a group is playing together, for example) by asking questions such as “Are all the hands moving together?” or “Are all the sounds right together?”
- Do not ask or allow students to identify those who are not in sync with the group.
- In individual activities, follow the child’s beat whether or not it is steady.
- In individual activities, if the child stops playing, stop singing or chanting.
- If a student intentionally changes tempo or stops repeatedly in a manipulative manner, challenge the student to turn you into a singing robot that sings everything evenly.
- Do not move students’ hands for them, but if you have a student who continues to struggle after many experiences, sit behind that child and lightly tap the steady beat on his/her shoulders as he/she plays the instrument.

Playing Instruments

Playing instruments in songs, stories, or poems links rhythm with text. In each case, children play designated phrases or words from the text when they are read. While specific instruments are recommended, you should substitute as needed to accommodate the sound choices you have. An ideal set includes five each of maracas (played one at a time), triangles, small hand drums, guiros, woodblocks, and tambourines. While in the beginning, this might be a financial hurdle, this set can last for many years if taken good care of.

The ideal goal should be for every student to play every instrument used during the course of that lesson’s repetitions.
Movement

Each of the movement activities designates an opening position as well as whether the movement is stationary or locomotor. For locomotor experiences, be sure the room is clear of obstacles.

As with everything teachers do, movement activities require thoughtful planning for success.

Teaching Tips

- Make sure students are familiar with the music or poetry before adding the instruments.
- To prepare for instrumental parts, use body percussion (mimicking the actual playing of the instrument when possible) as you teach the song. The children should join you.
- Teach students to handle the instruments responsibly and safely.
- Allow students a few seconds to experiment with the instruments before playing the song.
- Establish (teach, model, and practice) procedures for when it is OK to play and when students need to listen. I use the phrases “rest position,” which means the instruments are on the floor in front of the students and their hands are in their laps, and “ready position,” which means the instruments are in the students’ hands quietly waiting to be played.
- Develop a routine for passing out, trading, sharing, and putting away the instruments.
- Organize the instruments in baskets that can be passed out easily.

Read-Aloud Book

Using music-themed children’s books (particularly at the end of the class) has many advantages. Just to name a few, the children connect music with literature, recognize the story in a song, predict form, and calm down after a stimulating music class!

Each lesson has a recommended book with a musical connection. All the books currently are in print, and most, if not all, are available from public (and many school) libraries. This is not an exhaustive list of music-oriented books, so feel free to substitute your favorites for mine.
Since the AB form of this song makes it quite long, sing the A section followed by two or three B sections. The song naturally lends itself to call-and-response in the B section, and the class will likely sing the “Hey, lidey” lyrics with you. Remember to substitute names from your class in place of those used in the score.
Preschool Standards: Gross Motor Skills; Self-Concept & Self-Efficacy; Self-Regulation; Persistence & Attentiveness; Symbolic Representation; Receptive Language; Music; Creative Movement & Dance;
MU:Cr1.1.PreKa

Kindergarten Standards: RF.K.2A; MU:Cr1.1.Ka

Add the following movements with each new verse, while maintaining those you've already introduced:

- Waving fan = make a fanning motion with one hand
- Pair of shears = pantomime cutting scissors with other hand
- Wooden shoe = tap a foot to the beat
- Nut like you = point at the class with a silly face and big smile

By the end, you will be doing all the movements simultaneously and you will all look very silly, which often delights the students as they rarely get to see adults act this way!
Preschool Standards: Phonological Awareness; Patterns; Music; MU:Cr1.1.PreKa

Kindergarten Standards: RF.K.2A; MU:Cr1.1.Ka; MU:Cr1.1.Kb

Although the form of “Fooba Wooba John” is a little tricky, students tend to pick it up fairly quickly. Whether you follow the lyrics exactly or get creative and make up new ones, treat the song as a call-and-response by singing the narrative phrases and having the students join you in singing each Fooba Wooba line as well as the “Hey John, ho John” line. Eventually you won’t have to sing these repetitive parts as the students will know them well enough to respond without your support.