

FUN WITH FUNDAMENTALS

Musicplay Live with Artie, Denise and JJ 2023
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Music theory for your little folks is easy with lessons of this nature! We'll explore the basic music elements with Spuddy Buddy, the Friendship Hammer, pointing pages, poetry, and body percussion. Your students are sure to enjoy, and grow musically, with these unique foundation lessons.

1. **Pass the Friendship Beanbag** (*Also the Music Beanbag*) (Source: Sing! Sing! Sing! book by Almeida)

Focus: Steady Beat, Melody, Music Vocabulary, Getting to Know Names, Hobbies, Favorites, etc. Refer to the projectable visual provided for lyrics. The Friendship Beanbag song works very well as a lesson opener! The first iteration of the beanbag passing lesson involves students sharing their names with the class. Instruct the children to close their eyes while you sing a new song for them. After singing Pass the Friendship Beanbag, ask children to open their eyes and listen once again, still without singing. On the third repetition, invite the children to join you in the song. Pick up the beanbag and step into the circle. Sing the song as you step around the inside of the circle to the beat, simulating the beanbag being picked up by one child and placed in front of the child to their right. Then show the motion of the child who received the beanbag - picking it up and placing it on the floor in front of the child on their right, and so on around the circle partway. This will illustrate how the beanbag will travel on the floor, from child to child, to the steady beat of the song. Invite the children to all practice the "Pick & Pass" motion together as a class, perhaps chanting "Pick... Pass... Pick... Pass."

When you get to the eighth child, at the end of the song (on the word "name"), demonstrate the needed response for the child: Ask them their name, (for this example, let's use the name "Jada") and then show them what they will do with the beanbag for this demo. Tell the child she will tap the beanbag gently on the floor in front of her four times (quarter note taps), while speaking "My name is Jada!" The class will immediately respond with "Her name is Jada!" while clapping the beat four times. Ask a few students to demonstrate tapping the beanbag in front of them and saying their name for the class to echo. During the game, as soon as the child taps and speaks, with the class echoing, the children immediately start singing the song again and passing the beanbag on the beat. Or, if that is too abrupt and challenging a restart for the children, consider adding a teacher cue before they sing of "And... we... (pass the music beanbag)" (on the pitches of Mi and Re... leading the children into beginning the song again on the pitch Do.

The hilarity begins when there are quite a number of children who have had a turn! The beanbag keeps getting passed quite a distance around the circle with many children, often sitting right next to each other, getting the beanbag and also saying "I've already had a turn." There have been times in my class where the beanbag traveled through 10 or more hands of children sitting next to each other who've had turns and they are quite humorous in their responses. They will use high voices, low voices, loud voices, funny voices, "good-grief-this-is-taking-a-long-time-to find-a-person-who-hasn't-had-a-turn"voices, etc.

If you wish to modify the lesson as a **Getting to Know You** song, examples of lyrics might be:

- "Pass the **friendship beanbag**... and name your favorite food!" OR "and name an animal" OR "and name an instrument" OR "and name your favorite sport."

- **When using the Musical Knowledge version of the lesson**, you will need to prepare flash cards in a variety of topics. These will be placed in the center of the circle. **You would sing: Pass the music beanbag and listen for your clue!"**

Some Musical Knowledge examples might be:

- Note & Rest Values (e.g., "Go tap a quarter note")
- Non-Pitched Percussion Instruments (e.g., "Go tap a Guiro")
- Orchestra Instrument Families (e.g., "Go tap a Woodwind Instrument")
- Music Vocabulary Words & Symbols ("Go tap a Repeat Sign")

2. Spuddy Buddy (Almeida)

Focus: Steady Beat, Rhythms, Music Vocabulary

Materials: A wind-up Spuddy Buddy with an alarm, or a picture of a potato on cardstock & laminated. A set of potato shaped flash cards with 4-beat rhythm patterns on the back of each. I had cards in three levels of rhythm patterns, so that the game could become more challenging as the year progressed.

Room Set: Children will be seated in a circle, with the potato flash cards spread out in the center. The side of the potato card with the rhythm pattern should be face down.

Process:

1. Display the Study Buddy poem and practice reading it, and repeating it a few times: **“Baked potato, mashed potatoes, hot french fries . . . Spuddy Buddy might give you a big surprise!”**
Add the beat tapped on laps and speak poem again.
2. Let the children know that this is a passing game to the beat. They will be chanting the poem repeatedly and if Spuddy Buddy’s alarm sounds when you are holding him, you get to try and earn a point for the student team by correctly performing a rhythm pattern on a potato card.
3. Practice passing Spuddy Buddy to the beat, from student hands to student hands, around the circle as all students chant the poem repeatedly. If yours is a potato that winds up and then sounds an alarm bell unexpectedly, all the more fun for the children, but don’t let it become a game of Hot Potato! Reinforce the steady beat and the even passing of the tater on that beat.
4. If you could not obtain a potato toy that has an alarm buzzer, simply use a cymbal, vibraslap or other distinctive sound to cue when the potato should stop in the circle. You’ll want to make it very random and try to not have children get repeated turns at holding the potato.
5. When the alarm goes off, the child holding Spuddy Buddy is the **Tater Tot** who gets to choose a potato flash card to clap. **Correct response = point for kids. Incorrect response = point for the teacher!**
6. Have the student clap and say the rhythm again, with the class echoing.
7. Continue until many students have had a turn to perform a rhythm card.

3. Engine, Engine #9 Pointing Page Lesson

(Source: *Get to the Point* book by Artie Almeida & Katie Grace Miller)

Focus: Steady Beat, Rhythms, Melodic Direction, Sol-Mi-La, Coda, Crescendo)

Materials: A Pointing Page (2-sided) for each student (laminated is best!). A Pointing Device if possible (e.g., feathers, silly drink stirrers (sand down any pointy ends), etc. Pointing with fingers is not as fun for the kiddos.

There are four pointing pages provided for you in the Visual Support for this lesson:

1. Picture Page with train engines (Rhythm Picture Pointing Page)
2. Page with eighth notes and quarter notes (Rhythm Notation Pointing Page)
3. Solfege Notation Page (S-M-L)
4. Staff Notation Page (Key of C)

Sample Process (full lesson instruction details are provided in visual):

1. Speak the Engine #9 poem for children.
2. Add hand motions: **(Phrase 1)** Move your hands in the classic “choo choo” fashion. **(Phrase 2)** weave hands forward as if following the curved tracks. **(Phrase 3)** Show train falling off track with hands. **(Phrase 4)** hands out as if asking a question, then rub fingers and thumb together to indicate money. Ask children to join you in this poem with motions a few times.
3. Invite children to stand, join you in speaking the poem with motions.
4. Demonstrate speaking while pointing to the first picture page. Then hand out the two-sided pointing page (pics/rhythm notation) to children and have them try to point to each picture or notehead as they speak with you. *This will be very difficult for some children for a few classes.*
5. Using rhythm pointing page alternate measures with children, divide the class into four groups – one to perform each phrase, transfer to non-pitched percussion, etc. **(Continued in PPT)**

The full lesson plan pages for all four Pointing Page iterations are provided for you in the downloadable visuals for this lesson

4. Oats, Peas, Beans

(Source: *Get to the Point* book by Artie Almeida & Katie Grace Miller)

Focus: Melodic Direction, Audiation, Body Percussion

This full Pointing Page lesson is provided for you in the downloadable visuals for this session.

5. The Very Lonely Firefly (Author: Eric Carle) Melody by Almeida.

Create a Firefly puppet using a green glow stick held between hands covered in black socks or purchase a light-up firefly finger puppet. I read this in a darkened room with a small lamp illuminating the book pages. Choose a child to fly on each refrain, using the firefly puppet. Add finger cymbals (or triangles) on each quarter rest. Choose another child to roll a Low C on the Bass Bars or Bass Xylophone. Halfway through book, choose new puppeteer, player.



6. Stickman! Created by Marie Boyett

Stick Figure Mirroring Activities: Individuals, Partners, Trios, Quartets.

Available for purchase at Marieboyett@gmail.com

7. It's My Sister's Fault (Poem by Goldie O. Gryn, Out of Print)

Focus: Steady Beat, Downbeat Awareness. Speak the poem expressively for students. Teach poem, echoing a phrase at a time, then larger chunks, finishing with children able to speak the poem without you.

*I took a bath in vinegar, I took a bath in salt.
My body shriveled like a fruit and it's my sister's fault.
She said that I'd be sparkling clean, she said it wouldn't hurt.
But now I'm puckered like a prune, I wish I'd kept the dirt!*

Repeat the poem while clapping on each beat, while showing beats 1 through 4 by moving hands from the children's left to right. Transfer beats to Snap-Clap-Pat-Stamp. Assign exotic non-pitched percussion instruments to four students and perform. Change players and repeat. Change tempi and voice types. Add dance teams that design a 4-beat movement pattern.