

WORKSHOP NOTES FROM ISME CONFERENCE, July 2006

From Speech rhymes to instruments

(Main topic: Early Childhood) Age group 3-8 yrs

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1. Introductory activity:

Body Percussion patterns with recorder melodies (Irish jigs etc.),

e.g. knees, clap, knees, clap; then knees, clap, click, clap

2. Speech activity: "Monday, Tuesday"

"Mon-day, Tues-day, Wednes-day, Thurs-day,

Fri-day, Saturday, SUN-day!"

(right-left patting knees, in rhythm for 'Saturday' – ti-ti ta, then clap a big circle for 'Sunday'.)

- Say the rhyme, in many different ways: normal speech, then loudly, softly, squeaky voice, slower speed, faster speed, gradually getting louder (*crescendo*), gradually getting faster/slower (*accelerando*).

- Say one day silently/'inside our heads'. Pick another day. Then only say one day aloud (e.g. . . . , . . . , . . . , . . . , SATURDAY, . . .) while doing the actions.

- add instruments, one at a time: first a triangle, played in the big circle, for 'Sun-day'. Next a hand-drum played on Monday to Friday. Last a tambourine playing ti-ti ta for 'Saturday'. With small groups (up to 10) and small children (3-5), just use one triangle and pass it around the group. If the class is big/older, start with two or three triangles spaced around the circle to play simultaneously, then each passes instrument to the child on the left for the next time through. Similarly with the other instruments, added one at a time, until every child has had a turn on each type of instrument.

This rhyme can be done with instruments as a little performance for parents – actions first, different voices and ways of doing the chant, then with instruments.

This is quite a challenging concentration activity for young children: waiting through the rhyme then playing the instrument at the right time – or playing then stopping once their section is over.

3. One, Two, Buckle My Shoe (traditional English children's counting rhyme)

1, 2 Buckle my shoe

3,4 Knock at the door

5, 6 *Pick up sticks*

7, 8 *Lay them straight*

9, 10 *A big fat hen.*”

- the group does the counting, leader says the rest
- Clap with the numbers
- say them loudly
- whisper the numbers
- leader says the numbers, group does the response
- try everything
- suggest actions to go with the words
- tap knees for numbers, clap the rhythm of the remaining words
- Divide into two groups or lines facing each other. One group just says the numbers; the other just the phrases.
- Add a drum for the numbers.
- Next add a tambourine for the phrase rhythms
- using ONLY instruments to play the rhyme.

For a performance, the rhyme could be done several of these ways, e.g. two groups saying the rhyme, then taking turns doing the actions, then adding instruments, then doing it without words, then doing words, instruments, and actions together.

4. Okina Taiko (Japanese children's rhyme.song)

(Melody: d m-m d s, d d d m-m d d s s s l s-s m m s m-m r r . . .?)

O-kina taiko, Don, Don

Chiisana taiko, Ton-ton ton,

Okina taiko, Chiisana taiko, Don, Don, Ton-ton ton.

(‘Okina taiko’ means big drum; ‘Chiisana taiko’ means little drum. An English version can be:

Play on the big drum, boom, boom

Play on the small drum, tap, tap, tap.

Play on the big drum, play on the small drum

Boom, boom, tap, tap, tap.)

To turn this rhyme into a simple performance which shows each child individually playing drums (and gives parents good 'photo opportunities'!), make two sets of lines back from the front of the stage, with a large drum and small drum placed or held in front of each. Just follow the words, playing the big drum on the 'boom' and the small drum on the 'tap'.

5. Two Little Sausages

A very useful little rhyme - on page 4 of Chris Judah-Lauder's book "To Drum", which can be used in any classroom with whatever instruments are available.

Two little sausages sizzling in a pan,

One went 'pop' and the other went 'bang'.

Pop, pop, bang, bang, pop, pop, bang bang, pop, pop, bang, bang, pop, pop!!

Again, the words of this rhyme tell children when to play the tambourine or wood block ('pop') or the drum ('bang').

6. I Brushed My Teeth (sources – Raffi, Christoph Maubach, etc.)

I woke up in the morning at a quarter to one,

I thought I might have some fun,

I brushed my teeth, ch-ch ch-ch, ch-CH-ch-ch-ch!

I brushed my teeth, ch-ch ch-ch, ch-CH-ch-ch-ch!

I woke up in the morning at a quarter to TWO,

I really didn't have anything to do,

I brushed my teeth, ch-ch ch-ch, ch-CH-ch-ch-ch!

Etc.

Rhyming examples:

THREE – I was feeling happy just to be me!

FOUR – I thought I heard someone at the door

FIVE – I was so happy to be alive!

SIX – I found myself in quite a fix

SEVEN – Just for a moment, I thought I was in heaven

(faster) EIGHT – and Suddenly I realized I was going to be late.

(Children can work out their own rhymes for the different numbers.)

Instrumental arrangement:

This can make a very satisfying percussion arrangement, which I have done as a performance with a large group of children aged 3-6 years. All you need is a few children with a good sense of beat to play a basic alternating beat accompaniment.

Accompaniment: drum, triangle, drum, triangle.

Also a couple of children with good concentration can play a bass drum or other contrasting instrument on each of the numbers ('one', 'two' etc.).

Get the accompaniment established then say the words with instruments in groups:

Tambourine group: "I woke up in the morning at a quarter to ONE"

Leader on cowbell: "I thought I might have some fun"

Rhythm sticks/wooden instrument group: "I brushed my teeth"

Shaker group: "Ch, ch, CH-ch, ch CH ch ch CH!"

Finish the performance with everyone shaking or playing fast on their instrument, watching the leader for a big final 'bang'.