

Music from a Tree

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Summary

Students explore a variety of musical instruments, their sounds and materials.

Grade level

Kindergarten

Time required

60 minutes

Materials

Various types of musical instruments

Recordings of cedar flute and American Indian drum music

[Richard Marshall – picture, story and music](#)

[Blank world map](#)

Reading Rainbow, episode 51, “Barn Dance”

U.S. wall map

[Pictures of drums from around the world](#)

Goals

By completing this lesson, students will

- 1) explore and become familiar with various types of musical instruments,
- 2) be introduced to the concept of a resource,
- 3) learn about traditional American Indian and world music and
- 4) develop inquiry process skills.

Science standards addressed

National Science Standards

- Abilities necessary to do scientific inquiry
- Properties of Earth materials
- Types of resources
- Abilities of technological design

American Indian Science Standards

- The innate properties of objects and materials that were (and are) recognized by traditional Native American cultures in the manufacture and use of specific tools and material objects that capitalize upon those properties

- Problem solving skills demonstrated by historical American Indians in the development and improvement of tools and technologies, such as in pottery technology

Teacher tips

Gather instruments made from various materials, including wood, that students can examine in an open ended exploration. Arrange the instruments in centers for students to explore. Be sure to include American Indian instruments such as drums and flutes made from a variety of woods. Other good instruments include xylophone, maracas, pipes of pan, tambourines, and stringed instruments of varying sizes. Getting instruments of various sizes and made from a variety of materials will allow students to compare and look for patterns when exploring the instruments. Blocks of different woods that students can tap are also useful. Students could tap wooden versus metal spoons, for example, to compare the differences in sound. They could pluck stringed instruments of various sizes to hear patterns in sound related to size.

Size and copy the pictures of drums to make small drum icons, one set per students. Students will color and cut out the drums during the lesson, then attach them to the world map.

Obtain traditional American Indian music that utilizes drums and the cedar flute. The People's Center in Pablo, MT, sells a number of recordings of American Indian music, including the Smithsonian Collection of American Folk Music. Gather music from a variety of world cultures for students to compare and contrast.

As an alternative to purchasing music, use the Internet to provide examples of world music. The World Beats web site (www.world-beats.com) has a variety of drum music recorded around the world. The International Music Archives has pictures and sound samples of musical instruments from all over the world.

Invite native musicians to your classroom to play and discuss their music, and to discuss how to make instruments. Contact the People's Center in Pablo, MT or the CSKT Tribal Education Department for the names of local musicians you can invite. Supplement the visit with a viewing of the Reading Rainbow episode 51, "Barn Dance", which shows the complete process of a man making a fiddle from a piece of wood.

Background information

Wood is an important resource that has been used by humans for thousands of years in many ways. It has provided Indian people with a variety of tools, instruments, utilitarian items, shelters, art, etc. for generations. For example, the Salish, Pend O'Reille and Kootenai people have long utilized wood to construct drums and flutes.

The Salish, Pend d'Oreille and Kootenai have an extensive collection of both sacred and secular songs. Some songs belonged to individuals or families, and the community shared some songs. Specific songs are used for particular reasons and events. In times past, flutes were primarily used by men for courting, so most of the songs composed for the Native American flute are love songs. Playing a variety of songs and discussing these

ideas with students will facilitate the understanding of the diversity within traditional music of American Indians.

Richard Marshall is a professional violinist, who is member of the Lummi tribe of western Washington. The link provided will allow the user to view a picture of Richard, to listen to the story of his violin and the tree it was made from, and to hear some of his music.

Procedure

Engagement

- 1) Tell students that they are going to explore musical instruments. Instruct students to try to identify what instruments are being used in the songs you are going to play. Play several songs using drums and cedar flute. Ask students what instruments they hear, and show them examples of each. Ask them what the instruments are made from.
- 2) Ask students to name other items made from the *resource* wood. Use the word resource in context many times, then define resources for students as something we use to make other things. Ask students to name other resources that instruments are made from (metal, animal skins, shells, bones, etc.).

Exploration

Set up groups of instruments and noise making materials like spoons or blocks of wood in centers around the room. Give students time to explore the various instruments available. Instruct them to *observe* the sounds and characteristics of each.

Explanation

- 1) Ask students to share their observations about the instruments they explored.
- 2) Show the picture of Richard Marshall on the computer and play the story and song from his CD *Me and a Tree*. Tell students who Richard is – a violinist and composer who is a member of the Lummi Tribe of Washington. Point to the Lummi Reservation on a map.
- 3) Ask students to list as many instruments they know of that are made from the resource wood. Use the instruments and pictures of instruments to flesh out the list.
- 4) Show the Reading Rainbow segment on making a fiddle from a piece of wood.

Elaboration

- 1) Give each student a world map and sheet of world drums. Have them color the drums and cut them out. Tell them that the map is a drawing of the world. Play music from different places around the world and have students color that country on their map and then glue the drum icon on that area.
- 2) Invite musicians and instrument makers to visit your classroom to play and discuss their instruments and music for the students.

Evaluation

Give students various instruments and have them group them by the resource they are made from.

Vocabulary

resource

observe

instrument

Resources

WorldBeats – Provides sound samples from a variety of world percussion instruments.
www.world-beats.com

International Music Archive – Provides pictures and sound samples of a wide variety of instruments from around the world.
www.eyeneer.com/World/

Reading Rainbow, Episode 51, Barn Dance – Video shows the complete process of making a fiddle from a piece of wood. Distributed by the Public Broadcasting Service.
www.pbs.org