



## Elementary School Curriculum Guide for the Music of Roger Day

The adventures in Roger Day's music and songs can be enjoyed by students of any age or ability. Research has shown that exposure to music of different genres during the elementary school years leads to the overall development of self esteem across the domains—cognitive, physical, and emotional/social (Warner, 1999). Teachers of early elementary aged students (kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade) can, and should, continue to use music as a means to strengthen each student's language skills, creativity, and sense of self expression. With a little bit of creativity and willingness to try something new, Roger Day's songs can be easily integrated into many current thematic units and areas of study.

This curriculum guide was developed as a springboard for great ideas and should be considered a work in progress. Organized by song title, it provides suggestions on how to integrate the songs into broader units of study. The ideas take their inspiration from the songs themselves and many are supported by examples of children's literature and would make a great addition to literature-based, language-rich learning environments. The songs encourage higher level thinking when the teacher prompts the student with thoughtful questioning. Most of all, since we are all students, we can all enjoy the music and have fun while learning!

### **My Invisible Dinosaur**

- **Dinosaur Unit:** Use as an introduction or extension activity to dinosaur traits and environments. Share a good non-fiction book on dinosaurs with quality pictures and information. How do we know what dinosaurs looked like? [Scientists and paleontologists find remains—bones, teeth, fossils of skin, etc.] How would a dinosaur's environment affect what it looked like? What it ate? How it behaved? Compare it to a fictional book on dinosaurs. What information is the same? What is different? A good book: *Dinosaur Bones* by Bob Barner.
- **Creative Writing / Oral Language / Art:** If you had an Invisible Dinosaur, what would it look like? What would it eat? What would it do? What kind of pocket would it live in? Students can work alone or in pairs to brainstorm ideas using a variety of webbing techniques and then share ideas before writing. This would be

a great way to collaborate with the art teacher students could bring their words to life in a drawing or ceramics and then sew a special pocket. Or, have each student design and create a pocket and describe their dinosaur to the class. Then their classmates can draw their rendition of their friend's dinosaur. Create a class book of Invisible Dinosaurs.

- Using the Senses / Oral Language: As a transition activity during study of dinosaurs or while studying the senses, bring in a large cloth pocket. Ask the children, "Guess what I've got in my pocket?" They are likely to say, "An Invisible Dinosaur!" Tell the students that everyone will get a chance to reach inside and feel what is inside, but they shouldn't tell. If the item has an identifiable scent, it is OK to sniff it from the outside of the bag. As the bag goes around, ask questions like: What does it sound like? Smell like? Feel like? If you were to use words to describe how it feels, what would they be?

## **Mosquito Burrito**

- Following / Giving Directions: What is easier to do? Follow directions or give directions? Ask your students these questions and they will probably answer "Give them, of course!" But is it? (you can actually take a vote and note each child's answer to see if their opinion changes later). This activity can be used to develop both oral and written language skills. For younger children, a simpler version can be used as a review of the skill of sequencing. Bring in the ingredients for making peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, s'mores or any other well-known recipe. Keep all of the ingredients in their original packaging. Announce that you want to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich and present a variety of ingredients and utensils (not all of which are necessarily used to make a PBJ). As a class compose a recipe on chart paper. Have students come up with the list of ingredients and the steps to follow. Write down their words exactly and then follow the recipe. Chances are that the first step will be "Spread some peanut butter on the bread," which you do "smear on a glop of peanut butter right on the bread *in the plastic bag*" no one told you to take 2 slices of bread out of the bag first, did they? As the cooking lesson progresses, students will want to amend their directions and as they do, follow their oral instructions, but remember to do it exactly. When the sandwich is complete, discuss what happened and how they might do things differently the next time.

It is now the students' turn. In pairs or triads, present each group with a well-known, simple task that can be accomplished in the classroom (sharpening a pencil, cutting a circle from a piece of paper, drawing a picture of a house, opening a door, turning on the water faucet). One person is the "giver" and the other the "follower" and the directions can be given orally or in writing or both. After all groups have had a chance to take on both roles, invite 2 or 3 groups to share what happened. Ask the question again, "Is it easier to follow directions or give directions?"

Use *Mosquito Burrito* as an assessment tool play the song a few times and have students write (or draw) the steps to make a mosquito burrito. A good book: *Peanut Butter and Jelly* by Nadine Bernard Wescott.

## **Marvin the Marvelous Moose**

- **Alliteration**: Use Marvin as an example of alliteration (two or more words put together that have the same beginning sound(s)). What are some other examples of alliteration? (tongue twisters) Use alliteration to reinforce phonics instruction or letter/sound recognition. Pick a Letter of the Day from a jar and construct a class tongue twister during your Morning Meeting or to begin your language arts period. This activity can also be incorporated into a journal. Each student uses a composition book or bound paper for the weekly activity. For example:
  - Mondays: Introduce the letter and its sound. Students write a list of words they know that begin with that sound (pick a target number that is appropriate for the ability level of each child) and read the words to a buddy.
  - Tuesdays: Students circle some words they really like and think will make a good tongue twister (no more than 4 or 5) and read the words to a buddy. Students begin to write a sentence using their favorite words and read to a buddy.
  - Wednesdays: Buddy reading. Buddy can make suggestions / peer editing.
  - Thursdays: Students continue editing as teacher also makes suggestions. Begin final edits.
  - Fridays: Finish final edits and illustrate tongue twister. Use a rotation system for 3-4 students to share their creations with the class (make sure to give these students feedback early so that they can be ready).

Once all 26 letters have been used (you may want to consider eliminating the difficult ones or modifying the activity i.e. have students make a word list and illustrate the words), move on to blends, digraphs, etc. for an extra challenge. Have each student draw a letter at random from a hat and contribute that tongue twister to a collection that you assemble in a class book.

## **It s A No, No to Kiss a Rhino, If You Jump on the Bed, Helicopter Harry**

- **Fables and Tales**: Use these songs to introduce/enhance a literature/authorstudy on fables and tales. Compare/contrast the genres along with examples (Aesop s Fables, Grimm Brothers). Use contemporary versions of classic tales (i.e. John Scieszka s*The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs*, *The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs*:

*10 Year Anniversary Special: A. Wolf Update, The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tale; Susan Lowell's The Three Little Javelinas or Margie Pallatini's Piggie Pie*). Construct Venn diagrams or other graphic organizers to compare/contrast.

What are the messages in the songs *It's a No, No*, *If You Jump*, and *Helicopter Harry*? Talk about the concept of decision-making and consequences or the characters in the songs. Ask about other things that kids might do that their parents warn them about ( *don't play ball in the house*, *your face might freeze like that*, *don't run with scissors* ) and what might happen if they don't heed the warning. Write and illustrate a class story about their favorite warnings. Use concepts as a way of introducing topics like safety and health.

## **I Got Hands, Open Up the Coconut**

- **Brainstorming**: Use these two songs as introductions to the concept of brainstorming or as a way to warm up before a brainstorming session. Other warm up exercise ideas:

**Koosh Pass**: Sit in a circle and pass a Koosh (or other small, soft object). If the object is tossed to you, you have to say what it is ( *It's a lollipop. It's a balloon. It's my sister's blankie.* ). Just keep it going.

**New Surroundings**: While brainstorming, invite children to sit in strange places under their desks, sitting backward in their chairs, in the dark, outside.

**Going On A Picnic, To Grandma's, etc.**: To liven up this old favorite, bring in a picnic basket or suitcase. Students walk up and pretend to place their item inside.

## **Big Balloon**

- **Creative Writing, Oral Language, Art**: Use Jamie Lee Curtis' *Where Do Balloons Go?* as a companion. Talk about different kinds of balloons (hot air, helium, zeppelins, blimps, weather, the kind used to make balloon animals) and what they are made of/how they are used. Read the book and talk about some of the different places/things Curtis suggests they go/do. One of the questions Curtis asks involves writing postcards, so ask each student to decide where their balloon would go and then write and illustrate a postcard to the class from the balloon. For an extra challenge, assign students a state or country to research and then send the postcard. Arrange for a Postcard Penpal program with classrooms/friends/relatives in other states.

