



ART BRIDGES: Lesson Plans for Enrichment, Growth and Healing

Music Enrichment for Children with Typical Development

**Activities submitted by Board-Certified Music Therapist
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Disclaimer

The arts are a powerful modality to influence positive change in a number of clinical, medical, and educational settings. However, there is a significant difference between expressive therapies (i.e. music therapy, art therapy, and creative arts therapy) and arts enrichment programs. For example, therapy addresses individualized goals based on assessed treatment needs, and enrichment helps expose a group to a positive arts experience and may lead to positive functional lessons among the group as a whole. Therapy may require more arts-based skill and versatility from the group or session leader (i.e. live music, improvisation, hands-on or complex art making), whereas enrichment can often be accomplished with recorded music and by non-therapist staff members/volunteers who are skilled with that particular population. The purpose of the “Art Bridges” activities is to offer ideas to support arts enrichment programming, but none of these activities can be called “therapy” unless performed by a Board Certified Music Therapist, a Licensed Art Therapist, or a Licensed Creative Arts Therapist.

Considerations for Non-Music Therapists:

The following exercises aim to help typically-developing children or children with behavioral challenges gain interpersonal skills in the classroom or in after-school groups. Most of these exercises may help children improve levels of mood elevation, focus, leadership, confidence, and peer-to-peer respect. As with all groups that include children, the leaders must be both approachable and firm. It's important to emphasize the fun the group will have but also the ground rules clients must follow in order to participate in the fun. Keep rules simple and have children give examples of how to best demonstrate the rules. For example, three basic rules might be 1) Respect yourself, 2) Respect others, and 3) Respect your environment.

Ask the children to identify inappropriate behavior, such as throwing chairs or instruments, and encourage positive behavior, such as respecting the environment and complimenting peers. After rules are explained, you must follow through with giving children a break from an activity or from the music room if they are being disrespectful and distracting. Music time is usually a rewarding time, so most typically-developing children will be more likely to follow ground rules if they are confident that you'll give them a break otherwise. If children in group have severe or violent problem behaviors, it's essential that you have more than one adult present for a safe and effective group. Preferably, the extra staff member should sit close to children who are most likely to have an outburst and should be skilled at calming them and/or removing them from group immediately if needed.

Shaker Dance Party

Materials:

1. Recorded music player (iPod, CD player, etc.) with playlist of age appropriate, high energy songs that children will most likely know and prefer (i.e. Disney movie songs or current pop songs with appropriate lyrics)
2. Egg shakers (bought through vendor like Musicians Friend or homemade with Easter eggs, un-popped popcorn, and electrical tape)



Procedure:

1. Have each child choose two shakers out of bag.
2. Start song and give simple directive "Do what I do."
3. Lead a variety of dance/aerobic movements from a sitting position using legs and arms (i.e. punching up/out/down, clapping shakers together, patting knees, stomping feet)
4. Direct a participatory, outgoing child to lead the group dance moves for 30 seconds to a minute, and instruct the rest of the group to follow their peer.
5. Give each child an opportunity to lead, but be understanding if a client is withdrawn and is not yet ready to lead in this way.

Desired outcomes: mood elevation, leadership practice, focus, respecting peer leaders

Repeat After Me Beats

Materials:

1. Hand drums or paddle drums
2. Soft foam mallets for paddle drums



Procedure:

1. Demonstrate a way to quietly hold drums (softly rub mallet on head of drum).
2. Distribute drums, and encourage kids to keep drums and bodies quiet until everyone has received a drum.
3. Demonstrate a simple one or two bar rhythm and gesture to the group to repeat the rhythm after you with appropriate instrument volume.
4. Gradually increase complexity of rhythms while staying within the children's abilities. Avoid introducing a rhythm much longer than two

measures, and be success-oriented in your approach. Don't try to "stump" the group with an overly-complicated rhythm.

5. Allow each child an opportunity to lead three to five rhythms (depending on size of group and preferred length of activity) and encourage other group members to repeat after them.

Desired outcomes: focus, critical listening, short-term memory stimulation, respecting peer leaders, leadership practice, developing courage to try new things

Play and Freeze

Materials:

1. Shakers, drums, or any hand percussion instruments



2. Accompanying instrument like guitar, keyboard, or ukulele

Procedure:

1. Distribute preferred percussion instruments to group members.
2. Encourage group to "play when I play and stop when I stop".
3. Warm-up by leading a few two-to-five-seconds "rumbles" on guitar or keyboard and stopping sound abruptly. Make eye contact with group members who continue to play instruments to silently remind them to stop. Give verbal directive "freeze" or count down to the stopping point with groups who have a difficult time visually focusing enough to correctly follow this warm-up.
4. Start singing a client-preferred song and accompanying self on instrument. Encourage clients to play their instruments within the song's tempo and at an appropriate volume.
5. Freeze periodically with or without a "warning" depending on what strategy worked best during the warm-up.

Desired outcomes: focus on group leader, mood elevation, willingness to follow directions, ability to quickly alter distracting behaviors

Instrument Pass

Materials:

1. Wide variety of small, easy-to-manage hand percussion instruments



2. Accompanying instrument like guitar, keyboard, ukulele, or large drum

Procedure:

1. Prior to this activity, clients should be seated on chairs or on the floor in a semi-circle facing the leader.
2. Briefly remove each instrument from the bag, reveal the name of the instrument, demonstrate how to play it, and set it on the floor near the edge of the client semi-circle.
3. Explain that the client closest to the instruments will start the instrument pass game by choosing an instrument and playing along with the leader. When the leader counts down verbally or with fingers--that means it's time to pass the instrument to your neighbor and choose a new instrument.
4. Start singing with rhythmic, steady accompaniment instrument. Lyrics of chosen songs should reinforce themes of working together (i.e. "Lean on Me"). Count down (4-3-2-1) verbally or with fingers about every 8 bars, and remind clients to pass instruments if they don't respond to cue.
5. When everyone has an instrument, you may use this as an opportunity to conduct the entire group to play louder, softer, faster, slower, etc. or do call/response drumming.
6. At the end of the activity, fade instruments out the same way you fade them in, by passing instruments toward the opposite end of the semi-circle and having the person at the end place their old instrument in the bag each

time a new instrument is passed to them. Sometimes this happens quicker than the fade-in by passing every 4 bars.

7. Discuss what skills we had to use to make that game work (i.e. respect, focus).

Desired outcomes: focus on group leader, cooperation with peers, patience while waiting for a turn, respect for others

Song Request and Chat

Materials:

1. List of popular songs that contain age-appropriate lyrics and represent a wide variety of age-appropriate genres (have enough copies for all group members).
2. Accompanying instrument like keyboard or guitar.
3. Chord charts for each song on the list unless songs are memorized by leader

Procedure:

1. Distribute song lists and explain that the activity is a song request game where we take turns choosing songs that we like and then talk about why we chose them.
2. Play soft background music or sit in silence as clients look over the list. Once the first client speaks up, acknowledge that they made a great choice, and begin playing.
3. Encourage singing or clapping along during music to engage group.
4. As the song ends, ask the requesting client why he or she chose that song. If they are vague or unsure point out that sometimes songs become our favorites because of their meaningful words, their energetic rhythms, a personal memory that is linked to them, or the happy/relaxed feeling we get when we hear them.
5. Repeat this process for each song in the order that they are requested. If several clients request songs at the same time, start a list, and add to it over the course of the session. Do not play a client's second request until after each client has chosen their first song.

Desired outcomes: sSharing memories and emotion-related thoughts in a non-threatening environment, assertiveness to speak up with a request, patience to respectfully listen to the requests of others

Family Recitals

Materials:

Any materials used for above activities that will be included in performance

Procedure:

1. Work with after-school program directors to arrange date for recital and communicate details to parents.
2. Prepare for recital by using any combination of the above activities and games in the sessions that lead up to the scheduled performance.
3. Incorporate one or more songs with encouraging lyrics and/or client requested songs into the performance by using them as background music for an instrumental game or by simply singing the song as a group with clapping or actions.
4. Give frequent positive reinforcement when rehearsing songs and activities that will be included in the recital. Incorporate silly or relaxing songs into rehearsals to help clients who display performance anxiety.
5. During performance, remember to energetically announce what the audience members can expect to see during the show, and point out the behavioral outcomes that resulted from these activities within the enrichment groups. It may even be appropriate to include audience in certain parts of the show (i.e. repeat after me beats or shaker dancing).

Desired outcomes: parent awareness of music enrichment program benefits, student confidence and empowerment, improved behavior and motivation due to end goal of performance

*Heartfelt thanks to Board-Certified Music Therapist **Rachel Rotert**. She specializes in using music-based strategies and interventions to assist her clients in reaching a wide variety of emotional, relational, behavioral, and physiological goals. These music interventions may include song writing, music-assisted relaxation, lyric*

analysis, and drum circles. Rachel has worked in a wide variety of mental health treatment settings including a residential center for adolescents, an inpatient behavioral health hospital, and an outpatient recovery program for veterans. Rachel continues her mission to impact lives through music in her work at KVC (Kansas City, MO). KVC is a health system committed to enriching and enhancing the lives of children and families by providing medical and behavioral healthcare, social services and education. Hildegard Center had the honor of seeing Rachel at work “up close and personal” when she conducted “Music Magic” Workshops for children “at risk” as part of a grant Hildegard Center for the Arts received through the Lincoln Arts Council. You can contact Rachel at <https://www.linkedin.com/in/pianopeacemt>.

If you have used this activity, we’d love to hear from you! Please send questions or comments through our website www.hildegardcenter.org .

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