

INCORPORATING FOLK DANCE INTO THE MUSIC CLASS WITH EASE

Lesson Overview:

Over the course of several class periods, children will perform a familiar play party (such as Paw Paw Patch) as part of their regular music class routine. In an adjacent class at a later time, students will learn the additional moves for a similar folk dance (like Sweets of May) and perform it in class.

There are a number of play parties that lead easily into folk dances, which is a useful way to include dance in your curriculum without setting it aside as something that takes a full class to teach. I have created a full workshop presentation handout on this for grades 2-6 that I am happy to share with you if you'd like. Just ask. RLM

Materials (as necessary):

Teacher resources –

1. Adapted directions (and modified modern lyrics) for the traditional Appalachian play party Paw Paw Patch (below)
2. The CD “Chimes of Dunkirk” by New England Dancing Masters, where an excellent recording of Sweets of May can be found
3. Dance directions to Sweets of May, by Dudley Laufman (also given below)

Student resources –

1. Paper, pencils
2. Orff instruments for class exploration

Author: Robbin Marcus

Grade Level: 2 (adaptable to any elementary age)

Keywords: Playparty, folk dance, singing game

Standards addressed:

- MU:Cn11.0.2a - Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts and daily life.
- MU:Re7.2.2a - Describe how specific music concepts are used to support a specific purpose in music.

Learning Goals:

- Students will apply the knowledge of a familiar play party game to a new folk dance that uses many of the same moves.
- Students will understand the difference between a play party game and a folk dance.

Steps:

1. In class, as a regular part of music class activities, students will play the play party game Paw Paw Patch.
2. Paw Paw Patch nicely sets up the rhythmic concept of 4 sixteenth notes. Students can then discover and explore that rhythm with clapping/tapping patterns, singing and playing on instruments, eventually reading and writing as classes continue. Older students can explore the tonic and dominant triads found in the melody on barred instruments.
3. After a number of classes of playing Paw Paw Patch and exploring its musical concepts, students will be ready for a new challenge. The teacher can teach the claps and stamps that happen at the end of Sweets of May, and then explain that we are going to do our regular Paw Paw Patch game to different music, with the claps and stamps at the end of each round.
4. Teacher plays the recording of Sweets of May and prompts the dance for the students.
5. On another day, the teacher leads a discussion of why a play party is different from a folk dance. Use age-appropriate social context, i.e., in the 1800s play parties were done at social gatherings in people's homes without musicians, dances were generally done in more public locations with a caller and a band. (Older students may learn about the religious beliefs of not dancing to the fiddle.)

Reflection:

Students will reflect on what made Sweets of May different from Paw Paw Patch. (Accompanied vs. a cappella singing, extra part at the end in the form, different meter causes the movement to “feel different.”)

Assessment:

1. Students will successfully perform both the play party and the dance.
2. Write a paragraph on the difference between Paw Paw Patch and Sweets of May. Your paragraph should:
 - Have 4-6 complete sentences
 - Tell us what was different about them
 - Tell us what was the same
 - Share which one you liked the best and why



The Paw-Paw Patch

CSP: G

Play-party Song

The image shows four staves of musical notation for the song 'The Paw-Paw Patch'. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 2/4. The melody is written on a treble clef. The lyrics are written below the notes. The first three staves each have two lines of lyrics, and the fourth staff has one line of lyrics. The lyrics are: 'Where, O where is pret-ty lit-tle Su - sie?' and 'Way down yon-der in the paw - paw patch.'

Verse 2

Come on (boys,) let's go find (her)
Come on (boys,) let's go find (her)
Come on (boys,) let's go find (her)
Way down yonder in the paw paw patch

Verse 3

Picking up paw paws, putting them in (her) pocket
Picking up paw paws, putting them in (her) pocket
Picking up paw paws, putting them in (her) pocket
Way down yonder in the paw paw patch

Lyrics in today's classroom

Paw Paw Patch is an Appalachian play party that is well over 100 years old. The traditional words of the song are very gender specific, referring to "pretty little Susie" in v1, "boys" in v2, and the pronoun "her" in v3.

Please feel free to adapt each round of the game to the name of the lead child in the first verse, their personal pronoun in the third, and an adjective which retains the rhythm of 4 sixteenth notes, ie "spunky little Jordan" or "hungry little River."

Suggested words for verses 2 and 3 would be

2) Come on kids, let's go find them. 3) Picking up paw-paws, puttin' 'em in their pockets

Paw Paw Patch directions

Formation: Longways set, works best for 6-8 couples but can be done bigger with singing repeats of each verse.

My actions to this play party have been adapted from the original to make the game more interesting and less gender-specific. Feel free to try these at your school!

Verse 1) All face up towards the top of the set. One head couple member leads their entire line around the other line and back to place.

Verse 2) The second head couple member leads their entire line around the first line and back to place.

Verse 3) Both lines follow the head leaders, who cast to the outside of their own line (banana peel). At the bottom of the set, the head couple meets, joins hands with their partner and makes an arch. The rest of the couples go through the tunnel with their partners and return to the set with the second couple now in top position, and the original head couple at the foot of the set. Repeat the verse as necessary to get everyone back to place.

Dance directions for Sweets of May, from Dudley Laufman

longways set for 6-8 couples

Tune: The Sweets of May

- A1 All face up towards the top of the set. One head couple member leads their entire line around the other line and back to place.
- A2 The second head couple member leads their entire line around the first line and back to place.
- B1 Both lines follow the head leaders, who cast to the outside of their own line (banana peel). At the bottom of the set, the head couple meets, joins hands with their partner and makes an arch. The rest of the couples go through the tunnel with their partners and return to the set with the second couple now in top position, and the original head couple at the foot of the set.
- B2 Use this music to complete the cast off in B1.
- C1 All face their partner and with the music:
Clap, Clap, Stamp, Stamp (4)
Clap, Clap, Stamp, Stamp (4)
Two hand turn around with partner (8)
- C2 Repeat C1. (16)
Then, repeat the dance again with a new top couple.