

ART FORM

Music

LEARNING AREA

The Arts

SUBJECT

Music

TARGET GROUP

Key Stage 1 and 2
(Years 3 – 7)

MATERIALS

Enough limpet shells (the larger the better) for two per child
(Limpets are the conical, pale yellow shells found on rocky coastlines)
An instrument e.g. a drum to keep time.

SPACE

A room large enough to sit the group in a circle, preferably on the floor (this can be done in a classroom but the desks should be pushed right back).

DURATION

10-40 minutes

ARTIST'S INTRODUCTION

This workshop provides a non- competitive stimulus to seeking variety and imagination in producing sounds in the form of a game with no losers. Shells are ideal sound makers - free, versatile and novel, so the group starts from a position of equality.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Communication skills – listening and responding to their own and others music making
- Performance skills – developing rhythms and performing with simple instruments
- Creative skills – working creatively with sound, exploring new sounds and developing enjoyable soundscapes
- Working with others and independently

INSTRUCTIONS

Stage one: Exploration (Allow 5-10 minutes)

Seat the group in a circle, on the floor is best. Distribute the shells, two per child and allow exploration of the sounds it's possible to make. The idea is to find as many as we can that are different from each other. Encourage rubbing, scraping, clicking, shaking, the sound of the shell on the floor, on a table, of shell on shell.

Draw the group's attention to a new sound being discovered. One limpet shell placed over the slightly open mouth while being tapped with the other produces a satisfyingly variable sound. A good way to enjoin silence in which to draw attention to a new sound is to ask the rest of the class to place the shells over their ears. This is the 'Listening position'.

Build an agreed vocabulary of different sounds, at least half a dozen that all can produce. You could name them 'Michele's sound, Nazeem's sound', etc. or you could go around the circle inviting each child to demonstrate a new sound. Remember the dynamics of fast/slow, loud/soft - the same method of striking shells together could be done faster or more softly to differentiate the sound from others.

Stage two: Introduce the game (allow 5 minutes)

The teacher acts as the first leader. Make repeated sounds for the class to follow, all changing sound as the teacher does. This can be done either with or without a rhythm. The idea at this stage is to get the class to listen and to improve manual dexterity. The changes need to happen every 10-15 seconds.

Repetition is fine. Acknowledge the source of some of the sounds – "I think I'll change to Nazeem's sound ... now I'm going to change to Paul's sound."

The teacher invites others to be leaders until the concept is well-understood and the class is following the leader fairly accurately.

Stage Three: The Shell Game (allow 25 minutes)

When all are used to the concept of simultaneously following the leader, one group member is sent from the room with the following instruction, "When you return we'll all be following a new leader but you won't know who it is. You must stand in the middle and guess. You will have three guesses."

The 'Guesser' may spot the leader at once (often by following the gaze of the group). Encourage a culture of making it hard for the Guesser by telling the group to use their ears, not their eyes - "We don't want the Guesser to find the leader too soon so we must listen instead of looking."

Make sure the leader is changing the sound frequently enough. You can always say "Leader, change the sound please." On being rumbled the leader becomes the next Guesser. Make sure all have a chance to be leaders, it follows they will then also be Guessers.

LINKS TO OTHER LEARNING AREAS

- The World Around Us – looking at shells, colour, shape, size, texture colour etc – life cycle, origins etc
- Language and literacy – describing sound, developing key words and appropriate questioning
- Maths and numeracy – exploring rhythm, rhythmic patterns and counting and recording
- Personal development – developing confidence in performance, breath control, working as a team, problem solving and creative thinking

FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

It's possible to play this game with classroom percussion instruments or even with no instruments at all, using only sounds produced from the body. Giving the class the freedom to produce as many body sounds as they can might yield a surprising quantity.

A silent version is also possible, with gestures or numbers of fingers held up instead of sounds.

When I play this game, I introduce a rhythmic pulse on a drum or other instruments for leaders to work to.

A song could work too- perhaps the sound could change with each verse, "This is the way we.....on a cold and frosty morning", suggests itself.

Don't forget to send feedback to toolbox@youngatart.co.uk

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