

Sweetly Sing the Animals

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Early Arts Learning Pilot Project 2009-2010

Objective/Goal:

In order to begin to reach a level of musical improvisation, vocal sounds will serve as the point of departure. Through this experience, children will explore variations of sounds, and then sequence these sounds into a visual representation of their own original sound patterns. By using this particular song, familiar sounds can be used before going on to more abstract sounds.

Prerequisites of this experience (What do children need to know before this experience?):

- ✓ Familiarity with the song, "Sweetly Sings the Donkey" and the finger-play related to it, or another familiar song which involves animals, such as "Old MacDonald"
- ✓ The ability to identify animals related to the chosen story through the use of illustrations or props, and to imitate sounds made by the animals in these illustrations or props

Educational Impact:

- ✓ Awareness of voice and body
- ✓ Imitation/imagination
- ✓ Memory and recall



Suggestions for use with the *Songs for Singing and Learning* CDs:

- ✓ "Sweetly Sings the Donkey"

Materials Needed:

- ✓ Illustrations or replications of animals from a chosen story that involves farm animals, such as *The Singing Chick* by Victoria Stenmark (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1999), or *Barnyard Banter* by Denise Fleming (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2008)
- ✓ Additional animal props or pictures
- ✓ Optional: a container or bag to hold the animals

Procedure and Process:

Step One:

Review the song "Sweetly Sings the Donkey," and demonstrate the finger-play.
Place your hands behind your back and sway.

*Sweetly sings the donkey
At the break of day
If you do not feed him, this is what he says:*

Place your hands in front of your body, fingers coming together as if making a puppet:

Hee Haw, Hee Haw, Hee Haw, Hee Haw, Hee Haw

Step Two:

Briefly discuss where donkeys might be found, guiding the children to the place where the animals in the illustrations might be found (such as a farm).

Step Three:

Invite a child to close his or her eyes and choose an illustration (or animal prop) out of the bag. Encourage the children to identify the chosen animal and demonstrate how it sounds when it is hungry.

Step Four:

Sing the song again, this time substituting the chosen animal for the donkey, and include that animal's sound instead of the donkey's. Continue to choose other animals from the bag, substituting each of these animals into the song as it is repeated.

Step Five:

Invite children to choose at least three of the animals (or illustrations) that have already been put into the song, and ask them to sequence the animals (or illustrations) in any order of their choice. For example, sing the song about the cow, then the pig, then the cat.

Closure:

Sing the song again with the corresponding sequence of animal sounds. Use the word “animals” instead of “donkey” in order to include all the chosen animals into the song, repeating the last line once for each animal sound. As each animal sound in the sequence is sung, put that illustration back into the bag. When all the animals are gone, you can finish the song with an added line (sung or chanted):

...and they were all fed!

Overall Assessment (How will I know the children got it?):

While singing the song all together, the children will accurately imitate the sounds of the animals in the sequences they have chosen through their own rearrangements of the illustrations.

Modifications:

Different age group: With older children, such as those in Kindergarten, individuals could be chosen to hold the illustrations (or animal props) in a line while the class sings the animal sounds. Also, those holding the illustrations (or animal props) could sing the animal sounds individually.

Variations:

- Invite the children to continue rearranging the order of the animals, and then sing the song again with the new animal sound sequences.
- Try using a different song that involves animals, such as “Old MacDonald,” and apply the same concept of adding and sequencing animal sounds and visuals.
- Change the habitat of the animals (e.g. the zoo or forest). Have the children draw pictures of the animals found in these new locations and invite the children to arrange sequences of these pictures. The children will then sing the song using these animal sounds.
- Use replicas of the animals, such as plastic or stuffed animals (instead of illustrations).