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Activities and Play Suggestions

When I taught in a classroom or performed music in people's homes, I structured whatever space I was working in by making a circle of masking tape on the floor. This is what I'm talking about when I refer to the "circle" in the activities below. The circle can be used as a basis for almost any song and is useful for helping the children express the songs physically when you only have a small space, or to keep boundaries when in a larger space. Start and end each session by sitting on the edge of the circle, and don't forget to use the backing tracks so you can be free to join in!

TIP: Whenever the children are running around the outside of the circle, I would suggest having them all run in the same, predetermined direction to avoid crashes.



Bumblebee (Buzz Buzz)

TRACK 1

Start with everyone sitting on the circle edge. When you sing the verses, decide how many bees you are singing about, for example, "I saw TWO bumblebees." Then, when you reach "They said their names were..." insert the names of two children in the group. Those chosen go into the middle of the circle to jump and fly about.

When you get to "Oh one, a-two, a-one, two, three, go!" everyone gets up and flies around the outside of the circle, returning to the sitting position (on the circle edge) on the long "Bzzzzzz..." Repeat with different children being chosen to go into the middle.

A good way to end is to bring everyone into the middle at the same time by saying, "I saw lots of bumblebees... They said that they were from [insert name of school, group]."

I'm Gonna Catch You

TRACK 2

Begin the song with everyone running around the outside of the circle. Then have them "jump" into the day of the week by jumping into the middle of the circle—"I jumped into Monday..." They can then act out each activity that happens on the different days.

End by turning around on "Then I turned around..." and have them put a hand up to their ear on "And I heard a sound..." Continue with the running on "I'm gonna catch you..."

At the end when "I'm gonna catch you..." is repeated over and over, chase them around the outside of the circle and try to catch as many of them as you can!

Sneaks

TRACK 3

Have everyone walk around on their tiptoes looking for a "hiding place" during the opening of the song. Look for them and "find" them all during the "When I come out..." part. As you find each one, have them go to the middle of the circle and jump around as, one by one, the others join in.

During the last "La di da" encourage them to run, dance, spin, or move in any way they like, and then to finally flop down in the middle of the circle on their backs until the song is over.



Trucks

TRACK 4

This one is great for acting out the lyrics. Start by sitting around the circle edge and have everyone pretend to put on their “trucker” clothes (hat and pants especially), then scoop up the dirt and sand, just as it says in the song.

On “Drive your truck...” have them “drive” around the outside of the circle. Make the sound of a fire truck siren each time. Continue by acting out the verses, for example, reach up on “You gotta lift it up high...” and reach down on “And bring it down low.”


End the song with everyone back around the circle’s edge, acting out pulling the truck into the truck stop and filling it with gas. Then do a nice loud “honk” all together to finish!

Here’s another idea to encourage them to be creative: before you perform the song, ask the children to make the “shape” of each truck with their bodies. What would a car-carrier look like, or a crane?

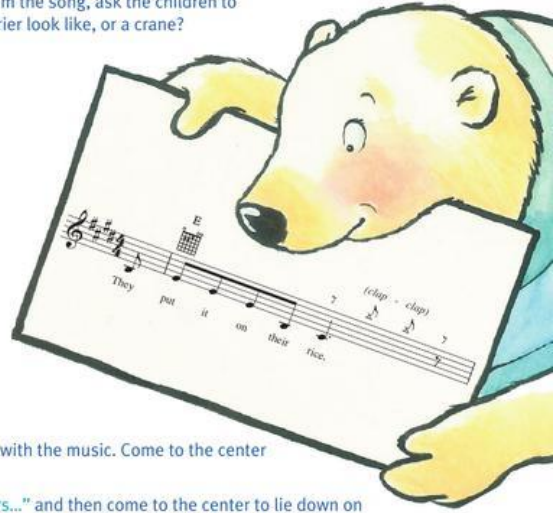


Victor Vito

TRACK 5

All percussion works well for this song and is especially good for the younger children. For the older kids, I would encourage them to clap rhythmically throughout and have them try to do a double clap after the words “rice” and “beans” like this: 

Sing the third verse quietly and slowly and then have everyone get up and dance, jump, and clap as fast as they can on the last verse.



We Are The Dinosaurs

TRACK 6

Start by marching around the outside of the circle in time with the music. Come to the center and mime eating on “We stop and eat our food...”

March around the outside again on “We are the dinosaurs...” and then come to the center to lie down on “We stop and take a rest...” Pause here and have fun waking them up! March again, and try to save the roaring for the very end so you can build up the excitement.

What Falls In The Fall?

TRACK 7

When I worked as the music specialist at Rockefeller University’s Child and Family Center, there was a phenomenal movement teacher named Debra Wanner who taught there at the same time I did. For many years we worked together creating end-of-the-year musical shows in which the children participated. Her wonderfully creative choreography really made it fun for them. My suggestions for this song are based on memories from the late 1990s of what Debra had a classroom of 3-year-olds do when they performed “What Falls In The Fall?” for their parents and teachers. (Anything that doesn’t seem to work is surely because my memory is poor and not due to Debra’s work!)

1st verse: “Rain falls” Start on tiptoes and have the children wave their fingers like rain falling as they move down toward the floor. Repeat while slowly turning around until the verse is over.

2nd verse: “Temperatures fall” Have the kids hug their bodies and shiver as if they are cold, and then ask them to find someone to hug on “You’ve got to hug your friends.”

Bridge: “And when the leaves start to change” Slow spinning with arms out until “High up in the trees,” at which point they reach up as high as they can.

3rd verse: “Leaves fall” Drop down from reaching and continue going up and down, or pretend to rake leaves, until “They swirl everywhere...” where the children twirl. Have them pretend to throw piles of leaves up into the air on “And I throw them in the air...” and finally, everyone stomps around on “They crunch beneath my feet...”

During the instrumental measures, everyone pretends to play in the leaves by throwing them, falling into imaginary piles, kicking them into the air, dancing, running, etc., until the words “Kids fall in the fall...” when they all fall to the ground slowly, “Down, down, down, down, down.”



Moon Moon Moon

by Laurie Berkner



Moderately

Musical notation for the first line of the song. The lyrics are: Moon, moon, moon, shin - ing bright. Moon, moon, moon, my night light.

Hold hands above head, touching thumbs and pointer fingers to make a circle shape. Repeat each time you sing this line.

Open arms out and bring them down to your sides.

Pretend to pull a chain to turn on the light.

Musical notation for the second line of the song. The lyrics are: (Spoken:) Turn it on. (click) Moon, moon, moon, I can see, moon, moon, moon, you're

Put the sides of your hands up to your eyebrows as if you are trying to look very far away.

Musical notation for the third line of the song. The lyrics are: tak - ing care of me. Look up, it's the moon. Look up, it's the moon. Look

Pretend to rock a baby.

Point up to the sky with one hand. Continue pointing, alternating hands for the next two phrases.

Musical notation for the fourth line of the song. The lyrics are: up, it's the moon up in the sky. It's big and round, and

Slowly raise arms from sides to above your head where hands come together to make a big circle.

Musical notation for the fifth line of the song. The lyrics are: I have found that it looks just like a { piz - za } { lem - on } pie.

Open arms out to the side, somewhat above your head, as if you're saying, "Ta-da!"

I'm Not Perfect

by Laurie Berkner

Moderately (♩ = ♩♩) ♩ = 120

Strumming pattern:



2. We're not perfect.
 No, we're not.
 We're not perfect,
 But we've got what we've got.
 We do our very best, we do our very best.
 We do our very best each day.
 But we're not perfect
 And we hope you like us that way.

3. You're not perfect.
 No, you're not.
 You're not perfect,
 But you've got what you've got.
 You do your very best, you do your very best.
 You do your very best each day.
 But you're not perfect
 And you know I love you that way.

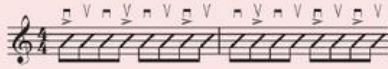
Walk Along The River

by Laurie Berkner

Strumming pattern: (verse)



Strumming pattern: (chorus)



D **Fast, in 2** ♩ = 100

Verse D

C

D

C

A

D

C

A

D



buzz buzz

The Laurie Berkner Band needs no introduction to the millions of children who already adore Laurie's fresh and irresistible music. Now you too can play her great songs with this super compilation of 25 favorite hits specially arranged for easy piano, voice and guitar.

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U.S. \$17.99



HL14018683

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ISBN 978-0-8256-3544-1



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