

Music Lesson Plan --- Grade 4

State Standards:

- 1.1 Read, write and perform melodic notation for simple songs in major keys using solfege.
- 2.3 Use classroom instruments to play melodies and accompaniments from a varied repertoire of music from diverse cultures, rounds, descants and ostinatos, by oneself and with others.

Objective:

Sing "Amazing Grace" in folk style. Accompany the song with a recorder ostinato pattern and create an arrangement of the song so the four verses are different from each other.

Set:

Tell students about the singing schools of the early 19th century and that this song, from that historical era, reflects the feeling of early American settlers. This song is a favorite of people in many parts of the world today.

Lesson:

Sing "Amazing Grace" in folk style, adding notes that are not written in the music, as children follow along on their music sheets. Invite students to sing along on verses 2, 3 and 4. Share ideas as to the meaning of the lyrics. How does the song express the spirit of the people who lived in America in the early 19th century?

Write an ostinato pattern on the board, consisting of the first and fifth notes of the scale (doh-so) and have students read it. Using recorders, encourage all students to play the ostinato. Accompany them on the piano, playing the melody of the song while students perform the ostinato to create a pretty harmony.

Split the class into two halves. Encourage class input as to how we are going to perform the whole song and make each verse different and interesting. Example, verse 1 can be a solo with a student improvising notes just as I did in folk style. On Verse 2, all sing; on verse 3, half the group sings (or all the girls sing) and the rest (or the boys) play the ostinato pattern to accompany; verse 4....

Then perform the song in the arrangement we have agreed upon.

Closing:

Use a simple tape recorder, and make a recording of our performance. We sound pretty good...

Encourage students to now devise ways to add expression through the use of elements like dynamics, phrasing etc. If time allows, make a second recording using appropriate dynamics, smooth legato phrasing etc. Allow students several sessions of practice over the following weeks as they memorize the lyrics and the ostinato accompaniment, and begin to perform with expression.

Bravo!

Extending the lesson:

During the next lesson, model writing an additional melodic pattern, similar to the ostinato we are using. Choose three tones, doh, mi and so or 1, 3 and 5. Encourage students to experiment with, and be creative with these notes as they compose a different melodic accompaniment. Add it to our performances; point out that it gives us greater options when arranging our piece now.

MUSIC LESSON PLAN --- Grade 5

State Standards:

1.1 Read, write and perform simple melodic notation in treble clef in major and minor keys.

1.3 Read, write and perform rhythmic notation including quarter note triplets and tied syncopation.

Objective:

Students will sing a song with changing meters and triplets. They will perform it as a round in 2 and later in 3 parts. Students will create an original rhythm song/rap using quarter note triplets, quarter notes and half notes.

Set: Tell students this song is going to feel like a roller coaster of fun and they get to figure out what in the music make the song feel this way!

Lesson:

Sing the song "Look Out!" as students follow along on their music sheet. Then ask/prompt if they know what gives the song that roller coaster feel. (Changing meters from 2 to 3 to 4.) Focus on triplets and guide the students to count out the triplets with scat sounds like "doo-pi-dy, doo-pi-dy". Brainstorm some words that give that triplet feel. Count out the 2 meter with scat sounds like "doot, doot". Now scat the rhythm of the whole song. That's fun!

Have students now clap or tap out the song rhythms while I sing it. Make sure they are feeling the meter correctly in 2, 3 and 4 and know where the downbeat is for the triplets. Now they are ready to try singing the whole song with help where needed.

Split into two groups and try the song as a round. This is a challenge, but it is within their scope. Eventually, we will sing the song in a three part round.

Close:

Create a cool performance by singing, then scating, then tapping. Reinforce those differences in meters and have fun!

Extend the lesson:

During the next class, review the song and the skill of counting triplets and meter in 2, 3 and 4. On the board, model how to create a short, 2 phrase rhythm rap. Start with words, just 2 short sentences (example, "Jupiter, Jupiter, You are/ Largest of all in the night sky") and then write out the rhythm of the words. Now have students call out phrases and choose volunteers to write them in standard notation. When we have practiced enough, split into small groups and create our own rhythm raps. Be ready to write them and share them with the class.

MUSIC LESSON PLAN — Grade 6

State Standards:

1.1 Read, write and perform intervals and triads.

2.1 Sing a repertoire of literature representing various genres, styles and cultures with expression, good posture, tone quality and vowel shape.

Objective:

Students will sing “Morning Has Broken” with appropriate performance style and expression. They will sing the three notes of a triad starting on any given note.

Set:

Tell students they will be able to talk about triads and chords just like their favorite guitar players!

Lesson:

Sing “Morning Has Broken” as students follow on their music sheet. Ask them to sing when they can.

Point out the melody pattern on the phrases “Morning has” and again on fourth phrase, (“Like the first”) and sixth phrase (“Praise for the”). These notes (1-3-5 or c-e-g) form a triad or chord when sung together. {In their music the phrases are shown in shaded boxes.}

Write out the triad on the board in standard music notation. Model how a chord can be created with the first, third and fifth notes of a scale. At the piano, sing several examples and encourage students to try building a triad on several different starting notes. Sing the phrase segment “Morning has” which contains the three notes of the triad.

Check:

Ask students to sing the opening “Morning has Broken” phrase starting on different notes. Praise them and prompt where necessary in building the triads correctly.

Practice the skill by splitting into small groups and having each group build the triad based on the starting tone I give them. When all groups have demonstrated they can perform triads, use the board and do small group work on writing the triad. I give them the starting note and they count the line-space distance on the staff and add the other two tones to form a triad. Provide individual help as needed.

(Over successive lessons, every student will get the opportunity to demonstrate grasp of singing writing and performing a triad.)

Close:

Sing “Morning Has Broken”. Encourage and praise legato style of singing with long, relaxed phrases and open vowel sounds.

Sing “The Star Spangled Banner”. Ask students to notice the melody pattern — the opening of the anthem is a triad!

If time permits, sing “Michel Finnegan” (more triad patterns.)

Great job!

Assessment in Music :

At Sycamore Elementary School, a large portion of assessment is student performance. Children sing a great variety of songs from memory, move to music, write out rhythms and melodies, and talk intelligently about what they have mastered in music, whether it is a composer's life story or the background to a Stephen Foster song. Assessment through performance takes many forms.

Students perform frequently for each other, sometimes walking to a different classroom and giving a performance after several weeks of working on a song, or taking part in a school-wide musical. There are many opportunities throughout the year for children to experience the discipline and joy of making the performing arts come to life.

At Sycamore, the art of song writing is cherished. Students enjoy putting lyrics to their melodies and in the past have created some amazing songs. Some of these songs were written away from the classroom by a child striving to express himself through music. This is a wonderfully positive sign that music is not just something that is limited to classroom music lessons.

Often, children working in groups write a song about an area of study. Assessment through performance happens when they present their songs to parents and peers.

While the music teacher makes her own assessment of student learning and proficiency, students also self-assess. They learn what they can do and how they want to improve. Children learn from each other and develop new skills, trying out for a solo one year, whereas previously, they had been unsure of themselves.

Another tool for assessment at Sycamore is written samples of student work. The children are aware of the fact that they are mastering a new "language" which they must practice. They take pride in being able to listen to, write out and create their own simple melodies using solfege.

Individual assessment happens in class, especially with regard to ear-training. By testing each student, over the course of the three weeks that the class is working on major as opposed to minor melodies, for example, the music instructor can assess which children have difficulty telling major from minor. Re-teaching and more practice is in order.

Finally, real learning and mastery is evident each time the students have music class. The last five minutes or so are devoted to "Requests" during which time children may request a song or dance that the class will perform together. It is not unusual for children to request songs and dances from many years gone by, as well as those that are relatively new. The pieces of music they request have become part of their repertory, bringing enjoyment and a sense of ownership of the material. This is the joy of real learning that comes from within.