

Witches' Brew

Pot Full of Songs for Oral Language Development

by Hap Palmer and Martha Cheney

The objective of these songs is to stimulate oral language development. They are easy to learn and fun to sing. Some of the songs appear twice, once with complete lyrics and once with blank spaces where the children sing lyrics they have created and verbalized.

After children have sung a song and are familiar with it they are ready for the Fill-In-The Blanks version. For instance, to do Grandmother's Farm, you might ask the children, "What are four more animals you could find on a farm?" Write the four suggestions on the board. Then play the Fill-In-The Blanks version of Grandmother's Farm using the animals the children have thought of (For each song that has a Fill-In-The Blanks version, you will find a sample question for eliciting the children's responses.)

Many of the songs have Instant Sing Lines. The Instant Sing Line is a phrase or sentence that repeats itself throughout the song. Because it can be learned quickly, the children are able to participate right away.

1. WITCHES' BREW

Instant Sing Line:

I got magic, Alakazamakazoo.

Lyrics:

Dead leaves, seaweed, rotten eggs, too.

Stir them in my witches' brew.

I got magic, Alakazamakazoo.

Spider web, moldy bread, mucky mud, too.

Stir them in my witches' brew.

I got magic! Alakazamakazoo

ooo - My witches' brew - ooo

What's it gonna do to you?

Boo!

Floor wax, thumb tacks, purple paint, too.

Stir them in my witches' brew.

I got magic, Alakazamakazoo.

Finger nails, lunch pails, apple cores, too.

Stir them in my witches' brew.

I got magic, Alakazamakazoo.

ooo - My witches' brew - ooo

What's it gonna do to you?

Boo!

Wrinkled prunes, mushrooms, motor oil, too.

Stir them in my witches' brew.

I got magic, Alakazamakazoo.

I got magic, Alakazamakazoo.

Action:

"Dead leaves, seaweed . . ."

Children pretend to throw ingredients

in cauldron.

"Stir them in my witches' brew."

Children do stirring motion.

"I got magic, Alakazamakazoo."

Children pretend to cast spell using any hand movements they feel are appropriate.

Boo!

Make any sudden scary movement.

Fill-In-The-Blanks: Play selection 10.

"If you were making a witches brew, what would you put in it?"

2. GRANDMOTHER'S FARM

This is a very simple and repetitive song. The very first thing the children do is to make the sounds of the animals in the instrumental spaces following the lines, "I saw a cow (. . . horse, . . . dog, . . . pig) and it talked to me."

Lyrics:

I took a trip to grandmother's farm.

What do you 'spose I saw?

I saw a cow and it talked to me.

La la la la la la la la.

I went to grandmother's farm

I took a trip to grandmother's farm.

What do you 'spose I saw?

I saw a horse and it talked to me.

I saw a cow and it talked to me.

La la la la la la la la.

I went to grandmother's farm

I took a trip to grandmother's farm.

What do you 'spose I saw?

I saw a dog and it talked to me.

I saw a horse and it talked to me.

I saw a cow and it talked to me.

La la la la la la la la.

I went to grandmother's farm

I took a trip to grandmother's farm.

What do you 'spose I saw?

I saw a pig and it talked to me.

I saw a dog and it talked to me.

I saw a horse and it talked to me.

I saw a cow and it talked to me.

La la la la la la la la.

I went to grandmother's farm

Fill-In-The-Blanks: Play selection 11.

"What are four other animals you might see on a farm?"

3. SCAMPER

Instant Sing Line: Yah yah yah.

Lyrics:

Little mouse on quiet feet,

Yah yah yah.

Looks for something good to eat.

Yah, yah, yah.

While the old Tom cat is snoring,

Little mouse will be exploring,

Looking for a midnight treat,
 Yah, yah, yah.
 Scoots beneath the pantry door,
 Yah, yah, yah.
 Knocks a bottle to the floor,
 Yah, yah, yah.
 Old Tom wakes and hears the clatter,
 Runs to see what is the matter,
 Mouse don't wait a second more,
 Yah, yah, yah.
 Scamper, scamper little mouse.
 Scamper, scamper to your house.
 Down the hall and through the wall,
 Scamper, scamper little mouse.
 Scamper, scamper to your house.
 Down the hall and through the wall,
 Scamper, scamper little mouse.
 Scamper, scamper, scamper, scamper,
 Scamper, scamper, hey!

Action: One to three children are chosen to be the cats. They lie down on the floor in the center of the space and pretend to be asleep. Everyone else will be mice. The mice move around quietly looking for food and teasing the cats by singing "Yah, yah, yah." On the line "Old Tom wakes and hears the clatter," - the cats jump up and try to catch the mice. When a mouse is touched it sits down and stops moving.

If you have a very large group, you might want to label the cats in some way - a card that says cat pinned on their clothes or a simple mask of some kind.

4. CLICKETY CLACK

Instant Sing Line: Going to the city and it won't come back.

Lyrics:

Carrying lumber down the track.
 Going to the city and it won't come back.
Carrying coal down the track
 Going to the city and it won't come back.
Carrying produce down the track.
 Going to the city and it won't come back.
Carrying grain down the track.
 Going to the city and it won't come back.
 Wooo! Wooo! Clickety clack.
 This old train is loaded down.
 Wooo! Wooo! Clickety clack.
 This old train is city bound.
Carrying sugar cane down the track.
 Going to the city and it won't come back.
Carrying milk down the track.
 Going to the city and it won't come back.
Carrying iron ore down the track.
 Going to the city and it won't come back.
Carrying gravel down the track.
 Going to the city and it won't come back.
 Wooo! Wooo! Clickety clack.
 This old train is loaded down.
 Wooo! Wooo! Clickety clack.
 This old train is city bound.

Action: During the verses the children can do a simple rhythmic movement such as swaying from side to side and snapping fingers.

"Wooo! Wooo!"
 train whistle.

Pretend to pull

"Clickety clack, this old
 train is loaded down."

Do chugging motion
 with arms.

"Wooo! Wooo!"

Pretend to pull
 train whistle.

"Clickety clack, this old
 train is city bound."

Do chugging motion
 with arms.

Fill-In-The-Blanks: Play selection 12.

"Can you think of other things a train might carry
 from the country to the city?"

5. GOODNIGHT

Children sing back each phrase they hear.

Lyrics:

The brown horse sleeps in his warm stall,
 The gray mouse sleeps inside the wall.
 Goodnight goodnight, now the sun has set.
 Goodnight goodnight, now it's time to rest.
 A small bug sleeps curled in a leaf,
 The blue bird sleeps safe in a tree.
 Goodnight goodnight, now the sun has set.
 Goodnight goodnight, now it's time to rest.
 The earthworm sleeps down in the ground,
 A white duckling sleeps in soft down.
 Goodnight goodnight, now the sun has set.
 Goodnight goodnight, now it's time to rest.

Variation: Children can lie down on the floor, relax and sing this song. Good for naptime or just a brief period of relaxation. Listening and repeating the lines can have a focusing and calming effect.

6. PACK UP THE SLEIGH

Instant Sing Lines: Hey, hey, pack up the sleigh.

Ho, ho ready to go.

Lyrics:

Hey, hey, pack up the sleigh.
 Time to get ready for Christmas day.
 Ho, ho, ready to go.
 Time to go flying over the snow.
 Bring something red that has four wheels,
 Bring something soft and fuzzy and brown.
 Bring something that floats in puddles and tubs.
 Bring something blue that you can wear,
 Hey, hey, pack up the sleigh.
 Time to get ready for Christmas day.
 Ho, ho, ready to go.
 Time to go flying over the snow.
 Bring something that makes a lot of noise.
 Bring something to play on rainy days.
 Bring something that you would like to ride.
 Bring something that's good for you to eat.
 Hey, hey, pack up the sleigh.
 Time to get ready for Christmas day.
 Ho, ho, ready to go.
 Time to go flying over the snow.

Action: Children think of gifts that fit the description of the song. This can be done in a large group with children calling out their ideas or in partners with the children sharing their ideas with their partners.

7. THEY GO TOGETHER

Lyrics:

Sand and sea, they go together naturally.
Bird and tree, they go together easily.
Honey and bee, they go together can't you see?
That they share their place in the world
Because they like each other's company.
Shoes and socks they go together naturally.
Keys and locks, they go together easily.
Boats and docks, they go together can't you see?
That they share their place in the world
Because they like each other's company.
Together, together
The way that they were meant to be.
Eggs and ham, they go together naturally.
Pot and pan, they go together easily.
Toast and jam, they go together can't you see?
That they share their place in the world
Because they like each other's company.
Together, together
The way that they were meant to be.

List on the board the pairs of things that go together from the lyric. Children read and sing each pair along with the recording. The singing is simple, since the pairs are all sung on one note.

Fill-In-The Blanks: Play selection 13.

"Can you think of some other things that could go together?"

Variation: Think of some body movements that go together, such as swing and sway, wiggle and jiggle, etc. Then use these to fill in the blanks. Movements are performed as they are sung. Any two movements the children want to do are fine.

8. SPACE EXPLORER

Instant Sing Line: Space Explorer, riding in my star machine.
Space Explorer, seeing what nobody's seen.

Lyrics:

Space Explorer, riding in my star machine.
Space Explorer, seeing what nobody's seen.
Flashing past the planets, on which do you land?
Space Explorer, riding in my star machine.
Space Explorer, seeing what nobody's seen.
Take a look around you, are there any living things?
Space Explorer, riding in my star machine.
Space Explorer, seeing what nobody's seen.
What will you take with you on your journey home?
Space Explorer, riding in my star machine.
Space Explorer, seeing what nobody's seen.
Space Explorer, riding in my star machine.
Space Explorer, seeing what nobody's seen.

Action: During chorus children fly around the room in their space ships. Just before each question the teacher rings a bell. Children stop moving, turn to face a partner, and answer the question they hear. You may want to begin the activity with children in a crouching position, doing a countdown - 10,9,8, . . . When 0 is reached, start the music. Children blast off and begin to fly.

9. THE EAGLE

Instant Sing Line: He was free, when they let him be.

Lyrics

Born for a western sky,
Sweeping a circle as he flies.
He was free, when they let him be.
tambourines

Brave and a hunter's son,
The land was his till he met a gun.
He was free, when they let him be.

In a land without a friend,
Will there be an empty sky,
Where the Eagle used to fly
In the wind?

There on a mountain high,
Wounded Eagle waits to die

He was free, when they let him be.

Dreaming of days gone by
When Indian children watched him fly,

He was free, when they let him be.

In a land without a friend,
Will there be an empty sky,
Where the Eagle used to fly
In the wind?

Born for a western sky,
Sweeping a circle as he flies.

He was free, when they let him be.

He was free, when they let him be.

Action: Children form large circle, each with a rhythm instrument. During verses children move around the circle stamping lightly twice with right foot then twice with left foot. Children play their instrument as indicated beside lyric.

During chorus children put instrument down in front of them and fly around the circle like eagles. When the chorus ends (teacher may want to ring bell to signal) children stop, pick up the instrument nearest them and begin to move and play as before.

Variation: A simpler way to do this activity would be to simply do the stamping and flying without rhythm instruments.

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Rhythm Instrument

Blocks, sticks, drums

Maracas, shakers,

Blocks, sticks, drums

Maracas, shakers,
tambourines

Fly around the circle

Blocks, sticks, drums

Maracas, shakers,
tambourines

Blocks, sticks, drums

Maracas, shakers,
tambourines

Fly around the circle

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