



Activities for the Arts for Autism CD

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Grades Pre-K - 6 / Teachers/Parents

1. Special Day

- Ask the students, “What special days do we celebrate in this country?” “Why?” “If you could create a special day for our country to celebrate, what and when would it be?” “Why and how would we celebrate it?”
- “What other special days do you celebrate in your family?” Have the students make a list of them and then have them choose one to write and/or draw details about how their family celebrates this day.
- On each student’s birthday let the children dance around the room to this song. Let the birthday child dance in a special place such as up on a chair or in the middle of a circle of students - whatever the child is the most excited and comfortable with.

2. A Monster Goes Rrrraargh!

- During the song have the students jump (or bounce their legs while sitting in a chair) during the first three lines of each verse. Then when it says, “But I am a monster...” have the students freeze, then put out their “claws” and “Rrrraargh” along with the song.
- Have the students count and list the different animals that are mentioned in the song. (There are 20.) The words are sung quickly, so this is a good listening comprehension activity.
- Have each student choose an animal from the song. Have them find out two facts about that animal, and then illustrate the animal with the facts written underneath. Display in classroom or hallway.

3. Bumbo

- As you play the song for the class have the students follow along with what the song says. It’s a fun and humorous song about shaking and swinging your “bumbo.”

4. Parachute Girl

- Teach the students motions to do during the song:
 - Chorus: “parachute girl flies over the world...” – put your arms out like a plane
 - “...when she jumps up...” – put your arms up over your head, hands together
 - “...and out of her airplane” – move your arms down, hands still together, like they are floating down like a parachute
 - During the verses, just put your arms out like a plane and fly around
 - “...she pulls her cord and her parachute pops open...” – put your arms up over your head, hands together
 - “...now she’s floating down, down, down, gently to the ground” – move your arms down slowly, hands still together, like they are floating down like a parachute all the way to the ground
 - Repeat the motions for the chorus as it is sung, and then fly around during the end of the song
- One of the lines in the song says, “Parachute girl flies over the world.” If the students had a parachute and could fly all over the world, ask them where they would like to go and why.

5. Nobody Knows

- The song lists all sorts of questions about life that “nobody knows” the answers to. After playing the song to the class, have groups of students brainstorm questions that they do not have the answers to. Have each group circle their favorite question, and then individually each student will illustrate what they think the answer could be.

6. Happy Song

- Ask the students, “What makes you happy?” Have them think of things that always make them smile and write a list as long as they can. Have the students keep the list in their desks or in front of their textbooks or folders so they can read it whenever they’re feeling down.
- During the verses of the song have the students tap their knees or stomp their feet to the beat of the music. Alternate the actions for each verse. During the first part of the chorus, “Come on along and sing a happy song, as loud as you can all day long; put a skip in your step and you can’t go wrong,” have the students dance (can be in their seats or standing up next to their seats). During the second part of the chorus, “la, la, la, ta, ta, ta, hey, hey, hey, ha, ha, ha,” have the students cross their midline as follows (think disco):
 - la, la, la – Right hand point up and out to the right
 - ta, ta, ta – Right hand points down and to the left
 - hey, hey, hey – left hand points up and out to the left
 - ha, ha, ha – left hand points down and to the rightEach student should follow their hands with their eyes during the dance.

7. Africa Calling

- After listening to the song with the students, have them name the animals that are mentioned. As they name them, write the animals down on chart paper. Then ask questions for each animal, using a KWL chart: What color are they? Where do they live? What do they eat? What noises do they make? Have the students tell the answers to as many questions as they can, as well as come up with additional questions that they want to know the answers to. Talk about how and where they might be able to find the answers to all of their questions. After sufficient time has been given for students to gather some information, come back together as a class and fill in the rest of the KWL chart.
- Have the students make a mask of an *Africa Calling* animal of their choice, laminate them, and have the students wear them when their animal comes up during the song. (You could also use store-bought animal masks or small stuffed animals that correspond to the animals in the song. Check out the Oriental Trading Company website – www.oriental.com - for inexpensive masks or the Kaplan catalog, Early Childhood Edition, under Children’s Literature, for finger puppets.) With younger students, after the song is over, put an empty box or bag in front of you and have each student put away their animal (stuffed or masked) by saying things like, “If you have the (elephant), come put him in the bag,” or “If you have the (gray) animal,...” or “If you have the animal that says _____,...”
- Teach the students motions to do during the song. Have the students follow your lead throughout the song instead of teaching them ahead of time (it’s a lot easier!)

(These motions can be done while sitting in a chair.)

The first verse of the song (lion):

- hold your hands in front of you like claws; walk your hands forward to the beat of the song as if prowling

The second verse of the song (elephant):

- stomp your feet

The third verse of the song (viper):

- slink your arm back and forth in a wave or S-motion

The fourth verse of the song (buffalo):

- put your hands up to your eyes like binoculars

The fifth verse of the song (monkey):

- lift up your elbows so your hands fall loosely toward the ground; swing your forearms back and forth

The sixth verse of the song (hippo):

- put your arms by your stomach, then move them up near your face and wave them up and down as if you’re splashing in water

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The seventh verse of the song (zebra):

- open your eyes really wide, stick out your neck, and slowly look around from one side of the room to the other with one hand above your eyes like you're searching

The eighth verse of the song (rhinoceros):

- run your feet in place

The ninth verse of the song (cheetah):

- slowly walk your feet while swaying your upper body forward as you walk, eyes wide as if looking for something, with both hands above your eyes as if looking for something

The tenth verse of the song (child):

- put the palms of your hands together, place them by your ear, then tilt your head, like you are sleeping

- Enact the story during the song. Have each student pretend to be one of the animals, with gestures and noises, as they move around the room.

8. Howdy Song

- “Hi” and “friend” are sung in this song in different languages: English, Spanish, German, Japanese, and Russian. Use, and encourage the students to use, all of the ways to say “hi” and “friend” that they learned from the song. If students in your class speak a language with their families other than the languages mentioned in the song, ask them to share how to say “hi” and “friend” with the class. Use these words, too.
- Ask each student to write down all of the different ways to say hi in English that they can think of. Would they use different ways with different people in different situations?

9. Flying Guitar

- Part of the song says, “We can go anywhere...and can bring anyone along.” Ask the students, “If you could fly on a guitar, where would you go and who would you take with you? Why?”
- A line from the song says, “Asked alligator for a ride, says he’s been on: a train..., a plane..., a bus..., a boat..., and a car.” Ask the students to name other modes of transportation. Choose five to ten of them and then as a class, graph how many students have been on each chosen mode of transportation.
- Another line from the song says, “She said up here, I’ve seen birds..., clouds..., planes..., sun..., and stars.” Have the students name other things that are found in the sky.

10. If Everyone Was Just Like Me

- Discuss different careers and how having an interest or the ability to do something can lead you into a certain career. Have students write in their journals about what they like to do and also what they are good at. Then have them think about and write down what career they would like to have after they finish school.

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- Have the students dress up as a person whose job they'd like to have, and present to the class what they would do in a typical day on the job.
- Have the students write a fictional story of what life would be like if everyone was just like them.

General Activities:

- The proceeds for this album go towards autism research, awareness, and education. Teach your students about autism. You can check out the Autism Society of America at: www.autism-society.org for information and facts about autism. You can also check out these picture books and others to read to your students: *Ian's Walk: A Story About Autism* by Laurie Lears and *My Brother, Matthew* by Mary Thompson.
- Check out www.artsforautism.org for information on autism, the proceeds of the album, and the artists who donated their songs.

For more information on *Arts for Autism*, visit www.artsforautism.org or www.playhouseradio.com

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