



Smithsonian Folkways

African American Music: Let's Sing and Play Clapping Games A Smithsonian Folkways Lesson

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Summary:

Students will learn hand-clapping games from the African American tradition to practice movement, listening, and rhythm skills. Students will explore the role of children's games in African American culture and around the world.

Suggested Grade Levels: K-2

Country: United States

Region: Northeast and Southern United States, North America

Culture Group: African-American

Genre: Ragtime, Children's

Instruments: Piano, Voice

Language: English

Co-Curricular Areas: Social Studies

National Standards: 1, 2, 6, 9

Prerequisites: None

Objectives:

- Listening (to instrument playing, beats, ostinato)
- Moving (moving to a beat, hand clapping games)
- Playing (rhythms, on instruments)
- Singing (call and response)
- Exploring the African American cultures and their children games

Materials:

- "Town Talk" by George Hicks from *George Hicks, Ragtime: Tickled Pink* (FW03165)
<http://www.folkways.si.edu/george-hicks/town-talk/jazz-ragtime/music/track/smithsonian>
- Hand drums
- Cups
- "Long John" by Ella Jenkins from *Adventures in Rhythm* (SFW45007)
<http://www.folkways.si.edu/ella-jenkins/long-john/childrens/music/track/smithsonian>

Lesson Segments:

- 1. Steady Beat Introduction** (National Standards 1, 2, 6)
- 2. Steady Beat in Work Songs** (National Standards 1, 6, 9)

1. Steady Beat Introduction

- a.** Play a game to introduce the steady beat.
 - i.** Explain what steady beat is and demonstrate on frame drum
 - ii.** Ask students to walk on steady beats played by teacher
 - iii.** Students should stop when they hear beats which are not steady beats (teacher plays sped up or slowed beats after steady beats to sharpen students' sensitivity to steady beat)
 - iv.** Ask students to take turns playing the steady beat on the drum
- b.** Play the steady beat with Ragtime (with hand clapping and plastic cups).
 - i.** Play "Town Talk" and ask students to clap the steady beat
 - ii.** Play recording again and ask students to pass their cup to the next person on their right side along with steady beat
- c.** Play a simple hand clapping game of your choice.

Assessment: Are students able to keep the steady beat? Are students able to successfully play the hand clapping game?

2. Steady Beat in Work Songs

- a.** Play recording of "Long John".
 - i.** Review steady beat by passing the cups to next person to the right
- b.** Watch hand clapping games that can be found online.
 - i.** Explain the meaning of hand clapping games in African culture
- c.** Review the simple hand clapping game you played in Lesson 1.
 - i.** Ask students to play the simple hand clapping game to "Long John"
- d.** Discussion.
 - i.** Besides the steady beat, what else do you hear in the music?
 - ii.** Do you hear any instruments in the music?
 - iii.** Can you name the instruments?
- e.** Explain that the work song "Long John" was once popular among African Americans.
 - i.** Discuss how singing, humming and making music can make work seem easier and build community
 - ii.** Students relate this to their own experiences
- f.** Learn the song by rote (call and response).
 - i.** Sing the song with CD and add the hand clapping

Assessment: Are students able to keep the steady beat? Are students able to discuss the material in an age-appropriate manner? Are students able to identify different instruments being played?