



Smilin' Rylan

Teaching Guide

Cross Curricular Activities, Ideas & Mini Lessons

Companion to the Album:

Thank You for Singing Along

Dear Fellow Educator,

Like you, I'm a full-time teacher. I teach K-5 fine arts and physical education in Saskatoon where I'm known as Mr. Goudreau. I also create and perform children's music under the name "Smilin' Rylan."

I know how hard it is to find quality and engaging music to use in the classroom that not only helps students meet curricular outcomes, but also maintains the sanity of the teacher.

I would like to offer you these free resources for your classroom: My new children's music album, "Thank You for Singing Along" and its companion teaching guide/activity booklet that you have in your hands right now. You will find the song lyrics located in the CD sleeve.

The album contains fifteen songs that vary in theme, style and musical technique. This booklet is a roadmap that will guide you through the songs and give you ideas on how you can use this music in your classroom and tie it into your curriculum across many different subjects.

I understand that everyone's musical tastes and teaching styles are different. If this music/resource is not a good fit for you or your class, all I ask is that you pass it on to a teacher who you think may find it useful.

Please feel free to contact me with any ideas, questions, suggestions, stories or live performance inquiries.

Until then, thank you for singing along!



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1. Best Birthday Ever

Theme: birthdays

Style: pop/rock

Musical Techniques: call & response, tempo/dynamic changes

A great song to play, sing and dance to when celebrating someone's birthday.

Teaching the Song:

- Introduce the song by asking students what their “best birthday ever” looks like, sounds like and feels like
- Teach the refrain line, “best birthday ever!” and practise it a couple times on your cue
- With students, co-create different actions/movements for each type of party mentioned in the song: pizza party, pool party, sleepover party, bowling party and movie party
- When playing the songs, perform the created party actions/movements together
- Hands in the air and jump up and down while singing the “best birthday ever!” line
- Freestyle dance and movements for “ice cream & cake”
- For the “video games” section, have kids get smaller as the music gets quieter and make the “shhh” sign together
- Jump back up for “best birthday ever!”

Math Mini Lesson:

Survey the class and write down everyone's age and birthday month on the board or flipchart. Prepare a large bar graph with numbers 1-10 on the Y axis and month names on the X axis. With the help of the students, fill in the graph to create a visual representation of how many birthdays there are in each month. Discuss the results e.g., which month has the most birthdays? Lastly, add up everyone's age to find out how many total birthdays the class has celebrated. Make a fuss about how old the class is.

2. Living With the Bison

Themes: traditional First Nations' culture, bison

Style: hip hop

Musical Techniques: story, list-song, sing-along chorus

This song is slightly more mature sounding but is still enjoyable for young listeners due to its fast rhyming and story-like nature. Use this song to supplement a lesson or unit on the traditional relationship between First Nations peoples and the plains/woodlands bison. It's essentially a list of things that First Nations people traditionally used the bison for.

Teaching the Song:

- Ask the students if they know what a bison (or buffalo) is
- Describe or have students describe what a bison looks like and where they can be found e.g., Prince Albert, Elk Island Yellowstone and Wood Buffalo National Parks
- Teach the words to the chorus by chanting each line in rhythm and having them echo:
 - living with the bison
 - the parks are where you'll find them
 - getting fat off grass man
 - we're living with the bison
- Have students listen to the song and challenge them to pick out any of the items listed in the song – make a list of these on the board or flipchart
- Repeat the song and see if you can add more items to the list

Social Studies Mini Lesson:

Use the created list to have a discussion on what part of the bison each item is made from, how it was crafted and how it was traditionally used in daily life.

3. Biggie the Baby Basset Hound

Themes: puppies/pets, outdoors/nature

Style: pop/folk

Musical Techniques: story, call & response (echo)

This song tells a cute story about a basset hound puppy named Biggie who can't help but follow her nose to big adventures far and wide.

Teaching the Song:

- Introduce the song by telling students that Biggie is the name of a puppy
- Even though she's just a baby, she got her name because she has: great big ears, great big feet/paws, a big long tail, a big long nose, a great big howl and a great big bark
- Ask the students to show you a "great big bark"
- Ask the students to show you a "great big howl"
- Explain to the students how "echoing" works
- Start the song and have kids echo the verses while learning the chorus by rote
- Have students improvise their own barking solos over the final barking chorus

Science/Health Mini Lesson:

Show a picture of a basset hound and have a short discussion on how their sense of smell is one of the strongest of all dog breeds. Point out how their loose skin and long ears help trap scents. Have some samples of items prepared that have unique scents (e.g. apple pieces, rose pedals, cinnamon sticks). Challenge the students to identify the items using only their sense of smell. Do they have a nose as good as Biggie's? Discuss what other senses we use to perceive the world (sight, sound, touch and taste). Conduct a similar activity to test these other senses (e.g., blindfolded taste test).

4. The Pee Pee Dance

Themes: inclusivity, commonalities

Style: pop/rock

Musical Techniques: actions/movements, call & response

Despite the title, this song is not a toilet humour song but rather a song about inclusivity that celebrates the one dance that transcends all genders, backgrounds and beliefs.

Teaching the Song:

- Tell the students that you're going to teach them "the most popular dance in the world!"
- I like to start by teaching the three different rhythms of the three responses
- Clap and/or chant the three responses and have the students echo (4/4 time):

1. | ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ |
pee pee dance (rest)

2. | ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ |
(rest) (rest) pee pee dance!

3. | ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩ |
(rest) (rest) (rest) dance!

- Teach students the dance moves: bounce up & down, spin round & round, hop on one leg and scrunch up your face
- Co-create movements for the verses, e.g., everyone can shake their bodies for the "I'm getting the shakes" line

Social Studies Mini Lesson:

Discuss all the things the kids have in common with one another (e.g., everyone has a nose). Then discuss all the things that make them different. Conclude that even though our differences are what make us unique, we are more alike than we are different.

5. Wiggly Tooth

Themes: change, friendship, loss

Style: waltz/lullaby

Musical Technique: sing-along

This song is about experiencing change as we grow up. Sometimes change makes us feel happy, like having a birthday. Sometimes change makes us feel sad, like saying goodbye to someone we love.

Teaching the Song:

- I like to start off this song by surveying the class to see who has, or has ever had a wiggly tooth
- You can follow that up with questions about where they think their tooth went (or will go), if they miss their tooth and why
- Teach the words to the song by chanting each line in rhythm and having them echo
- Play the song and have a sing-along
- Co-create movements for each line e.g., have students hug themselves and wiggle their bodies for the line “wiggly squiggly jiggly tooth”

Language Arts Mini Lesson:

As a class (or independently, depending on the level of your students), write a goodbye letter to “my wiggly tooth.” They can include a favorite memory with the tooth, how they felt (or how they think they’ll feel) when they said (or will say) goodbye and where they think (or hope) their tooth has gone. You may want to have a template prepared titled, “My Wiggly Tooth” with a box for the illustration and a few lines for the goodbye letter (perhaps with sentence starters/prompts). Alternately, the students can simply tell a story by using only an illustration.

6. Fruit Party

Themes: sharing, fruit, Spanish language

Style: Caribbean/calypso/soca

Musical Technique: call & response (echo)

Not only is this upbeat island-style song irresistible to dance to, but it also has a great message about sharing and teaches kids popular fruit names in English and Spanish.

Teaching the Song:

- Start by asking what the kids' favorite fruits are
- I like to begin teaching the song by telling the students I need three "ays!" and one "ay ya ya!"
- Practise the "ays!" by clapping on the strong beats and cuing the kids on the weak beats (in 4/4 time):
 - | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3...
 - (clap) ay! (clap) ay! (clap) ay! (clap) ay yi yi! ay! (clap)
- Explain to the students how "echoing" works
- Chant the lines "fruit party" and "fiesta de la fruta" in rhythm and have the students echo
- Let the kids know that they just spoke a different language, Spanish! (you can even discuss and/or point out parts of the world where Spanish is spoken on a map)
- Have a classroom dance party and include a conga line!

Health Mini Lesson:

Bring some popular fruit into the class and discuss how according to Canada's Food Guide, eating fruit is an important part of a healthy diet. Talk about each fruit (e.g., name, geographic origin and preparation). Have students help prepare a fruit salad (or prepare their own with kid-safe utensils), serve and enjoy. Use the colours of the fruits you've observed to introduce a science lesson on the colours of the rainbow.

7. In a Good Mood

Theme: positivity

Style: upbeat folk

Musical Techniques: actions/movements, sing-along

Here we have a collection of classic kid-friendly actions and movements incorporated into a bouncy upbeat and positive song.

Teaching the Song:

- I like to start off in a standing circle and ask the kids what they like to do when they're in a good mood
- If a student says e.g., "rub my tummy," ask him or her to demonstrate and invite everyone to join in
- If you like, you can teach the specific actions/movements from the song: clapping hands, stomping feet, bouncing up & down and taking a nap
- Try singing the song without the CD playing and use the actions/movements suggested by the kids (e.g., "I rub my tummy when I'm in a good mood")

Language Arts Mini Lesson:

You've now discussed and acted out many things the kids like to do when they're in a good mood. Have the students sit and draw themselves (perhaps with friends and family) in a good mood. They can then (depending on their ability) describe or write a story about what they're doing. You may want to have a template prepared titled, "In a Good Mood" with a box for the illustration and few lines for the description/story (perhaps with sentence starters/prompts).

8. Zombie Parade

Themes: Halloween, zombies

Style: spooky/Halloween music

Musical Techniques: call & response (echo), actions/movements, tempo/dynamic changes

The quintessential Halloween song (or anytime song) that features today's most popular movie monster, the zombie.

Teaching the Song:

- Ask kids who their favorite Halloween/movie monsters are
- Teach the call & response pattern used in the verses:
 - Call: "I'm in a really cool"
Response: "really cool, really cool"
 - Call: "club after school"
Response: "after schoooooo!"
 - Call: "if you want to join us"
Response: "join us, join us"
- Teach the zombie-walk by chanting the words in rhythm (with kids echoing) and modeling the actions/movements: raise your arms, drag your leg and talk in a monster voice
- During the song, encourage kids to show you the proper zombie-walk for each given signal: little zombies, big zombies, fast zombies, any kind of zombie, etc.
- I like to start in a circle for the first verse, spread out around the room for the zombie-walks and then reassemble back into a circle for the second verse

Drama Mini Lesson:

Line kids up on one side of the room. Give them new zombie-walks and have them walk across the room in that style e.g., "show me zombies walking on the moon." Then take suggestions from kids.

9. Friends Forever

Theme: friendship

Style: folk/maritime

Musical Techniques: sing-along chorus, actions/movements

A fun song that reminds kids they're loved and supported by their classmates, and challenges them to do some fun and interesting actions and movements.

Teaching the Song:

- Ask kids to raise their hands if they have friends (encourage everyone to raise their hands because “we’re all friends”)
- Teach the chorus by chanting each line to the students in rhythm and having them echo:
 1. forever will you be
 2. my friend forever
 3. forever will you
 4. be my friend
- If you like, you can teach the specific actions/movements from the song: clapping, stomping, tongue clicking, lip smacking and friend hugging (if appropriate)
- During the sing-along chorus, kids tend to want to put their arms around each other and sway side to side – this may be something you want to encourage depending on your school policies

Social Studies Mini Lesson:

Arrange the students in pairs. Tell them to have a conversation with their partners and find three things they have in common. With a student volunteer, model an example of what such a conversation would look/sound like. Once everyone has discovered what they have in common, bring everyone back into a group. Ask each pair to share their findings with the group. If anyone else in the class has these same things in common, have them shout “me too!”

10. Chugga Chug Choo Choo

Themes: imagination, phonics, food, animals, geography

Style: country /western

Musical Techniques: sing-along chorus, list-song

At its core, this is a song about how when you use your imagination you can go anywhere and do anything. In this case, all those places and things start with a “ch” sound.

Teaching the Song:

- Tell the students that they’re all going to go on a magical train ride and they can go anywhere they want
- Ask the students to suggest some places they’d like to go, but tell them that this train only stops at places that start with a “ch” sound (they will probably need some hints)
- Write out the students’ suggestions on the board or flipchart
- After the list is complete, make two more “ch” lists: animals you might see on your voyage and food to eat along the way
- Teach the chorus by chanting each line to the students in rhythm and having them echo:
 1. chugga chug train ‘round the bend
 2. just me and my best friend
 3. chugga chug choose what to do
 4. just me and you
- Play the song and point to words on the lists you’ve made when/if they’re sung in the song
- During instrumental sections, have kids travel around class like a train – you may want to pick students to be the engine and the caboose (and of course, say “choo choo” together)

Language Arts Mini Lesson:

Co-create more categories and lists using “ch” and other sounds.

11. Scrapes

Theme: playing outside

Style: pop/folk

Musical Techniques: call & response (echo), list-song

Whether on your hands, toes or knees, scrapes can be worn as a badge of honour earned from exploring and playing in the outdoors.

Teaching the Song:

- Introduce the song by asking the students if they like to play outside and what they like to do outside
- Ask the students if they've ever had or currently have any scrapes (or cuts, bumps, and bruises)
- Make a fuss over any scrapes the kids want to show off or talk about
- Explain to the students how "echoing" works
- After listening, co-create actions/movements for all the body parts mentioned in the song (e.g., put hands on knees and move them in and out for the line "scrapes on my knees")
- When singing the song without the CD playing, you can incorporate your own students' names into the final verse

Physical Education Mini Lesson:

Go outside and play! Go to the playground, take your students on a hike around your neighborhood, go to the local park or go sledding in the winter if you have a little hill nearby (crazy carpets are cheap).

12. T-Rex & Friends

Theme: dinosaurs

Style: showtune/musical

Musical Techniques: list-song, sing-along, tempo/dynamic changes

Kids love dinosaurs and no dinosaur is more popular than the tyrannosaurus rex. This song features the king himself, T-Rex belting out a showtune in which he introduces the listeners to his dinosaur friends.

Teaching the Song:

- Introduce the song by asking the students to name all the dinosaurs they can think of
- Write down all the dinosaur names on the board or flipchart
- Teach the kids to growl the word “rex!” (with teeth barred and little claws out) and join in every time T-Rex sings: “tyrannosaurus REX!” and “you call me T-REX!”
- As you play the song, check dinosaur names off your list and see how many you were able to guess (and if you guessed any that weren’t in the song)
- Help the students sing along by writing out the dinosaur names in the order they appear in the song and point to them as they are sung – extra challenge when tempo changes
- Additionally, you can co-create actions/movements for each dinosaur to perform during the song (e.g., kids can pretend to shake their tails for “stegosaurus”)

Science Mini Lesson:

Find images of dinosaurs from the song. Show each image to the kids. Discuss and/or label each dinosaur’s specific attributes e.g., sharp teeth, claws, long neck, etc. Ask the students what each characteristic might be used for. Teach the terms “herbivore” and “carnivore.” Categorize the dinosaurs into one of the two headings.

13. Little Friends


Themes: beach/shoreline ecosystems, animals


Style: sunshine reggae/pop

Musical Techniques: call & response, sing-along

Teaching the Song:

- Tell the students to close their eyes and ask them to imagine that they're on a beach or shoreline
- Ask the kids to describe:
 - what they see (e.g., water, trees, sand and sky)
 - what they hear (e.g., wind blowing, waves lapping, birds chirping and leaves rustling)
 - what animals are there (fish, crabs, birds and dogs)
- Clap and/or chant the two responses and have the students echo (4/4 time):

1. 
I like (rest) you (rest)

2. 
lit – tle friends

- While playing the song, encourage the kids to participate in some laid-back groovy dancing around the room

Music Mini Lesson:

Distribute several different non-pitched percussion instruments and sound objects. These can include scrappers, bells, hand drums, tambourines, sticks, found objects in the classroom and even body percussion. Refer to when you had the kids imagine being on a beach/shoreline. Have the students imitate the sounds using the instruments (e.g., bells jingling softly for leaves rustling). Improvise a story that causes the sounds to change in intensity and speed (e.g., suddenly there's a storm!). Try a new environment/ecosystem.

14. Puddles!

Theme: playing outside

Style: pop/rock

Musical Techniques: call & response, actions/movements, sing-along, freeze-dance

This song is all about jumping and playing in puddles. It's the perfect companion to a rainy day.

Teaching the Song:

- Start by asking what it looks like outside after it rains
- Once the topic of puddles comes up, survey the class to see who likes to play in puddles
- Have the students elaborate by asking follow-up questions:
 - size, shape and depth of the puddles
 - colour and consistency of the puddles
 - their splashing technique and how wet they got
- Teach the refrain line, “puddles!” and have kids practise shouting/singing it a couple times on your cue
- Tell the kids you want to see how good they are at jumping, but when they hear the word “splash!” they must freeze
- Co-create actions/movements to perform during the lines in-between the “puddles!” parts (e.g., raise hands high in the air for “big,” and crouch down low for “small”)

Visual Art Mini Lesson:

On construction paper, have students draw and cut out a large puddle. On a separate white piece of paper, have an outline of a child prepared for the kids to colour, design and cut out (a self representation). Have kids glue the puddle and figure on a background to create a puddle-jumping action scene. Create a splash effect by applying beads of glue coming out of the puddle and adding glitter (great for a springtime bulletin board). Furthermore, use the song to introduce the water cycle.

15. Thank You for Singing Along

Theme: goodbye song, languages

Style: waltz/lullaby

Musical Technique: sing-along

A great song to use as a goodbye song and learn some farewells in other languages in the process.

Teaching the Song:

- Ask the students to demonstrate how to say goodbye in your community
- Ask if they know of any other ways people say goodbye in different languages and/or different parts of the world
- Teach the words of the song by chanting each line in rhythm and having them echo
- Explain where the farewells in the song are used:
 - “goodbye/so long” in Canada, U.S.A., United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand
 - “adios” in Mexico, U.S.A., Spain and Latin America
 - “ciao” in Italy, Latin America, Greece and Slavic speaking countries like Russia, Czech Republic, Poland and Croatia
 - “au revoir” in Canada, France, Monaco and Belgium
- Co-create actions/movements to perform with the farewells e.g., waving, bowing and whatever the kids come up with
- When singing without the CD, add more farewells in other languages (especially those the students can teach you)

Social Studies Mini Lesson:

On a large or projected map, locate and mark the countries that use the farewells you’ve learned. As a group, research and learn what the greetings used in those same countries are. Practise as a group.



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