

Singing Fun and Games!



By Artie Almeida
Themes & Variations

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ISBN# 978-1-989166-83-3

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Cover by: Lana Swanson Arrangements and Recordings by: Jason Misner and Morgan McKee

Edited by: Denise Gagné and Leanne Holloway

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Introduction:

I grew up in a singing family and singing has brought me joy my entire life. During my thirty-eight years as an elementary music instructor, each day was brighter because I got to sing with children. Whether it was happy songs we sang, somber songs that helped us work through challenging events, or silly songs created by the little folks . . . singing was the heart of the program.

The scientifically proven benefits of singing have been detailed in a multitude of publications. A small sampling of the rewards that singing brings includes building community and a sense of belonging, a lifting of mood, stress relief, coping with grief, immune system stimulation, increased lung function and much more. While these statistics are a fabulous statement about the value of singing, we know that our students just want to sing joyfully . . . with their friends . . . as often as possible.

"Singing creates everlasting memories by singing at bedtime, family get-togethers, celebrations, in the car, at preschool and school, or just anytime." (Linda Adamson)

Every child needs a pocketful of songs that they can carry with them throughout their childhood and share with friends and family. My hope was that I could provide my students with a huge assortment of songs for them to access in a variety of special occasions and situations.

"Singing is like a celebration of oxygen." (Bjork)

A very celebratory – and touching – bulletin board in my classroom (right by the front door) featured pictures that my students brought in of them singing or playing recorder, etc. in some setting other than our school music room. There was a picture of a 4th grade boy and his father playing recorders (Hot Cross Buns!) at the top of Pikes Peak. One picture featured a family singing together at a holiday celebration in their home. Another was a picture of a girl playing her recorder in the woods by a mountain stream. This bulletin board was a favorite of students and faculty and encouraged other children to think about facilitating family music-making experiences, and ways to take the songs and tunes we learned in class out into their larger world.

Song-based lessons can provide a wealth of learning in many academic areas, both musical and non-musical. The diverse collection in this resource book contains some of my students' favorite songs and activities. I was grateful for the happiness they brought and the musical elements that could be illuminated in an active and engaging fashion.

The lessons are divided into five categories:

1. Action Songs
2. Songs with Props
3. Audiation Songs
4. Echo Songs
5. Singing Games

Realistically, however, most of the songs in this collection could easily have been listed in two or three of the different categories, so use them as they best fit into your curriculum.

"The only thing better than singing is MORE singing!" (Ella Fitzgerald)

Lesson Structure: **READY . . . SET . . . GO!**

(This in-depth lesson organization will prepare you for success in each class.)

READY . . . (Targets)

This section details the learning targets, specific concepts to be addressed, vocabulary to be introduced, or reinforced, and lesson outcomes.

SET . . . (Stuff you're gonna need!)

- A list of materials and equipment needed
- The Visuals needed for lesson support, which are available to you as downloads.
 - ♦ Our artist Lana has done a fabulous job at preparing motivational and child-appealing visuals for the lessons. (Never underestimate the power of a good visual!)
- Recordings for all songs:
 - ♦ Our arranger Jason has provided very creative, child-appropriate and fun tracks for the songs in this collection!
- Photographs to help you see what this lesson will look like in your classroom:
 - ♦ My niece, Katie Grace Miller, who facilitated a day for me to go to her music room, where she took photographs of her students demonstrating the songs in the book!
- **Interest Igniters** like props and manipulatives you might wish to use are included in many lessons.
- Suggestions to prepare your teaching space and materials to ensure a smooth lesson flow, making it more likely you can meet all your goals. (My thoughts are with you if you have the extreme challenge of traveling from room to room to teach!)

GO! . . . (Instructional Sequence)

- Lesson Hooks to draw students in
- Step-by-step, in-depth instructional suggestions
- Plans that are scaffolded well, in order to use the children's time wisely. This is especially important since so many music teachers see the students infrequently.
- Plans that strive to address a variety of "paths to learning" for your students



Thanks again to my niece (and music education colleague) Katie Grace Miller, for assisting me in providing you with "student action shots" of the lessons in this book!

DEDICATION

I want to dedicate this book to my wonderful Mom, June Audrey Grace, who kept our home full of music . . . always. I grew up hearing music of all genres, especially orchestral, jazz and folk, and singing hymns with her and my family as she played piano. We sang in the car, we sang at picnics, and anywhere else we found ourselves. We loved to harmonize together and to create humorous new lyrics to old favorites. I think of her always and will forever be grateful for the music she unlocked in me.

1. My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean

4 bar intro

Traditional

My Bon-nie lies o-ver the o-cean, My Bon-nie lies o-ver the sea. My
Bon-nie lies o-ver the o-cean, Oh, bring back my Bon-nie to me.
Bring back, bring back Oh, bring back my Bon-nie to me, to me.
Bring back, bring back Oh, bring back my Bon-nie to me.

My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean

Bring back my Bonnie to me!

My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean is a very popular old Scottish song that most likely originated in the 18th century. It is theorized that the song refers to Charles Edward Stuart, aka Bonnie Prince Charlie, who wished to reclaim the British throne for his family. Because Bonnie (or bonny = fair of face, or good looking) could refer to a man or a woman, the supporters of the rebellion could freely sing the song about an uprising, disguised as a romantic song about a love lost. This song has also been covered, in a wide variety of styles, by Ella Fitzgerald, Ray Charles, Bing Crosby, Bobby Darin, Jerry Lee Lewis, The Ventures and others.

Suggested Grade Levels: 2nd-5th

READY . . . (Targets)

- AB Form ("The FORM of a piece of music is how the large sections of the piece are organized")
- Triple Meter ("Meter is how the beats are organized into sets. Duple Meter has sets of two beats, while Triple Meter has beats grouped into sets of three.")

SET . . . (Stuff you're gonna need!)

- Downloadable Visuals and Audio: Title Page, Melody Notation, Perf/Acc mp3s
- A chair for the leader – who is You! This works much better for the children if they are also in chairs, or on risers. If no chairs are available, simply have the children stand tall and stay upright for the "stand up" parts and hunker down lower, with hands on knees, for the "sit down" parts.

GO! . . . (Instructional Sequence)

First Experience (Meter Exploration):

1. Display the Song Title visual.
2. Begin the lesson with children seated. Instruct them to close their eyes while you sing or play the song for them. Have them decide how many LARGE sections they believe are in this song. Did they hear one, two or three large sections? When done singing, have children show their answers with numbers of fingers held up.
3. When the correct answer is discerned (2 large sections), ask the children whether the melodies of the two large sections were the same or different. Sing again, if needed, to determine the answer (different). Remind the students that the form label for a song with two different melody sections is AB Form.
4. Focus next on the triple meter feel of the piece. Instruct children to gently sway back and forth with you (to the downbeats of the song) while singing.
5. Continue by adding the following body percussion patterns while singing the song:
 - a. A Section – Pat/Clap/Clap (with a gentle sway from side-to-side)
 - b. B Section – Pat/Clap/Snap
6. Note: There are often a few children that are upset because they cannot snap, so I reassure them there is no need to worry – they can substitute “Chicken Beaks” (tapping fingers of both hands against both thumbs) and the day will not be ruined! 😊

Second Experience (Focus on “B” – Pointing):

Using the accompaniment track, sing the song once again, instructing children to use the pointer finger of their dominant hand to point (gracefully and musically!) at the large letter “B” in the PPT, each time they sing a word that starts with “B.”

Third Experience (Focus on “B” – Arms Up & Down):

Again using the accompaniment track, focus on the words that start with “B” and sing the song again. On the words that start with “B”, have the children raise their arms in the air on the first “B” word, and lower them on the second, raising them on the third and so on until the end of the song. If done properly, arms should be down at the end of the piece. Alert them to the challenging part where the lyrics are “Bring back my bonnie” and the arms move up and down quickly! (In my room we like to add a silly moment before we sing, asking children to do a quick “armpit check” to make sure things “smell like roses” before we do all the arm lifting. Of course, if this were to cause any problems with specific children, certainly ignore this silly addition.)

Fourth Experience (Focus on “B” – Stand & Sit):

(Refer to the “SET” section at the beginning of this plan for dealing with the issues of having chairs or no chairs for this lesson.) Using the audio track instruct the children to stand up on the first “B” word, sit down on the next, and so on until the end of the song. If done correctly, all children will be seated at the end. Be ready for gales of laughter after this last experience!

- I must share a “classroom funny” with you, that happened a few years ago in my music room. We were doing this lesson and the children were seated on risers. As the students were filing out at the end of the lesson, one of the 2nd grade boys came up to me and

asked if he could tell me something funny. Well, we are always up for some humor in the music room, so I told to please share his story with me. He said that during the final part of the song he got too excited, sat down too hard on the risers and “busted his bootie.” And . . . wait for it . . . he wanted to rename the song “Bring Back My Bootie to Me!” (Is there anything more fun than teaching elementary music???) 😊)

On Stage! 🎬

This 3-level sequence of activities (see below) is a fun ice-breaker for the student performers to do with their families in a concert, a PTA meeting or in an Open House Informance setting! Perhaps feature two or three student “leaders” in chairs near the front of the stage. Note: In family programs, we do not always do the meter/body percussion segment, although if you have enough time, it is well-received. This works best when done acapella, rather than using the accompaniment tracks.

7. Level 1: Sing, with all audience members pointing to the large, fancy “Letter B” projected on the screen. If you are not projecting, it’s fun to have a child come out on the front of the stage holding a large, funky, poster board letter “B”.
8. Level 2: Sing, with arms going up and then down on all words that start with “B.”
9. Level 3: Sing, standing up/sitting down on each consecutive word that starts with “B” (Be sure to warn the audience not to “miss their chairs” when sitting down – Ack!)



Pointing on each “B” word



Arms up/Down on each “B” word



Stand/Sit on each “B” Word



Last B word is a Booty Buster!

8. Six Blue Pigeons

4 bar intro

Traditional

Six blue pi-geons sit - ting on the wall. Six blue pi - geons

sit - ting on the wall. One flew a - way! Wah!

- | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|--|
| 2. Five blue pigeons... | 5. Two blue pigeons... | Spoken: "Wait! I think I hear one pigeon flying back to us!" |
| 3. Four blue pigeons... | 6. One blue pigeon... | |
| 4. Three blue pigeons... | 7. No blue pigeons... | |

Six Blue Pigeons

Who flew the coop?

Suggested Grade Levels: K - 1st

READY . . . (Targets)

- Tuneful Singing
- Melodic Direction
 - ♦ Notes can go up, down or repeat
- Melodic Intervals
 - ♦ Notes can move in steps, skips or repeated notes

SET . . . (Stuff you're gonna need!)

- Downloadable Visuals and Audio: Title Page, Fun Facts, Melody Notation, Pigeon Cards and Badges, Perf/Acc mp3s
- "Pigeons Packs" (Sets of six small pigeon picture cards for students to use as they sing the song. For storage of the individual sets of six cards I use library pockets, which can be purchased at school supply stores. Or they can simply be paper clipped together in sets of six.) Consider adding a pigeon picture on the library pockets and laminating them for durability.
- A harmonic instrument for accompaniment, if desired. Guitar, ukulele or autoharp work well.
- A "wall" for six pigeons to sit upon. This could be a set of risers, or simply six chairs lined up.
- (Optional) Pigeon necklace-type signs for the six children who will be dramatizing the song. I print the pigeon pictures and place them on colorful pieces of cardstock (approx. 6" wide and 4" tall), with a piece of yarn to make them wearable around the children's necks. Punch holes in the upper right and left side of the pigeon signs through which to tie the yarn, creating a neckstrap. We provided "hole punch guide dots" for you on the cards. Be sure to use a safe length of yarn. (An alternative would be to make pigeon headbands, instead of cardstock necklaces.)
- This lesson is most easily presented if children are seated on the floor, rather than in chairs.

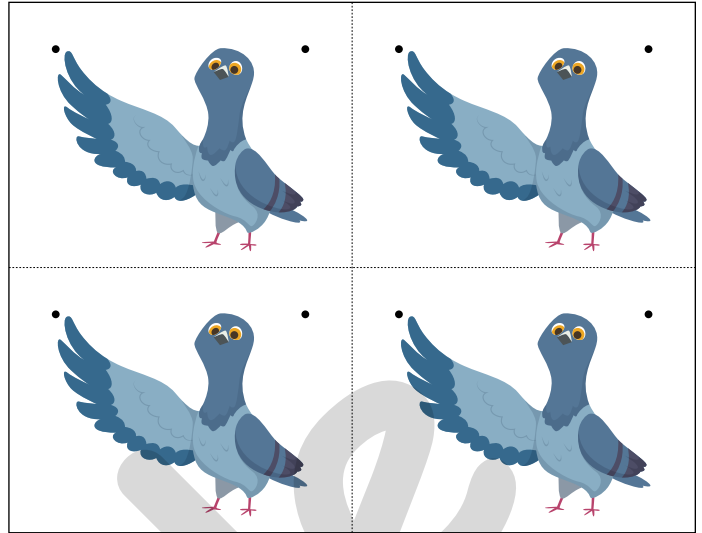
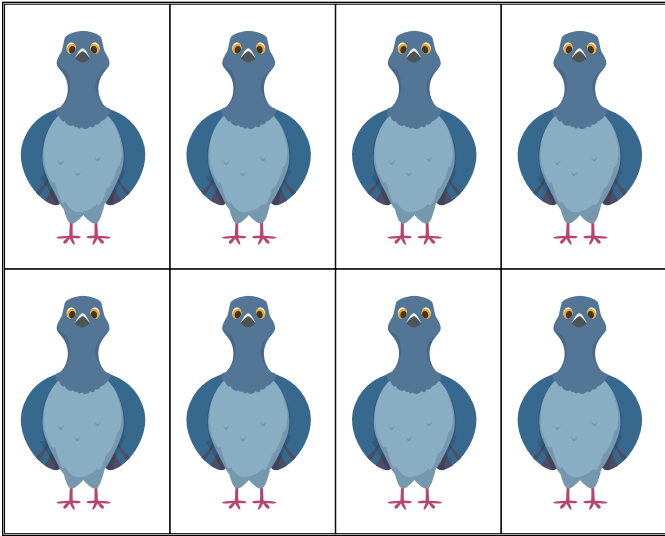
GO! . . . (Instructional Sequence)

1. Display title slide and ask children if they have seen any of the types of birds called pigeons.
2. Display the Fun Facts about Pigeons slide and read through them with the children.
3. Ask the children to close their eyes while you put a new song in their ears. Tell them that you will have some questions for them about what happened in the song. Sing Six Blue Pigeons to the children, then ask the following questions:
 - a. How many pigeons were in this song?
 - b. What color were these pigeons?
 - c. Where were they sitting?
 - d. What did one pigeon do at the end of Verse 1?
4. Display the notation for the song and sing it slowly to the children, pointing to the note heads as you sing. Before you begin singing, ask the children to watch the noteheads (the circles on the music staff) and observe how they move up and down during the song.
 - a. This is not a note-reading exercise, but just an initial exposure to the look of notes on a staff for young children, and how they can move up, down or repeat.
5. Repeat the song and ask the students to point to the noteheads with you while singing.
6. There is a **spoken** interlude between each verse.
 - a. Teacher: "One flew away!"
 - b. Students: "Waaaaaaahhhhh!" (with students pretending to cry and rub eyes)
 - c. Teacher: "Then there were . . ." (resume singing with "Five blue pigeons . . .")
7. For the dramatization, choose six children to come to the front and be pigeons. Seat them in six chairs, or on a set of risers, and give them pigeon necklaces.
8. Designate a place in the classroom to where the student pigeons can fly away; perhaps a place in the room behind the singers, so they are hidden or partially hidden.
9. Distribute Pigeon Packs to the rest of the children and have them take out the six pigeon cards and place the empty library pocket behind them. They should then line up the six pigeon cards in front of them, in a single line if there's space.
10. As you sing each verse and a pigeon flies away, the students will put one of the cards behind them or off to one side of their legs.
11. Sing through the six verses, until all pigeons have flown away.
12. With a sad, slow feel, sing the next verse: "No blue pigeons, sitting on the wall . . . no blue pigeons sitting on the wall."
13. The teacher shouts excitedly: "Wait! I think I hear one pigeon flying back to us!" Cue one of the "hidden" pigeons to fly back. Wild applause ensues from the class!!! You can choose to make it the first pigeon that flew away, or the last pigeon, with other students returning in order.
14. Sing the song again until all six pigeons are back in place, ending with a resounding cheer or a round of applause, some hip-hip-hoorays, etc.! Ask pigeons to take a grand bow and invite all of the children to give themselves a big pat on the back for their fabulous singing and emotional performance!

Lesson Additions . . .

- Encourage the students to teach this song to friends or family members when they get home.
- It is also fun for the children to "perform" the piece at home, using six stuffed toys for the actors. They could revise the lyrics to "Six sweet critters" or "Six beanie babies" etc. 😊

Pigeon Reproducible Cards



Pigeon Facts Visual

Pigeon Facts

- Pigeons can recognize each letter of the human alphabet.
- Pigeons can fly up to 6,000 feet high!
- Pigeons are very social and live in groups of 20-30 birds.
- Many years ago, pigeons in New Zealand were used as mail carriers.
- Pigeons are very fast . . . A pigeon was recorded flying 95 miles per hour!

