

Violins Prepare Kids for Future Musicianship - and Much More!

Mrs. Anne Jacob, Director

Featuring the Kings Highway Rockin' Lion Cubs

Thursday, January 9, 2020 1:45-2:45 PM Tampa Convention Center Room 3

Developing good habits from the very first music experience is essential for future individual and ensemble musical excellence. "Violins Prepare Kids" is a unique step-by-step approach to developing routines for everything from opening cases to developing playing technique, ultimately resulting in well-behaved students prepared to fully engage and participate in future ensembles. Pre-K and Kindergarten "Kings Highway Rockin' Lion Cubs" will demonstrate their newfound skills in this session.

Why start so early?

- Young students are very receptive to new ideas (they are 4 or 5 years old so almost everything is new to them)
- The "Florida Early Learning and Developmental Standards ages 4-Kindergarten" <http://www.floel.org/standardsresource/> lists standards in 8 domains that are included in almost every violin lesson
- Sparks an interest in playing an instrument in future ensembles
- Proper behavior and attitude in an ensemble is just as important as knowing how to play your instrument

Developing Routines

Entering the Classroom

- Greet students as a class and wait until all students are quiet and calm in the hallway before inviting them into the classroom (I have a stop sign outside of my room so that the students know where to stop).
- Give students instruction on how to walk into the room and how and where to sit BEFORE they enter the room. (carpet squares, sit spots, or tape on the floor)
Example: "*When you walk into the room you will see circles on the floor. Safely and calmly find a blue or green circle and sit on it, crisscross applesauce, hands in your lap*" Later in the school year, ask students how they will sit, where they will sit, etc.
- Make sure to compliment students who are following instructions correctly and give very specific praise. With only 10 students in the group, I try to mention the name of every student with a positive compliment in the first few minutes of class.

Opening Songs

- Start with a short greeting song. Incorporate movement. Have students echo phrases and then sing the whole song together. Use the same song to start every class.
- Have a second song that is familiar to the students, such as "If You're Happy and You Know It" to get all students engaged and focused

Adding New Routines

- Teach one or two new components to the routine in each class, and involve the students in recalling what was learned in previous lessons
- Use nursery rhymes, puppets, and movement activities to reinforce music concepts

Violins Prepare Kids Lesson Routine

- **Enter and sit**
- **Opening song**
- **Fun song**
- **Open case**
- **Parts of violin**
- **Bow hold and blast off**
- **Rosin bow**
- **Stand up**
- **Pick up violin**
- **Play violin**
- **Place bow on floor**
- **Place violin in case**
- **Sit down**
- **Clean violin**
- **Close case**
- **Closing song**

Violins Prepare Kids

(to the tune of “Wheels on the Bus”)

Verse 1 [*Students open cases while singing*]

I undo the latch and open my case, open my case, open my case.
I undo the latch and open my case; I love my violin. *Spoken: “Clap, Clap, hands in your lap.”*

Verse 2 [*Students point to parts of violin while singing*]

Chinrest, bridge, and neck and scroll, neck and scroll, neck and scroll.
Chinrest, bridge, and neck and scroll, I love my violin. *Spoken: “Clap, Clap, hands in your lap.”*

Verse 3 [*Students pick up bows and put it on their right knee*]

Now it’s time to hold my bow, hold my bow, hold my bow.
Now it’s time to hold my bow, I love my violin.

or

Pinkie in the fish and thumb in the frog, thumb in the frog, thumb in the frog.
Pinkie in the fish and thumb in the frog, I love my violin.

[Students move bow like a rocket and land back on their knee]

Spoken: 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, 0, Blastoff!

Verse 4 [*rubber band and tape mini rosin to box violin for students to have better control*]

I put some rosin on my bow, on my bow, on my bow.
I put some rosin on my bow, I love my violin.

Verse 5 [*Students put bows on their heads to stand up - keeps bow from touching the floor*]

My bow’s on my head while I stand up, I stand up, I stand up.
My bow’s on my head while I stand up, I love my violin.

Verse 6 [*Students pick up violins while singing*]

Under the neck and on the button, on the button, on the button.
Under the neck and on the button, I love my violin.

Students move to playing position - use your own expertise for this part.

At this point, teach a short playing lesson - bowing open strings in various rhythm patterns, working on open string pieces, echo-playing open strings, etc. When finished playing, have students carefully place the bow on the floor, place the violin in the case, and then sit down.

Verse 7 [*Students clean the rosin off of their violin - sing this verse twice if needed*]

I clean, clean, clean my violin, violin, violin.
I clean, clean, clean my violin, I love my violin. *Spoken: “Clap, Clap, hands in your lap.”*

Verse 8 [*Students close cases while singing*]

I close my case and lock the latch, lock the latch, lock the latch.
I close my case and lock the latch; I love my violin. *Spoken: “Clap, Clap, hands in your lap.”*

The First Lessons

(note: every lesson begins with the opening song; lessons may be repeated as many times as needed)

1. Teach opening song, size students for violin (write down name and violin size), if permitted, take a photo of each student holding their violin.

Tips: Have students compare sizes of violins and allow them to try each size

The classroom teacher can help with names

Make sure that you can pronounce each child's name correctly

2. Introduce box violin. Compare to real violin. Teach chinrest and scroll. Distribute box violins. Practice pointing to chinrest or scroll and "Clap, Clap, hands in your lap" several times. Practice moving box violins "up and down" using high and low voices. End class with the "ABC" song or another familiar nursery rhyme.

Tips: Ask students what each violin is made out of. Let each student answer.

Students practice standing up without touching or stepping on their box violin.

Students pick up the box violins from a standing position.

3. Teach bridge and neck. Review chinrest and scroll. Show students the bridge on a real violin and that the bridge can fall down if they are not careful. With students standing and holding their box violin like a tray in front of them, place a block, lid from mini rosin, or another small object on the box violin. Challenge students to move the violin up and down without the object falling off. Teach students to sing "London Bridge" at the end of class.

Tips: Assure students that it is ok if it falls, this is why we practice.

Let students discover that it is easier to keep the object in place if they move slowly.

When teaching "London Bridge" for the first time, have students hold their arms up in front of them and bring their hands down on the word "lady." Once they can do this alone, have them do it with a partner. Caution: Do not attempt to play the game yet!

4. Teach the song verse 2 (Chinrest, bridge...) with students pointing to each part of the box violin

Teach the game "London Bridge" with students in groups of 3 or 4. Emphasize safety.

5. Show students the "button" on a real violin and ask them to find where that is on their box violin. Review verse 2 and then teach verse 6 (Under the neck...)

Teach students your process for having them hold their box violin in playing position.

6. Teach pencil bow hold and the song verse 3 (Bow hold...)

Count down from 10 and "blast off." Teach the song "Farmer in the Dell" and play the game.

7. Review pencil bow hold and teach song verse 5 (My bow's on my head...). Practice moving the pencil bow up and down, using high and low voices. Play "Farmer in the Dell" or "London Bridge."

8. Discuss rosin and show students a real violin bow. Teach the stick and the hair, and emphasize importance of not touching the hair. Allow them to touch hair from a broken bow to satisfy their curiosity about it.

9. Prepare one box violin with a mini rosin. Distribute box violins and pencil bows. Go through routine with verses 2, 3, 5, and 6. Challenge students to once again balance an object while moving the violin up and down, or holding it in playing position while maintaining their pencil bow hold. While they are doing this, work with one student at a time with the real bow on the mini rosin.

10. Have one real violin of each size and your list of student violin sizes. Distribute box violins and challenge students to hold the box violin in playing position without using their hands. They may also practice moving it up and down and side to side. While they are practicing, call one student at a time up to teach them to hold the real violin.

11. Have student violin cases labeled with their names on painter's tape, color-coded by class. When students enter, ask them to find their name on the violin and sit crisscross applesauce without touching the violin. Show students the latches on a case and how they open. Guide students in opening the cases and teach song verse 1 (I undo the latch...). With violins in the open cases, ask students to name and gently touch parts of the violin and to count the strings. Teach song verse 8 (I close my case...).

Tips: Emphasize to walk around, not over the cases and to never sit or step on a case.

Remind students about the delicate bridge.

12. Review opening cases (verse 1) and have students practice standing up very slowly and carefully without touching their case or their violin. Guide students in picking up their violin "Under the neck and on the button." Have the lid from the mini-rosin or a lightweight block for students to balance while moving the violin up and down and side to side. Guide students in gently placing their violin back in the case without pushing on it and then sitting down without touching the case or the violin. Teach verse 7 (I clean...) Review verse 8.

13. Begin establishing the routine with verses 1, 2, and 6. Have students "practice" gently pointing to and counting (plucking) each string with their right hand. Work with each student to get correct playing position while they are practicing. End with verses 7 and 8. *Repeat this lesson several times in a row until most of the students are comfortable holding their violins. This will differ by class.

14. Review pencil bow hold. Have students practice moving pencil bows up and down, landing on their knee. Show students the tip and the frog and remind them to keep the tip up. Distribute bows by "trading" each pencil for a bow, forming bow hold with each student individually and having them continue practicing up and down with the real bow. Once all students have a bow, have them stand up with bows on their head (verse 5).

15. Prepare box violins with mini rosin. Review pencil bow hold. Distribute box violins and ask students to identify what is different - the rosin. Distribute bows for students to place on their knee. While seated, have students pick up their box violin and move the bow down and up on the rosin. While they are practicing, go to each student and help them guide the bow all the way to the tip and to the frog. Teach verse 4 (I put some rosin...).

16. Have violins, box violins, and bows set up when students arrive. Go through the entire routine, step by step. Gradually increase playing skills with each new lesson.