

MUSIC
for
MIDDLE GRADE CHILDREN

AN ABSTRACT
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by
Virginia Butler
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The arts in the school of today, are important in a well-rounded curriculum dedicated to the purpose of a democratic way of life. Music, as an art, serves the needs of elementary education in our society. It is essential to the full development of children.

The teacher must work creatively to help his children draw their own music from themselves. Music is important because it is a representative of goodness in the world. Music is important because the love of it enables people to lead a fuller and more appreciative life. Music is a creative medium. Allowing self expression through music and learning about the music of all peoples in the public school may create the better human relationships and understandings so important to current world civilization.

Elementary music has always depended in large measure on the classroom teacher for implementation. Many classroom teachers have been excellent teachers of music but some have always side stepped it. Reasons for this attitude seem to fall into certain categories.

Teacher One feels helpless in using his own singing voice. Teacher Two disliked his own childhood school music. Teacher Three needs to become better organized. Teacher Four is lacking in enthusiasm himself. Teacher Five lacks the skills necessary to feel secure with the technical side of music, and Teacher Six, a beginner, needs time to try things out with his class.

These six teachers feel inadequate in the area of music because of attitudes toward this particular art. Attitudes can be changed, and teachers, whose primary job it is to recognize and alter negative attitudes towards skill development, should be challenged to recognize and alter their own negative attitudes or mental blocks toward music.

There are many classroom teachers who enjoy teaching music. It is an area in which they have personal skills and self confidence. As one of these people, this writer has used many interesting music activities with middle grade children. Some of these activities are community type singing, harmonizing rounds, holding chord roots, work with rhythms, folk dances, singing games, making instruments, demonstrations by music people, and learning to play easy instruments such as the tonette.

Although most teachers' manuals published with the music books for elementary schools have typical lesson plans for specific material, many classroom teachers seem unable to follow them successfully. This study describes possible activities and includes four sample lessons used successfully by the writer. These lessons are planned for (1) teaching a song from a record, (2) conducting a creative rhythms lesson, (3) presenting round and canon singing, and (4) introducing note reading.

Music's true values determine the objectives that should be the basis of a good music program. As a result of the material presented in the paper, aims and objectives are presented as a summary of all work in music with children.