

WS19 5-7th grade Lesson Plan

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WoodSongs Classroom Project

Title: Mousie HiWay

Subject: Folk Music, Bluegrass and Community

Length of Lesson: May vary depending on class times and Project Design

Introduction and Overview: Mousie HiWay is the story of Banjo Mouse and his journey through the Appalachian Mountains. Banjo Mouse didn't have a home of his own, yet he was blessed with plenty of friends throughout his journey, because he knew so many songs on his banjo. This aspect of the story will allow the children to understand and make connections to the way that music encourages a sense of family, friendship, and togetherness. It's fun! Students will also realize that it takes cooperation to make an entire band, and that through friendship, this is possible. Banjo Mouse and the friends that join him along the way form the Mousie HiWay Band. Banjo Mouse meets several friends along his journey through the Appalachian Mountains. Among these friends are, Fiddle Fox, Doggy Dobro, Mando Moose, Kitty Guitar, and Little Bitty Beaver.

Goals

- Students will understand how music brings us together and creates friendships, and is fun!
- Students will understand the history of Bill Monroe, Bluegrass Music, Kentucky and Appalachia
- Students will understand the instruments featured and the history of them, along with the distinct sounds of each instrument.
- Activities may vary depending on grade level and teacher modifications.

Activity 1:

Begin the lesson with a discussion. Ask them questions to access prior knowledge. For example, ask the students what they know about the banjo. Other questions may include, "What is your favorite instrument?" "Do you know what Bluegrass music is?" "Do you play a musical instrument?" "Do you know what the word Appalachia means?" Asking questions to access prior knowledge, will encourage the students to make connections to the story as you read. Then, read the story to your class and show the pictures to accompany each page. Let the students know that after you have read the story, there will be time to ask questions and discuss it. As part of the discussion, ask students how they feel Banjo Mouse brought the band together by playing his banjo. Also, being to discuss the various instruments in the story, and ask the students if they are familiar with the sounds.

Activity 2:

Ask the students to write a poem based upon the Mousie HiWay story. Encourage the students to use different characters than in Mousie HiWay, but have them think about the way that Banjo Mouse met all of his friends along the way. Encourage them to assemble a band, in which they all must work together to perform. Encourage descriptive language, and also, possibly making this a ballad, which will reflect more of the Appalachian connection. This activity will encourage creativity. It also emphasizes the importance of working together, the way that music brings us together, and the way that music shares a message.

Activity 3:

This activity will include an introduction discussion as well. Ask them questions about the instruments featured in the story. Talk to the students about Bill Monroe, explain that he helped create Bluegrass music from his home in Kentucky, and from his very own front porch! Then, play

a Bill Monroe song. Have students write a one-two page paper, in which they research and write about Bill Monroe and the history of Bluegrass music. The paper should also include at least reliable sources. This will allow students to also make the distinction of designing projects with different intention. Meaning, to design a paper for the purpose of sharing information versus writing a song/poem to relay a message.

Activity 4:

Students to design their own artistic project of the message featured in Mousie HiWay. Encourage the students to feature a front porch, mountains, and their family or friends that they would want to share music with. The medium of the project may be drawing, painting, photography, media design, or other options that your class has been working on or that they wish to use to design this project.

For all artistic aspects involved, let the students know their work will be displayed in the hallway or in the classroom, which will encourage them to do their very best work. Most importantly, have fun and allow them to really take in the message that music encourages togetherness, as referenced by the way Banjo Mouse and his friends form the Mousie HiWay Band.

Connection to Standards:

- Through their use of elements and structures of music, creators and performers provide clues to their expressive intent.
- Creating: Conceiving and developing new artistic ideas and work
- Realizing artistic ideas and work through interpretation and presentation
- Synthesize and relate knowledge and personal experiences to make art.

Do you know how to read notes? It's not hard to learn and music notes let you see exactly what the melody is. The chords (the letters above the music) help you play along on any instrument: guitars, banjos, even a piano.

The notes and chords to "Mousie HiWay"

The image displays the musical notation for the song "Mousie HiWay". It consists of four staves of music, each with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 2/4 time signature. The notes are written on a five-line staff, and the lyrics are written below the notes. Above the notes, the chords are indicated by letters: G, C, D, and G. The lyrics are: "Up and down the Mou-sie high-way, Blue Moon Moun-tain here we go. Up and down the Mou-sie high-way, coun-ty line not far to go. Up,— down the Mou-sie high-way, sing-ing eve-ry song we know. Friend-ly peo-ple wav-ing my way, play-ing on—that old ban-jo."

Up and down the Mou-sie high-way, Blue Moon Moun-tain here we go.

Up and down the Mou-sie high-way, coun-ty line not far to go.

Up,— down the Mou-sie high-way, sing-ing eve-ry song we know.

Friend-ly peo-ple wav-ing my way, play-ing on—that old ban-jo.

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