

# WS19 K-4<sup>th</sup> grade Lesson Plan



April Ballard, M.Ed, BS

**Title: Mousie HiWay**

**Subject: Folk Music, Bluegrass and Community**

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

**Grade Level: K-4th**

## **Introduction:**

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. His music brings people together. 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 Mouse HiWay Band. Banjo Mouse meets several friends along his journey through the Appalachian Mountains: Fiddle Fox, Doggy Dobro, Mando Moose, Kitty Guitar, and Little Bitty Beaver.

## **Goals:**

- Students will understand the way that music brings us together and creates friendships, and is fun!
- Students will understand the history of Bill Monroe, Bluegrass Music, and Appalachia
- Students will understand the instruments featured and the history of them
- Activities may vary depending on grade level and teacher modifications

## **Activity 1:**

Begin by gathering students to sit in a circle. Then, 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.

## **Activity 2:**

Ask the students to draw a picture of a band that they imagine. 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. This activity will encourage creative thinking, and also emphasize the importance of working together and the way that music brings people together. Music offers a sense of community.

**Activity 3:**

Have students sit in a circle again, I find this encourages good discussion, and ask them questions about the instruments featured in the story. Then, after discussing them, talk to the students about Bill Monroe. Explain to them that he helped create Bluegrass music from his home in Kentucky, and from his very own front porch! Then, play a Bill Monroe song, and let them know they can dance if they choose! They can tap their feet, clap their hands, or just listen if they want. This should likely be an activity where students have a limit on the space to ensure it remains calm and they are able to really hear the sounds of the instruments.

**Activity 4:**

The final activity is for students to draw their own photos of the instruments featured in Mousie HiWay. Also, encourage the students to feature a front porch, mountains, and their family or friends that they would want to create and share music with, and that are special to them.

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. Have fun and allow them to really take in the message that music encourages friendship, as referenced by the way Banjo Mouse forms the Mousie HiWay Band.

**Connection to Standards:**

- Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work
- Develop and refine artistic technique and work for presentation
- Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work
- Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding
- Convey meaning through the presentation **of artistic work.**

*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"

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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