Integrating

US and World Folk Songs

into the Elementary Curriculum

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Introduction to Folk Songs

Folk songs are simple songs that generations have sung. They express many different emotions and recall many different aspects of the common person’s life—work, play, love, sorrow, even death. There are folksongs about animals and birds. There are songs that integrate games (singing games). There are spirituals that speak of hope and faith.

These songs are the non-commercial popular music of the past. Many have only recently been written down. Because of this, the tunes for some have been sung in a variety of different ways in different parts of the country or by different ethnic groups or individuals. They are easy to sing by groups of people, bringing together communities.
Sometimes the original meaning of the songs has been lost as the years have passed, but the songs remain favorites because of the clever combination of words, or their lively or melancholy tune. Each new generation contributes its own meaning to these historical treasures.

Hungarian composer and music educator Zoltan Kodaly collected folk songs from the country villages of his homeland. He recommended that the folk songs of one’s own country be an integral part of music education for the children of that country.

“Singing games and tunes... will all through their lives warm some small recess of their souls.” (Kodaly, pg. 95)

“No teacher can do without a thorough knowledge of [the magic kaleidoscope of] these [singing] games. Anyone who did not take part in them as a child will bear the traces of his sad childhood till the day of his death.” (Ibid., pg. 48)

Frequently these songs are sung on the playground as a game is played. They may be used by teachers as icebreakers or to reward work well-done. Folk songs can be easily integrated into social studies units or presented in programs for family and friends. The teacher needs to join in with a playful spirit and enjoy the singing, the jumping, the running, or other movement (e.g., “Rig a Jig Jig and Away we go!”).

Besides the fun, these songs and the accompanying games and movement are very useful in helping children develop social skills.

Introduction to the Study of World Songs

The act of singing knows no boundaries; people sing all around the world. Through singing the songs of people of other cultures, a child’s worldview is expanded and he catches a glimpse of what life is like for people from every part of Planet Earth.

One of the best ways to learn about people from around the world is to get acquainted with their music. Focusing solely on a Euro-classical music curriculum denies the value of the music of other cultures. Recognizing the value of each culture is like showing appreciation for the various instruments in a symphony orchestra. Each instrument retains its uniqueness while contributing to the overall beauty of the performance.

Despite our differences, our Creator God has created us equally. It doesn’t matter where we live—we all need love and acceptance. Until Jesus returns, He asks us to be His hands, His face, and feet in serving those who hurt. In the words of the old children’s song:

“Jesus loves the little children,
All the children of the world.
Red and yellow, black and white,
All are precious in his sight.
Jesus loves the little children of the world.”

C. Herbert Woolston

This take-home packet includes a variety of folk songs from the peoples within North America as well as from around the world. More information about this song collection and many other free downloadable materials may be found at http://www.can-do-music.com/ and http://circle.adventist.org/ go to “music”
Achim Baram (Cold Morning Wind)

Korean Folk Song

Sei! Sei! Sei! Achim baram chan baram ae

Goori goori goori goori ga-wee ba-wee bo!

Words:
SEI SEI SEI! (a rhythmic introduction with no actual meaning)
Achim baram chan baram ae (Cold morning wind.)
Ulgo ganun jau girogi (Seagull crying in the morning.)
Uri sungseng gye shiljogae (While our teachers are staying here)
Upso hanjang so juseyo (Write him/her a postcard.)
Hahjang malgo doo jangyo (Not one but two postcards.)
Goori goori goori goori (rolling rolling rolling rolling)
Gawee bawee bo! (rock, scissors, paper.)

This is a singing game based on the "Rock Paper Scissors" game.
On the "Sei" part, the partners clap each others' hands or hold each others' hands bouncing them up and down.
On the singing section (1st verse) the student do a clap/pat pattern (Hot Cross Buns style).
On the "goori" section, they roll hands in circles around each other.
On the final word "bo!" they extend their hand in either rock, paper or scissors.
In Korea the loser bends his/her head foward and winner tape the loser's neck with a finger.
The winner then opens a hand to show five separate fingers, and the loser must guess which finger tapped him.
Alabama Gal

Come through n’ a hurry, Come through n’ a hurry,
Come through n’ a hurry, Al - a - bam - a gal.

2. I don’t know how, how (X3)... Alabama gal.
3. I showed you how, how, (X3)... Alabama gal.
4. Ain’t I rock candy (X3)... Alabama gal.

Participants stand in two lines, facing their partners. For the first verse the head couple joins hands and sashays (gallups sideways) down between the lines and back up to the top. For the second verse, the head couple swing each other 1 1/2 times, then “weave” down the opposite line. When they reach the foot of the lines, they again swing each other 1 1/2 times, ending on the same side they started out on (except at the foot.) To weave is to swing the person in the opposite line, then swing your partner, then the next person in the opposite line, then your partner, and so on down the line with that pattern.
Al Citron

Mexican Singing Game

Al ci-tron de un fan-dan-go San-go,

san-go sa-ba-re Sa-ba-re de

la ron-de-la Con-su tri-ki, tri-ki-tron.

Participants sit or kneel in a circle on the floor, each with a wooden stick or block in front of him or her.

On the first beat of each measure, the stick is tapped on the floor near the neighbor on the right. On the next beat, it is passed on. This pattern continues until the words "triki, triki, tron". The sticks are held and knocked on the ground to the right and left, then passed.

Aquaqua Del-a Omar

Israeli song game

A-qua-qua del-a o-mar, qua, qua, qua.

Del si ma tri-co tri-co tri-co Ira. Va
Children sit in a circle. Each has their left palm facing up, their right palm facing down. The leader starts by patting once (with her right palm) the hand turned up belonging to the person on her right. The second person responds by patting her neighbor’s turned up hand once. So the gentle pat continues around the circle on the beat while the song is being sung. At the last phrase of the song, when the number’s are spoken, if the pat is received on #5, then that person is “out”. If the upturned hand is removed before the pat on #5 can be given, then the giver is “out”. The game continues until everyone is out. A second and even a third circle can be started by those that are out!

**Bow, Belinda**

American Folk Song

1. Bow, bow, bow, Belinda, Bow, bow, bow, Belinda,

2. Right hand round, bow Belinda... Early in the morning.
3. Left hand round, bow Belinda... Early in the morning.
4. Both hands round, bow Belinda... Early in the morning.
5. Back to back, bow Belinda... Early in the morning.
6. Promenade round, bow Belinda... Early in the morning.
7. Through the tunnel, bow Belinda... Early in the morning.

*In this song "bow" rhymes with "low." Also "early" is pronounced "ear-lye".*

Participants form two lines facing partners, approximately 5-6' apart. The head couple and the foot couple will interact for the first 3 verses with the person on the opposite end and opposite side. One pair will approach each other between the lines, and do the action and as soon as they have retreated to their original place in the line, the other pair will do the same action. "Bow" means to bow to the other person. "Right hand round" and "left hand round" mean to swing the person back toward their own spot in the line. "Both hands round" is a double hand swing. "Back to back"—they fold their arms across their chest and approach the other person, loop behind them (still facing the opposite end), then back up to their original spot. To "promenade", partners in the line step next to each other, join hands, then follow the head couple around to the right. When the head couple reaches the spot where the foot of the line was, they form a tunnel by joining hands and raising them high for the other pairs to go under. The second pair leads the way up to the top of the line, becoming the new head couple.
Charlie over the Ocean

Leader sings first, then group echoes

Charlie over the ocean. Charlie over the sea.

Charlie caught a blackbird. Can't catch me.

Participants stand in a loose, unconnected circle. The leader "Charlie" walks around the circle as he leads the "call and response" song. (The leader sings the first phrase, then the circle echoes. The leader sings the second phrase, then the circle echoes, etc.) At the words "Can't catch me", the leader taps someone in the circle on the shoulder, then runs around the circle to try to get back to that spot before being caught by the person he tagged. If he gets tagged, then the new person is "Charlie". If not, then he is "Charlie" again. (I usually make those who have been tagged sit in their place or in some other way make it obvious they have had a turn. Everyone will want a turn!)

Coulter's Candy

Scottish folk song

Allly bally, ally bally bee, Sittin' on your mammy's knee,

Greetin' fur anither bawbee Tae buy mair Coulter's candy.

1. Mammy, gie me ma thrifty doon,
   Here's auld Coulter comin' roon,
   Wi' a basket on his croon,
   Sellin' Coulter's candy.
   
   CHORUS

   Meanings of some of the words:
   Mammy - mother or grandmother
   gie - give
   ma - my
   greetin' - cryin'
   thrifty - bank
   anither - another
   doon - down
   bawbee - coin
   auld - old
   tae - to, too
   mair - more
   roon - round
   sae - so
   whit - what
   puri - poor
   dae - do
   twae - two

2. Little Annie's greetin', tae.
   Sae whith can her puri Mammy dae,
   But gie them a penny 'tween them twae
   Tae buy mair Coulter's candy.
   
   CHORUS
Cuckoo
Garman Round

One bright and sunny morning I walked through the forest. When

suddenly I heard a soft and faint cuckoo. Cuckoo, cuckoo,

I heard a faint cuckoo, Cuckoo, cuckoo, I heard a faint cuckoo.

Participants stand in a circle holding hands. Circle walks right on the first phrase, then left on the second phrase. On the third phrase all take one step toward the center on first "cuckoo", raising their joined hands. On the second "cuckoo" they step back, lowering their hands. This action is repeated on the two "cuckoos" in the fourth phrase.

Come Back Home, My Little Chicks
Hungarian Chase Game
Adapted by Jill Trinket

"Come back home, my little chicks." "We won't come!" "Why not?" "We're afraid." "Of what?"

"Of the wolf!" "Where's he hiding?" "In the woods." "What's he doing?"

"Washing." "What's he drying his face on?" "The kitty cat's tail!"
Participants form a circle, hands joined.

As the song begins, the circle walks the beat answering the questions of Mother Hen or Father Rooster (inside the circle). The wolf lurks outside the circle.

At the end of the song, the chicks let go of hands and hold their arms and hands tightly to their body to allow the hen/rooster and wolf to freely move between them, in and out of the circle. The wolf tries to catch the hen/rooster. Both choose new children to take their places.

Einini (Little birds)

Ay-neee-nee ay-neee-nee, cuh-duh-lee-ghee, cuh-duh-lee-ghee Ay-

Ay-neee-nee ay-neee-nee, cuh-duh-lee-ghee, cuh-duh-lee-ghee. Cuh-duh-

lee-ghee, cuh-duh-lee-ghee kuhsh uh kly-mwih kuhsh uh kly-mwih cuh-duh-

lee-ghee, cuh duh-lee ghee kuhsh uh kly-mwih kuhsh uh kly-mwih.

Translation:
Little birds, little birds, go to sleep, go to sleep (2X)  
Go to sleep, go to sleep by the fence outside, by the fence outside.

The words are spelled phonetically for easier pronunciation! Roll the "r" slightly. "d" is almost a "th" sound. "ch" is slightly gutteral.
Epo I Tai Tai E (I Will Be Happy)

Maori folk song (New Zealand)

This is a game to be played with sticks. Participants team up with a partner facing each other and each has one stick.

Measure 1: kneeling low, tap own stick on floor X2, tap stick on partner's stick X2
Measure 2: gently lay stick on partner's shoulder
Measure 3: tap own stick on floor X2, tap stick on partner's stick X2
Measure 4: gently lay stick on partner's shoulder
Measure 5: tap own stick on floor X2, tap stick on partner's stick X2
Measure 6: tap own stick on floor X2, kneeling high, with sticks overhead, tap stick on partner's stick X2
Measure 7: kneeling low, tap own stick on floor X2, kneeling high, with sticks overhead, tap stick on partner's stick X2
Measure 8: gently lay stick on partner's shoulder

Going Over the Sea

Canadian Folk Song

When I was one I ate a bun,

Going over the sea. I jumped aboard a

sailor man's ship, and the sailor man said to me, "Going
2. When I was two, I buckled my shoe...
3. When I was three, I banged my knee...
4. When I was four, I shut the door...
5. When I was five, I learned to dive...
6. When I was six, I picked up sticks... Etc.

Actions:
"one" - hold up correct number of fingers
"going" - shade eyes with hand
"jumped" - jump once in place
"sailorman said" - hands on hips
"over" - Swoop hand up
"under" - Swoop hand down
"attention" - stand erect with arms at sides
"soldier" - salute with right hand
"one, two, three" - step in place three times

Iroquois Lullaby

Canada (Iroquois)

Ho, ho____ wata-nay, Ho, ho____ wata-nay,

Ho, ho____ wata-nay, Ki-yo-ke-na, ki-yo-ke-na.

Translation: Sleep, sleep, little one. Now go to sleep.
The Jolly Miller

American Children's Singing Game

Therewasajollymillerandhelivedbyhimself,Whenthewheelwentroundhemadhiswealth.With
onehandinhispocketandtheotherinhisbag,Asthewheelwentroundhemadhisgrab.

There needs to be an uneven number of participants. The group divides into pairs with one person left over to be the "miller". The partners join hands and form a ring around the miller. All sing the verse, walking around in a circle, suggesting the mill wheel. At the end of the verse, every inside partner steps quickly forward and catches the outside partner of the pair in front. While this is going on, however, the miller tries to seize one of the outside ring and get a partner for himself. This enables him to join the ring. The one child left without a partner becomes the new miller and the game continues.

Jump, Jim Joe

Children's singing game

Jump, jump, jump, Jim Joe. Shake your head and nod your head and tap your toe.

Round, round, and round we go, Now we'll

find another partner and we'll jump Jim Joe.

The actions of the song can be done in many ways. It can be done as a whole group with the whole group circling on the words "round, round". Or it can be done with one pair starting in the middle and then each partner in the first pair finding a new partner until all are participating. Or you can start right out with everyone paired up and just switch partners each time. I have even done it with children doing the actions alone, changing the words to "Now we'll do it again, we'll jump Jim Joe."
Kaeru No Uta (Frog Song)

Japanese folk song

Translation:
The song of the frog I can hear: Gwa gwa gwa gwa Gwa Gero gero gero gero gwa gwa gwa gwa.

This song is a round for four groups. Each group comes in when the previous group has gotten two measures ahead.

Kookaburra

Australian folk song

2. Kookaburra sits in the old gum tree,
Eating all the gumdrops he can see,
Stop, kookaburra, stop, kookaburra,
Leave some there for me.

This song is a round that may be sung in four groups. Each group waits until the previous group gets two measures into the song, then they begin.
Little Frogs (Sma Grodorna)

Action Song from Sweden

The little frogs, the little frogs are lots of fun to watch. The

little frogs, the little frogs are lots of fun to watch.

2. No ear, no ears, (flap hands by ears) No tails have they, (flap hands behind back) Repeat.

3. Kou-ack-ack-ack, kou-ack-ack-ack... (Hands on hips, hop around the circle.)

My Owlet

Kiowa Indian lullaby

Ow-let, my ow-let is sleep-ing. Ow-let, my ow-let is sleep-ing.

Wee stars are twink-ling in the sky. Moth-er is sing-ing lull-a-by.
Rig a Jig

English folk song

As I was walking down the street, down the street, down the street, A
friend of mine I chanced to meet, Hi-ho, hi-ho__ hi-ho__

Rig-a-jig-jig and away we go, Away we go, away we go.

Rig-a-jig-jig and away we go, Hi-ho, hi-ho__ hi-ho__

Participants stand in a large, loose unconnected circle. One is chosen to be the leader. The leader skips around inside the circle during the first half of the song. At the words “friend of mine”, the leader chooses someone to shake hands with. At #9 the leader takes both hands of the new “friend”, seesaws the arms on “rig-a-jig”, and they sidestep together on “away we go”. This action is repeated.

The next time through the song, the original leader and the new friend split and each skip around inside the circle completing the same actions. Two couples will now “rig-a-jig” and “away we go”.

This pattern continues with the four choosing new participants as partners the third time, and eight choosing new participants as partners the fourth time. It should not take more than five turns to have a whole classroom involved (32 people!)
Sansa Kroma

African rock passing game

Participants are seated in a circle, knees touching. Each has a rock; there is one that is specially marked—perhaps striped, with the others plain.

The rocks are "walked" around the circle on the beat: grab, tap, tap-release, clap. The one with the striped rock at the end is out. Eventually a second group of those who have gone out can be started surrounding of those left in the original group.

Seminole Duck Dance

Seminole Indian song

He-hoh! We he-nuh we he-nuh he-yuh, We____ nuh he-yuh,

we he-huh he-yuh, We____ nuh he-yuh we he-nuh hey-yuh.
*Can use rattle or tambourine to keep time.

Participants form double circle, pairs of women (ducks) and pairs of men (hunters.) The pairs of ducks and hunters hold hands and face each other to form two halves of the circle.

On the introductory call, the teacher shakes the rattle while hunters form arches and ducks duck under one place forward in the circle (behind the pair of hunters whose arch was walked under, and facing the opposite direction.)

For the remainder of the song, ducks walk backwards in the circle and hunters walk forward to the beat.

The introductory call is used between singings, and the teacher may decide to do the "He-hoh!" part more than once before going on to the walking part of the song. Ducks advance with each "He-hoh!"

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**The Shoemaker**

Danish Folk Song

Wind it this way Wind it that way, pull, pull, tap, tap, tap. Wind it this way

Wind it that way, Pull, pull, tap, tap, tap. Tra la la la la la la

Tra la la la la la. Tra la la la la la la, Tra la la la la la la

Partipants stand in an unconnected circle.

On the first and second phrases students roll their hands for "wind", pull their clenched hands toward their chests for "pull" and pound fists on top of each other for "tap".

On the third phrase, students take four tiny steps toward the center of the circle and back again. This action is repeated on the fourth phrase.
Song of the Dragon

See the dragon come on a hundred legs! He brings us all good cheer;

him we do not fear! Long life and peace and joy, in the bright new year!

*Can use 20' brightly-colored, traditional paper Chinese dragon to weave around the room (carried by students). Another idea is to have long ribbons on sticks for 8-10 students.

Sarasponda


do-ray boom-day ret-set-set Ah-say, pa-say oh! Ah ah-say, pa-say oh!
Sorida

Folk Song from Zimbabwe

These words have no meaning. They are simply silly syllables to play a hand game. Two children are partners and put their hands together. On "so" they make a wide circular motion together. On "ri" they flip their hands over and pat their partners' hands once with the back of their hands followed by a regular forward pat on the syllable "da". "Ri" is always backward pat; "Da" is always forward pat.

Yo, Mamana, Yo

Lullaby from Mozambique

Translation: Oh, mama. Oh, mama. You left me alone, With my suffering.

Participants form a circle with joined hands and sway from right to left, with one swaying movement for every three beats.
**Zudio**

From the singing of Barbara Woodring, Chicago, Illinois

- **Here we go Zudio Zudio Zudio, Here we go Zudio, All night long.**
  
- **Step back Sally, Sally, Sally, Step back Sally, All night long.**
  
- **Go in' down the alley, alley, alley, Go in' down the alley, All night long.**

Participants form two equal lines, facing partners in the opposite line. For the first section of the song, the partners hold both hands and see-saw in time to the music. During the second section of the song, the partners take small jumps backward followed by a clap (away from each other) 6 times. On the words "Sally, Sally, Sally" and "Sally, All night long," for the third section of the song, the head pair sashays—or walks any other funny way they can come up with—down between the lines to the end. While they are walking the others side step slightly toward the head end. One person in the pair is designated the leader; the other of the pair must imitate the leader's movements while going "down the alley."

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**OTHER RESOURCES:**

*Songs of America.* Cedarmont Kids, $9.99 - 08441801492 CD


*Many and Great, V.I, & Sent by the Lord, V. 2,* Songs of the World Church, ed. & arr. Bell, GIA Publications, Inc. (CD also available)