

The P.R.I.Z.E. Method of Teaching French Songs and Stories

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Here are a few tips on ways to have fun and learn with music using French songs and stories. It is surPRIZEingly easy! "The song is just the beginning."

- P** **PROPS, PUPPETS and DRAMA** - make the words come alive visually
- R** **RHYTHM and MOVEMENT** - find the beat and move to it
- I** **IMAGINATION** - stimulate creativity, a sense of wonder and discovery
- Z** **ZIPPER SONGS** - write new songs by adding variations to those you know
- E** **ECHO - CALL AND RESPONSE** - the easiest way to teach a song

Try these ideas with any song, story, or poem!

Props, Puppets and Drama

- Props enhance the visual impact, add a sense of fun and comedy, reduce the inhibitions of the teacher and the children and increase comprehension of the words. Make pizza in class so that the children learn all the ingredients listed in *Je suis une pizza*.
- A felt board with felt figures or stick puppets with paper figures can be used to animate a story or song. For example, **le petit poisson** est mangé par **une belle pieuvre**, qui est mangée par **un barracude**, qui est mangé par **un grand requin** ...etc. (*La belle pieuvre*)
- Puppets allow the focus to pass to a puppet, teddy bear or plush toy, which can present a different point of view. Puppets encourage conversation and problem solving. Do you have a classroom mascot like **le Hug Bug** or another plush animal that can spend time with a child on a special day?
- Drama encourages children to enter the world of fantasy and imagination through simple costumes: a pizza costume, hats, scarves, dark glasses, boots, umbrellas, a laundry basket, dog or cat ears, insect antennae, face paint, ribbon sticks and bubble wands. Change your voice and play the part to suit the characters, such as, "**le Monsieur et la Mademoiselle**" in *La Bastringue*. Use simple costumes (a colourful bow as a bow tie for *le Monsieur* and a hair ribbon for *la Mademoiselle*).
- Suggested songs: "La belle pieuvre," "La Bastringue," "Le Hug Bug," "Mi Caramelita," "Y a un chat," "Di, Di Dinosaur," "Je suis une pizza," "Je suis une bulle" and "Aujourd'hui, il pleut."

Rhythm

- Children love rhythm; it makes the lyrics of a song or chant easier to learn and to remember.
- Hand claps, finger snaps and sound effects help to develop a sense of rhythm.
- Rhythmic body movement encourages physical or kinaesthetic involvement with the song. For example, add sign language or gesture, simple dance steps and clapping with a partner.
- Ribbons and scarves follow the flow of the music and allow a child to explore the space around them.
- Songs that come from other lands or cultures are easier to teach when we start with the rhythmic pulse of the music. Make simple percussion instruments based on authentic instruments, such as, maracas, claves, guiros, tambourines and rain sticks.
- Suggested rhythmic songs: "La Bamba," "Tout le monde aime les bananes," "Collinda," "La Bastringue," "Di, Di Dinosaur," "Bats ta pâte," "J'ai perdu le 'do' de ma clarinette," "Les Sandwichs," "V'là le bon vent," "Bonjour l'hiver" and "Vive le vent."

Movement, Gesture and Sign Language *Talk with our hands and body!*

- Rhythmic movement unifies the group. Holding hands in a circle is a wonderful way to begin and end the day. (*Donne-moi la main*)
- Movement increases attention span and participation. When a movement crosses the body midline, both sides of the brain become involved. (*Embrasse quatre fois, Dix belles carottes*)
- Sign language increases comprehension and introduces the expressive language of the deaf. (*Qu'il y ait toujours le soleil, La toile d'araignée, Nous sommes tous comme les fleurs*)
- Other suggested movement songs: "Tout ce que je veux - la Paix," "J'ai perdu le 'do' de ma clarinette," "Embrasse quatre fois" and "Je suis prêt pour les montagnes."

Imagination Let's Pretend!

- The magic words, "Let's pretend" always evoke a sense of mystery, suspense and discovery. Use music to stimulate a child's creative development through word-play and role-play. A stormy day, a special event, classroom news, such as a new puppy can lead into song or story. Be spontaneous when children have a keen interest in a topic.
- Draw while listening to music. A song can create a mood or expand on a theme.
- Suggested songs and stories: "Mon école est le monde," "Je suis une bulle," "Je suis une pizza," "La toile d' araignée," "Pourque le monde soit plus beau" and "V'là le bon vent."

Zipper Songs Let's Make Up a New Song!

- Encourage children to compose their own songs by adapting songs they already know. For example, "Je suis une pizza" could become "Je suis une bulle," "Je suis une guitare," or "Je suis un sandwich."
- With "Y'a un chat à la porte," change the positions of where the cat is found. - dans une boîte, dans la chambre, dans la poubelle!
- "Qu'il y ait toujours le soleil" could become "Qu'il y ait toujours des aigles" (or des baleines, des rhinocéros des tigres ou les autres animaux en voie d'extinction). Ou qu'il y ait toujours ma famille - mon frère, ma soeur, mes grands-parents.
- Other suggested zipper songs: "Aujourd'hui, il pleut," "Tout le monde aime les bananes," "Dix belles carottes" and "La belle pieuvre."

Echo Songs (Call and Response) Let's take turns being the leader!

- Echoing is one of the most effective ways of teaching lyrics and melody.
- The group can be divided in two, one group leads and the other echoes.
- Echoing is excellent for teaching English as a Second Language, or introducing another language. The teacher can hear more clearly the response of individual children. The children can see how the teacher forms the words, then imitate mouth shape as well as sound.
- Suggested Echo Songs: "Je suis une pizza," "Je suis une bulle," "V'là le bon vent," "À la violette" and "Tout le monde aime les bananes."

*Remember to include quiet songs during the day
to rest and nurture our softer side.*

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