

# Instruments are for Everyone!

## Making Instruments Accessible to Special Learners in Elementary General Music

Lowri Casimiro & Crystal Pridmore  
CASMEC February 20 2021; 11am

### **Mrs. Pridmore's Teaching Truths for 2020-2021**

Teaching is hard. It is a wonderfully complex profession with many unique challenges during normal times. 2020 has forced many of us to examine our relationships to our jobs. For my own mental health as I have faced these challenges, I have written some truths that I find helpful to remind myself of frequently. They are in no particular order.

- There is still a pandemic.
- We are still operating under crisis teaching and learning conditions (despite some voices in leadership that argue differently).
- I will not allow myself to receive toxic messages that downplay the struggles I face in my job during this time of crisis (anything that someone says beginning with "at least" is not worth listening to).
- I am a great teacher. I care about my job and my students. I believe my job makes a difference in the lives of my students.
- 2020 lessons in every subject must be SEL focused for student and teacher wellbeing. Learning cannot take place until students are able to manage their stress. Maslow's before Bloom's. (Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs must be met before Bloom's Taxonomy can be applied).
- I will not allow my job to put my mental, physical, or emotional health or my work/life balance at risk. "No" is a complete sentence.
- Benefits such as but not limited to sick days and personal days were bargained into my contract by people who understood their value in preventing teacher burnout. I need to take advantage of those benefits.
- I will only teach songs and activities that feed my soul, bring me joy, and are worth remembering for my students.
- This is temporary. This is temporary. This is temporary.

I encourage all of you to put your needs first. We need our teachers healthy. We particularly need the teachers who nurture the hearts and creativity of our students healthy. YOU MATTER. Here is an article I wrote about boundaries for this school year from Teaching With Orff:

<https://teachingwithorff.com/making-it-work-setting-boundaries/>

We're starting every class with a dance party and mindful deep breaths because I need that!

Dance party music: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5pBjopDymts> (Piano Guys It's Gonna Be OK)

## Max Found Two Sticks: Introduce instrument rules

# Max Found Two Sticks

By Brian Pinkney


This is a story about a little boy who is having a hard day and doesn't want to use his words. Instead, he uses his imagination and works through his feelings, finding joy in the materials and natural rhythms all about him. I find that it is especially effective as a means to introduce the use of rhythm sticks and set some rules for instruments in our classroom.


### Handing Out Sticks:

Before you pass out sticks, make your expectations clear, "When I hand you these sticks, you may gently use them to tap the floor and keep a steady beat like this to a song you sing softly to yourself." Demonstrate, and ask them to use their pointer fingers to copy you. "Great! You look like you're ready to handle the responsibility of the real thing! When I hand them to you, you can experiment with keeping a beat, making pitter-patter sounds like rain, or finding ways to make your sticks sound like wind on the carpet- I wonder what sounds you'll discover."

I emphasize the importance of using "please" and "thank you" with my students. When I hand younger children materials, I use this song:

## Thank You Song

Voice Lead   
I have a \_ for Av - a and she says thank - you

  
You're Wel - come!

Make sure to prompt them with, "Can you say 'thank you?'" if the students don't respond right away. They will only have to echo you a couple of times before they sing "thank you" before you finish the song!

After they've mastered saying "thank you" when I pass out materials, I'll start to put music with a strong beat on for the kids to play along with. Some of my favorites include:

*Tucker's Barn* Doc Watson  
*Through the Woods* The Okee Dokee Brothers  
*Happy* Pharrell Williams  
*Sing, Sing, Sing* Benny Goodman  
*Don't You Worry 'Bout a Thing* Stevie Wonder  
*Take it Easy* the Eagles  
*9 to 5* Dolly Parton  
*Battu* Angelique Kidjo  
*The Fox* Nickel Creek  
*Love Me Do* the Beatles

Once sticks are passed out, get their attention by miming actions with your sticks. Wait for them to follow you- they will. Stirring a pot, cracking a whip, writing, forming letters, using the sticks as insect antennae- use your imagination! Once everyone is on board, gently place your sticks on the floor, say, "Bye bye sticks! See you in a minute!" Fold your hands in your lap. "I'm going to read you a story. When I'm reading, your hands stay folded in your lap. But when I put down my book and pick up my sticks, pick up YOUR sticks and do what I do!"

Read the story. Whenever Max plays a rhythm, put down your book, pick up your sticks, and play the rhythm together. When you're finished, place the sticks on the ground, say "Bye bye sticks! See you in a minute!" and fold your hands in your lap. By the time the book ends, you've practiced picking up and putting down the sticks 8 times, self control in leaving the sticks untouched during the reading, and playing together as an ensemble.

# Max Found Two Sticks

Rhythm Sticks  $\text{♩} = 80$   $\text{4/4}$

Pat Pat Tat Pat Pat Tat Pat and Stop!

4

Put - ter put - ter pat tat put - ter put - ter pat tat put - ter put - ter and Stop!

7

Tap - tap - tap Tap - tap - tap tap and Stop!

10

Tip - py tip tat tat tip - py tip tat tat tip - py tip and Stop!

13

Dum dum - de dum dum dum - de dum dum and a Stop!

16

Dong! Dang! Dung! Dong! Dang! Dong! Stop!

19

Cling! Clang - da BANG! Cling! Clang - da BANG! Cling! and - a STOP!

22

Thump di-di Thump! Thump di-di Thump! Thump di-di Thump! Thump di-di Thump!

24

Thump di - di Thump! Thump and a Stop!

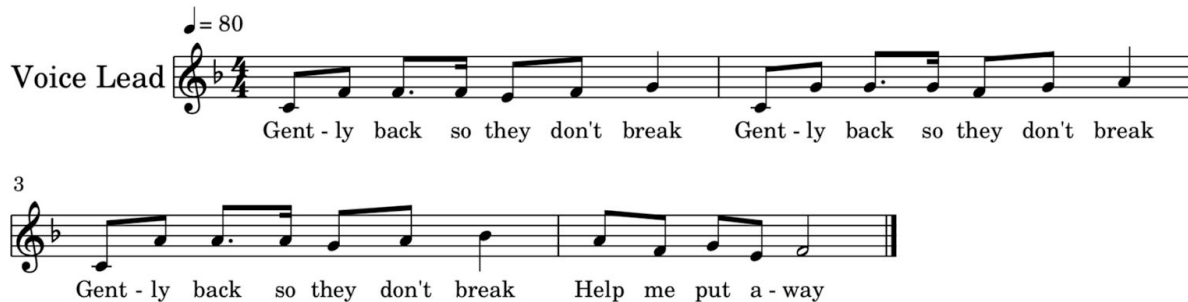
## Cleaning Up the Sticks

Every activity must be accompanied by singing for the little ones. Singing transitions help remind the children to pay attention, be mindful of their actions, and keep them engaged so they can listen to your next instructions. I use this song as we clean up small instruments like rhythm sticks:

### Gently Back Song

♩ = 80

Voice Lead



Gent - ly back so they don't break Gent - ly back so they don't break

3  
Gent - ly back so they don't break Help me put a - way

<https://www.warwicks.com/book/9781419727016>

#### **Magic Zoom Background for "Magic Beat Finger"**

Major props to my good friend/ fellow Orff teachers Liban Gomez and Kate Bright for sharing this amazing trick!

#### Kate Bright's instructions

Here's what you need:

- Zoom
- Green (or greenish) post-it/solid color

Here's what you do:

- Go into the Virtual Background & upload your picture
- Hold up your solid-colored greenish object and click "I Have a Green Screen"

It takes some playing with distance of the greenish object, but it works LIVE!

**Example of Kate using it with a body percussion slide:** <https://youtu.be/gfnZQx3ssHU>

#### **Magic Beat Finger:**

Show the pulse of the music with your finger. Now touch your finger to another body part and transfer the beat to that part. Take turns leading the game.

Follow along as I highlight different body parts on my magic zoom background and use those to transfer the beat.

## Making Instruments A Sensory Experience.

e-mail: [lowri.casimiro@cvesd.org](mailto:lowri.casimiro@cvesd.org)

**This activity targets Special Education classes , Pre-K, and KG.** We are focusing on introducing instruments with a sensory experience, using respectful & gentle hands.

We start on the floor, it hasn't woken up yet. Everything we do on the instruments – in this case drums, we do on the floor first.

### We Pat the floor:

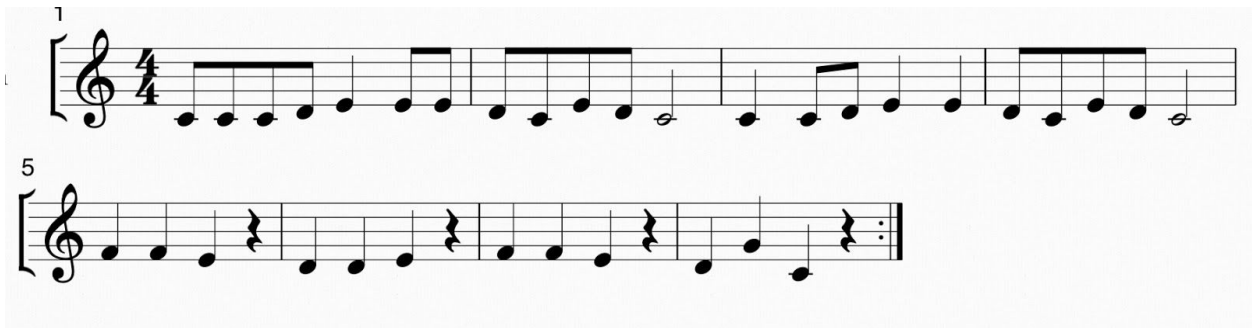


We tap the floor.... We knock on the floor... we pat the floor and we tickle the floor!

We stroke on the floor.... We rub the floor... we scratch the floor... and we listen!!!

### Wake up floor:





Going to the kitchen to see if I can find,

Something to tap (shake/scrape), so I can play in time.

1, 2, 3 – play with me; 1, 2, 3 – play with me

\*Echo 4 beat rhythms\*

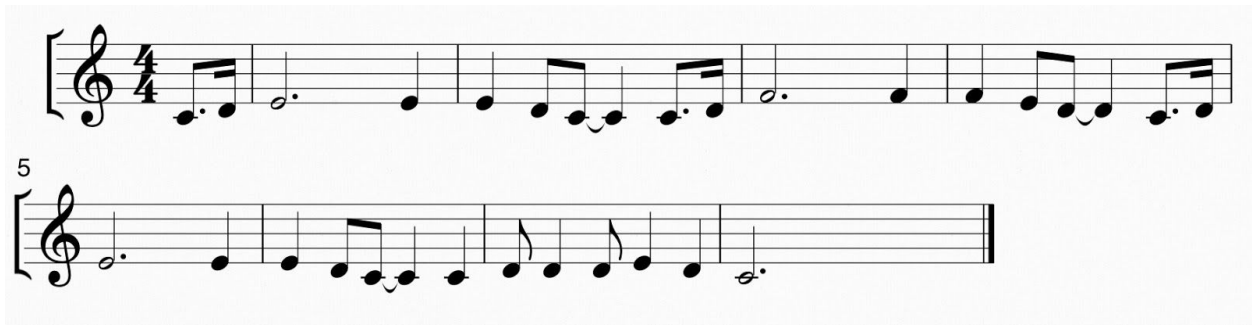
Working on impulse control, echoes, sensory playing experience, sound selection, steady beat, play with me & play after me.

Put them down, in front of you

Put them down in front of you

Put them down in front of you

And show me your empty hands



This is a great jingle to help cue them when to put their instruments down.

**Progression:**

I usually follow found sounds with a sound-scape book, for example Too Much Noise