



Classroom Guide

Title: **Zin! Zin! Zin! a Violin**

Author: **Lloyd Moss**

Illustrator: **Marjorie Priceman**

Theme: Musical instruments make beautiful music on their own, but together they create a magnificent symphony.

Program Summary: The featured book explores how rhyming, melodies and mathematics help combine sounds of different instruments, making music fun — and fun music. Taking a trip to New York City’s Juilliard School, LeVar finds out how orchestra members combine their sounds, and work as a team under the leadership of the conductor. Then STOMP, a percussion performance group, demonstrates how it incorporates creativity, expression, rhythm, dance and self-expression in a team effort that’s very active and entertaining.

Topics for Discussion:

Before viewing the program, discuss experiences students or members of their families have had playing musical instruments. Make a list of musical instruments with which students are familiar.

Discuss the importance of practice when learning a new skill. Invite students to relate their experiences with learning to do something new.

In an orchestra, it is essential for the musicians to work together. Discuss other activities in which it is important for the participants to work together.

Discuss the style in which the book, *Zin! Zin! Zin! a Violin*, is written, so students recognize that the story is told in rhyme, instead of the narrative style of most stories that they read. Discuss the possibility that because the book is about music, the author chose to write it in rhyme.

Curriculum Extension Activities:

Brainstorm with the students a list of careers associated with the field of music. Compose a list of questions to which they would like answers about those careers. Have them utilize a variety of resources, including interviews, email, or letter writing, to obtain the answers to their questions. Provide an opportunity for students to share their findings.

It is likely that there are several vocabulary terms in the story with which students are not familiar. Provide some direct experience with these words. For example, in a place where there is space for students to move around, have them arrange themselves in



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duos, trios, quartets, etc. Have them determine how many of these different groups they can make using the whole class.

Invite the orchestra from the high school or musicians from the community into the classroom to demonstrate their instruments. Reread portions of the story that describe how the individual instruments sound and have students compare those descriptions with the actual sound. Obtain permission from the musicians for the students to examine the instruments “up close” by fingering keys, plucking strings, beating a drum, etc. Reinforce the names of the instruments as the students explore.

Have students look around the classroom for things they can use to create a musical sound. Encourage them to be creative.

After viewing the video, role play conducting and performing in an orchestra. Use classical music as the backdrop. Have students change roles often so they can “experience” different instruments.

Have students use rhythm instruments to accompany the reading of other stories and poems. Encourage them to listen to the beat (rhythm) of the words and play the instruments accordingly.

Working in small groups, have students think of a familiar melody and compose the words to an original song that can be sung to that tune.

Have an “outdoor concert” at a time and place on the school grounds where there are few distractions. Make simple snacks, such as peanut butter and crackers, apple slices, popcorn, etc., to eat at the concert (enlist the aid of students as much as possible in the preparation). Sit on blankets, munch the snacks, and listen to recorded music. The music may be only classical (scores in which the instruments are fairly easy to identify, such as “Peter and the Wolf,” are a possibility) or a sampling of several different types of music.

Have students survey family members regarding their favorite types of music and graph the results at school. Discuss how different age groups may have different preferences in music.

Book Reviews:

Max Found Two Sticks by Brian Pinkney

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Meet the Orchestra by Ann Hayes, illus. by Karmen Thompson

Supplementary Booklist:

Ben's Trumpet by Rachel Isadora

The Philharmonic Gets Dressed by Karla Kuskin, illus. by Marc Simont

Charlie Parker Played Be Bop by Chris Raschka

Related Themes:

- math concepts in music
- types of music
- musical composers and performers

Related Reading Rainbow Programs:

- Program #90 — Berlioz the Bear
- Program #30 — Mama Don't Allow
- Program #35 — Abiyoyo
- Program #51 — Barn Dance!
- Program #15 — Ty's One-Man Band

About the Author: Lloyd Moss hosted a classical music program at a New York public radio station for five decades. He also worked on many TV and radio shows as a voiceover actor. *Zin! Zin! Zin! a Violin* was his first book for children.

About the Illustrator: Marjorie Priceman has illustrated several books for children, including the Reading Rainbow feature book, *How to Make an Apple Pie and See the World*. Her whimsical watercolor illustrations earned a Caldecott Honor Book Award for *Zin! Zin! Zin! a Violin*.