Episode: “The Four Beeps”

Albie dominates the quartet when she sings everyone else’s part. She doesn’t understand why her friends are upset! Albie visits a choir and learns that everyone’s voice is important, not just her own. She also learns about pitch and how different voice parts add to a song and let everyone shine.

Activity

Materials:
- Four glasses
- A spoon
- Water
- You and a friend

Steps:
1. Watch the episode “The Four Beeps,” and notice how Albie sings over her friends, even though Zia says everyone will get a turn. How do you think Albie’s friends feel?
2. Albie meets the Philadelphia Voices of Pride chorus, who sing “Row, Row, Row Your Boat.” Sing along with the Voices of Pride as you watch.
3. Do you remember the four voice parts Albie learns about? Sopranos, altos, tenors and basses all sing in a different range. Try making high, medium and low sounds with your own voice.
4. Grown-ups can help arrange four glasses with different amounts of water. Fill one all the way up. Fill the next a little less (about half full) and the next even less (about a quarter full). Leave the fourth glass empty.
5. Gently tap the side of each glass with a spoon. Grown-ups, demonstrate how to do this safely! Notice differences in the sounds the glasses make. Which is the highest, like the sopranos? Which is lowest, like the basses? Arrange them in order from high to low and tap them gently to experiment with the music they make.
6. For the singing challenge, each person picks a glass to play as they sing “Row, Row, Row Your Boat.” If you want to sing in a higher voice, pick the empty glass or the glass with the smallest amount of water. If you want to sing in a lower voice, go for the glasses that are more full.
7. Each singer matches the pitch of their voice to their glass and tries to sing
“Row, Row, Row Your Boat” at the same time, with one voice singing in a higher pitch and one singing in a lower tone—this is called singing in harmony. It can be tricky, so keep trying!

8. Experiment with different musical patterns. Try having your child start singing first while you come in second to sing in a round.

**Tips**

- No need to stick with “Row, Row, Row Your Boat.” Sing any of your family’s favorite songs.
- No glasses handy? Skip that step and just practice using your voice. You can also fill up small containers with different amounts of beans to create another kind of high and low sound.

**In this activity, your child:**

- Learned about different pitches in music and identified high, medium and low sounds
- Mimicked different voice tones
- Sang a song in different pitches while listening and collaborating with others

**Talk to your child! Conversation Starters:**

- Letting other friends take a turn singing was hard for Albie. Have you ever struggled taking turns? What are some things we can say to ourselves when it’s hard to remain patient?
- People can have all different feelings about singing alone in front of other people. How did it feel for you?

**Vocabulary**

- **Soprano:** The highest voice in a chorus
- **Alto:** A medium-high voice in a chorus
- **Tenor:** A medium-low voice in a chorus
- **Bass:** A very low voice or sound
- **Pitch:** How high or low a sound is
- **Harmony:** When different notes are sung at the same time to create a pleasing sound
Keep Going!

**Straw Pan Pipe**
Gather five or six drinking straws and cut them to all different lengths. Line up the straws on a piece of packing tape or duct tape and cover with another piece of tape to secure. Blow across the top of the straws to hear differences in sound. The shortest straw is the soprano, and the longest is your bass!

**Make Your Own Drum Set**
Gather pots, pans, empty containers and boxes and try drumming on them. Compare the different pitches and sounds each drum makes. How does the size of the drum or its materials change its sound?
More At-Home Activities
Visit PBS Learning Media for more activities like this inspired by Albie’s Elevator.

Children’s Books with Related Themes
Check out these children’s books online or at your local library to continue exploring the concepts in this episode.

**Sound: Shh…Bang…Pop…Boom** by Romana Romanysyn and Andriy Lesiv
An exploration of the science of sound through colorful illustrations that invites readers to listen intently to the world around them.

**Change Sings** by Amanda Gorman
A poem by presidential inaugural poet and activist Amanda Gorman is the foundation of this book about how anything is possible when voices join together.