
This book builds on a belief in the importance of music in the life of children. It offers ways to introduce children to songs and instruments, describes a range of thematic literature programmes and offers a broad range of action songs, themed music and stories for K-3 children. There are strategies for successful programming involving literature and music over a one-hour session. Most programmes weave together an activity involving movement, literature and music making or instrument making with mix-and-match alternatives for presenters who are not comfortable with the suggestions.

The rationale for such an approach lies in a foundation of Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences, and learning experiences involve several senses and understandings. The author feels that music making and playing adds a new depth to library programmes and literature sharing. She provides a checklist to consult when choosing music to use and offers simple skills using traditional songs, contemporary songs and the creation of original songs. Though proper instruments can be used, she goes on to explain how to make instruments from found or recyclable materials and how to use them to represent story characters and to enhance storytelling. For each themed programme music is suggested (both recordings and participative sing-alongs), an activity or instructions for instrument making and the stories required. This is followed by the sequence of the programme with annotations for each one-hour segment. She also offers ‘bonus books’ which are extra stories and ‘bonus tracks’ for extra recordings.

The book had two appendices and a very detailed index. The appendices offer samples of action songs and a detailed presentation of related songs/music and children’s literature.

While the book’s intention is to widen the interpretation of children’s literature by pairing selected stories with music and other activities, and the careful presentation of programmes is intended to inspire confidence and support, it would still mostly appeal to children’s librarians, teacher librarians and junior school teachers who have some musical background and ability. Conducting a one-hour session for primary grade children would benefit from the range of themed readings/activities/music, and this book represents ideas for practical programming to suit this timeframe. There is also virtue in the philosophy that knowledge (or literature) does not stand alone, but is related to many other aspects of
life. Apart from the background philosophy of the book, it represents a real attempt at widening the appeal of literature through links to other related areas.

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