

Making musical instruments

Create a selection of musical instruments from our guides below and make your own marching band!

Learning aims

- Knowledge and understanding of the world
- Being creative and expressive
- Listening and attention

Resources

Homemade beat sticks

What you will need

- Broom handles sawn into smaller pieces and rubbed down with sandpaper
- Strong sticks from the woods
- Paint to decorate.



Activity outline

1. Decorate the sticks as you wish
2. Bang the sticks together to make a beat
3. Can the children follow your beat? Can they count the beats as they bang them together?
4. You could add these to your marching band instruments.

Homemade rain sticks

What you will need:

- Long and wide cardboard tubes or Pringle tubes
- Card
- Scissors
- Rice or lentils
- Paint, glitter to decorate.

Activity outline

1. Draw around the cardboard tube on the card
2. Cut this circle shape into a spiral making it as long as possible
3. Stick the outside to the top of the inside of the tube
4. Stretch the spiral inside the tube and the stick into place
5. If you have used tubes make two ends for the tube by cutting a circle about two centimetres wider than the tube then snip little lines all the way around, fold them in to make a lid and base for the tube
6. Stick the base lid on using the tape; make it as secure as possible
7. Add the rice or lentils, you will not need too many, approximately one tablespoon should be enough
8. Stick the top lid on and secure it in place
9. Decorate and allow to dry
10. Tip the tube up and down slowly to make the rain noise.

Water music

What you will need:

- Glasses or glass bottles
- Wooden spoons or sticks
- Water
- Food colouring
- Jug and funnel.



Activity outline

1. Add different amounts of water to each vessel and add some food colouring to make it more inviting
2. Ask the children what sounds they make; can they put them in order of pitch?

Homemade shakers

What you will need:

- Plastic cups
- Tubes (such as Pringle tubes)
- Plastic bottles
- Funnel
- Sticky tape
- Lentils, rice, pasta, pebbles, seeds, gravel
- Pompoms, marbles, sequins
- Paint and paintbrushes
- Material scraps.



Activity outline

1. Try out different materials in the vessels such as gravel and lentils and talk about the sounds they make; are they deep, loud, quiet?
2. Which do they prefer?
3. Support the children to put the materials into the vessels, you may need a funnel if you are using plastic bottles
4. If you are using plastic cups you can tape two cups together with the materials in the middle
5. Decorate your shaker by painting or covering in materials and allow it to dry
6. Use in your band or play along to the music.

Homemade guitars

What you will need:

- Tissue boxes
- Plastic containers (butter/margarine tubs)
- Elastic bands
- Paint/pens etc. to decorate.
-



Activity outline

1. String the elastic bands across the vessel
2. Try different thicknesses of bands
3. Pluck the bands, what sounds do they make?

Homemade drums

What you will need:

- Old pots and pans
- Old recycled plastic containers
- Old tins
- Wooden and metal spoons
- Sticks.

Activity outline

1. Try banging drums with the different spoons and sticks, what sounds do they make? Which has the highest pitch? (Sounds like the highest note). Which is the lowest?
2. How about when you tap them with your hands and palms? What sounds do they make now?
3. What other things can we try as drums?
4. These can all go outside in a 'sound garden' and you could add wind chimes for the children to bang with their spoons as well.

Health and safety warning! Make sure that if you use tin cans that the edges have been filed down or covered with tape and that there is no rust present.

Extending the activity

Have the children seen a marching band? Can you find one on the internet to show the children? You could create a marching band for yourselves with the instruments you've made.

1. Gather your homemade (or real) instruments and make some hats and a baton for the leader.
2. Make the hats out of strong cardboard stuck into a cylinder. Ask the children to decorate the cardboard prior to sticking it together. Make the hat the right size for each child by measuring their head first.
3. Make a baton for the leader out of a stick. You may choose to decorate this with glitter or sequins and paint
4. Some children may prefer to be majorettes; these are the people who twirl batons and march alongside the band. Why not create pompoms for the majorettes too