



A DRUM CIRCLE PROGRAM BY DAN REIFF



## *All Hands On Beat ~ Intermediate School Program*

### APPROACH

To show that drumming is universal, something anyone at any age or stage can do - if you have a pulse, you can play! I will use a mix of fun and simple rhythm games, basic instruction, and fundamental listening and teamwork activities to get everyone participating in creating and playing music together.

### LEARNING GOALS

- Play the basic sounds of the djembe drum correctly and clearly
- Understand the drums origin and use as a tool of communication and expression
- Understand basic drum circle calls and signals
- Pattern recognition, rhythm, and creative expression through movement and sound
- Importance of teamwork: the whole is greater than the parts
- Develop self-confidence, trust, and leadership skills in a group setting
- Listen and look for patterns and rhythm in every day life

### SINGLE SESSION

We will start with some fun rhythm games using our hands, feet, and voices that will test the group's coordination and rhythmic ability. We will move to the djembe drums, and talk about their origin, construction, and historical use. We will go through the basics of playing the two key sounds, bass and tone, and use word games to create some rhythms. I may play beats to popular contemporary songs to see if the class can identify them. I will also show some facilitator calls and signals that we use to start/stop and shape the drum circle. Then we will learn a traditional African rhythm, and talk about where it comes from. We will try to add more than one pattern to the rhythm, breaking the group up. This may also include adding more sounds like bells and shakers. Lastly, we will play the African rhythm, and expand to allow for some freeform drumming within the boundaries of that rhythm.

### OUTCOME

To know the origin of the djembe drum, how to play the basic sounds, and how to play one traditional African rhythm. To have the class create their own rhythms through fun games, and use the basic drum circle calls and signals.

### MULTIPLE SESSIONS

These ideas can be expanded to include more instruction, games and activities to put students in control of the drum circle. By showing them more hand signals for shaping and changing the music, they can take turns leading the group, building confidence and trust as they learn to lean on, and listen to each other. We can also explore other percussion instruments and sounds, and discuss their role in bringing different tones to the drum circle. We can work to create our own beats, play a mix of traditional rhythms and/or play along to popular songs, and even record ourselves in the process.