



A DRUM CIRCLE PROGRAM BY DAN REIFF

## *All Hands On Beat ~ Junior 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 team work activities to get everyone participating in creating and playing music together.

### LEARNING GOALS

- Play the basic sounds of the djembe drum correctly and clearly
- Know where the djembe is from and what it's made out of
- Pattern recognition and rhythm through word play, movement and sound
- Understand basic drum circle call and signals
- Communication and expression through a musical instrument
- Being part of the class community by listening, sharing and taking turns
- Importance of team-work: 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 a simple and fun rhythm game using hands, feet, and voices to get us warmed up. This will include testing coordination by trying to do two things at once, and testing rhythmic ability through simple word play and number games. I may break the circle into parts and show them some basic hand signals used to shape the sounds we are making. We will move to the djembe drums, and talk about where they are from, and what they are made of. We will go through the basics of playing the drum, focusing on the two sounds, bass and tone. We will also learn the first 'call' or start/stop signal. We will play a word game to create some fun, simple patterns. Then we will learn a basic African rhythm, and talk about where it comes from. Lastly, if time allows, we may introduce egg shakers to the beat, or play an egg shaker game.

### OUTCOME

To know what the djembe drum is, where it comes from, and how to play the basic sounds, bass and tone, and the start/stop call. To have the class create their own rhythms, play along to or create their own version of a popular song, or play a culturally specific rhythm, using djembe and percussion instruments.

### 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 African rhythms and play along with popular songs, and even record ourselves in the process.