



A DRUM CIRCLE PROGRAM BY DAN REIFF

## *All Hands On Beat ~ A Grade School Drumming 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:

- To provide a musical experience where everyone can participate equally, and learn the basics of playing the djembe drum in a circle
- To encourage team work by listening to each other and sharing in the creative process
- To help develop self-confidence, trust, and leadership skills in a group setting

### OUTCOME:

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. (This varies depending on age/grade).

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### BREAKDOWN BY GRADE LEVEL

#### Kindergarten

We will start with some simple rhythm games using our hands, feet, bodies and voices. This will get everyone active, listening, and having fun before introducing the instruments. For example, using our names to sound out clapping and stomping patterns, and trying the game 'lap lap clap clap' while saying our names. Also, dividing the group by numbers 1-4, and seeing if we can keep in rhythm by saying our numbers out loud in order. Then we will move to the djembe drums, learning and experimenting with some of the basic sounds. We will talk a little about what the drum is made of, and what we think it sounds like. Then we will play some letter and word games to help learn simple patterns, and create our own classroom beats. Lastly, we may introduce egg shakers with a game called 'take and pass'.

## Primary

We will start with simple and fun rhythm games using our hands, feet, bodies, and voices that will get everyone smiling and warmed up. Then we will move to the djembe drums, and talk a little about where they are from and what they are made of. We will go through the basics of playing the drum and getting the right sounds, talking a little about the sounds they hear. We will play some word games to help learn simple patterns, and create our own classroom beats. Lastly, we may introduce egg shakers to the beat, or play an egg shaker game.

## Junior

We will start with simple and fun rhythm games using our hands, feet, and voices to get us warmed up. 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, getting the right sounds, and 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.

## Intermediate

We will start with a simple and fun rhythm game using our hands, feet, and voices to warm up. We will move to the djembe drums, and talk about where they are from, what they are made of, and what they were used for. We will go through the basics of playing the drum, getting the right sounds, and understanding some facilitator calls and signals. Then 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. 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 free-form drumming within the boundaries of that rhythm.

## Senior

We will start with a simple and fun rhythm game using our hands, feet, and voices to warm up. We will move to the djembe drums, and talk about where they are from, what they are made of, and what they were used for. We will go through the basics of playing the drum, getting the right sounds, and understanding some facilitator calls and signals. Then 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. 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 free-form drumming within the boundaries of that rhythm. Time permitting, we may work towards including breaks with call and response.

\* This is a sample of what can be done in a single session. With multiple sessions these ideas can be expanded with more instruction on proper play and rhythms, and can include more games and activities to put students in control of the drum circle. By showing them calls, signals, and breaks such as call-and-response, and by exploring other percussion instruments and sounds, their roles in the rhythm can change. Students will learn how to move from playing one pattern to another without dropping the beat, and how to hear and play multiple parts at the same time. Eventually they can take turns leading and facilitating their own rhythms, building confidence and trust as they learn to lean on, and listen to the group.

If you are interested in bringing this program to your school, please contact: [dan@drdrumming.com](mailto:dan@drdrumming.com), 905-449-6309.

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