



A DRUM CIRCLE PROGRAM BY DAN REIFF



## *All Hands On Beat ~ Senior Program*

### APPROACH

To show that drumming is universal - if you have a pulse, you can play! I will use a mix of challenging and fun 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
- Play a traditional African rhythm, with multiple parts as a group
- Understand the importance of teamwork: the whole is greater than the parts
- Develop self-confidence, trust, and leadership skills in a group setting
- Understand some of the health and wellness benefits of drumming
- Understand the importance patterns and rhythm can play in daily 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 talk a little about the origin of percussion and hand drums as some of the first instruments ever made, and the djembe specifically, touching on their construction, and historical use. We will go through the basics of playing the two key sounds of the djembe, bass and tone, and use word games to create some rhythms. 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, breaking the group up. This may also include adding more sounds like bells and shakers. We may expand to allow for some freeform drumming within the boundaries of that rhythm. We will end by talking about the health benefits of drumming and *entrainment*, as well as the importance of patterns and rhythms outside of music. We may end with a fun egg shaker game.

### OUTCOME

To play the basic sounds on the djembe, and one traditional African rhythm. To be able to create your own beat, and use basic drum circle calls and signals to shape that beat in a group setting. To know a little about the origin of drumming, and the importance of patterns and rhythm can have in every day life.

### MULTIPLE SESSIONS

These ideas can be expanded to include more instruction 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 with popular songs, and even record ourselves in the process.