

Little House in the Big Woods

By Laura Ingalls Wilder

&

Caddie Woodlawn

By Carol Ryrie Brink

Presentation by:

Jennie Andreasen (jensings2@yahoo.com) NBCT EMC 2006
Port Washington-Saukville School District

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Jan Anderson (jananderson@sheboygan.k12.wi.us)
Sheboygan Area School District

Both of these projects were born out of a desire to integrate the visual and performing arts into the WI 4th grade social studies curriculum using the books Little House in the Big Woods by Laura Ingalls Wilder and Caddie Woodlawn by Carol Ryrie Brink.

We used Melody #1, page 24, from Music for Children, Volume IV by Carl Orff-Gunild Keetman, English version adapted by Margaret Murray. We transposed the melody from d minor to e minor. If desired, the d dorian version on page 48 could be used instead.

Then we used the following (text by Jennie Andreasen):

“In the big woods of Wisconsin, Laura lives with Ma and Pa, baby Carrie, sister Mary, cat Black Susan, Jack the dog.”

After teaching students to sing this melody you can teach it on recorder or other pitched classroom instrument. Notice that we changed the accompaniment in the B section of the melody and inserted 2 measures of rest before the repeat.

At Jan's school the students also performed a series of tableaux (motionless scenes). They created a short synopsis for each chapter of the book. Students then took turns reading the synopses to accompany the tableaux. In addition, one student performed the Orff melody and accompaniment on the piano.

Other correlating activities could be various art projects such as lanterns made from tin cans, candle making, soap making, or any type of art depicting the scenery from the books. You might also initiate field trips such as going somewhere to learn about maple syrup or attending some type of heritage school.

Sarah, Plain and Tall

Patricia MacLachlan

This project was about the prairie-scapes of WI as opposed to the forests. Our objective was to build a prairie-scape using improvisation and creative movement. We wanted to show how resilient a prairie is by incorporating the idea of fire and how it affects the life on the prairie. The entire piece took an ABA form.

Teach the children melody #1, page 24 from Music for Children, Volume II, by Carl Orff-Gunild Keetman, English version adapted by Margaret Murray.

Use the following text (by Jennie Andreasen):

A. Prairie Song

“It's a colorful place to be. The wildflowers dance in the wind while the golden sun shines down. It's a colorful place to be.

It's a jubilant place to be. The ground squirrels play and chase all around while the meadowlarks sing out. It's a jubilant place to be.”

Please notice we slightly altered the melody by adding a “c” on the words “wind” and in the 2nd verse on “while”. We left it in the key of C

We added a level bordun with this melody.

Teach the children melody # 4, page 5 from Music for Children, Volume IV, by Carl Orff-Gunild Keetman, English version adapted by Margaret Murray. Transposed to the key of c-minor.

Use the following text (by Jennie Andreasen):

B. The Fire Song

“The fire grows, the prairie glows, the flames burn on through the day and night and still
The fire grows, the prairie glows, the flames burn on and on.
Comes the fire, ever higher, burning brighter, as the flames crackle
Here comes the fire, ever higher, burning brighter what will happen to us?”

Please note we again slightly altered the melody on the words “flames crackle” and changed it from quarter note A&C followed by eighth note B&G to eighth notes A&C, then eighth notes B&G and another pair of eighth notes A&C.

For the accompaniment, we did the triplets marked in the score on a C.

After learning the melodies, we brainstormed different plants and animals on the prairie. Using those rhythms (and staying in 6/8 meter) each student came up with his own ABAC pattern (eg. Prairie dogs, sunflowers, prairie dogs, wind). Have students create their own improvisation using the rhythm using C pentatonic scale.

Movement: Break into groups of weather, storm, fire, trees, plants, flowers, animals, birds or whatever you decide. Each group creates a movement that represents their subject. Then decide the order of how they will enter. Our order happened to be trees, plants, grasses, animals, birds and weather. While this happened we had four students play their improvisations on glockenspiels at random tempi. Once the prairie-scape was built, we sang the prairie song and moved directly into the fire song. At this point our fire students moved onto the floor with red and orange scarves. The animals & birds scurry while the plants and trees are burned to the ground. After the fire moves across and the song is over, it's time for the rebirth, so we started over essentially with the improvisation and ended with the Prairie Song.