

Leaf Children

Suggested grade level: K-1

Objectives:

- Experience the dance concept of pathway in vertical space
- Melodic direction (vocal and instrumental)
- Control of dynamic expression on barred instruments

Materials:

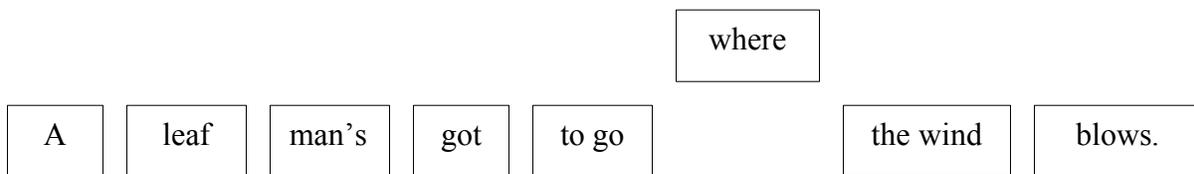
- *Leaf Man* by Lois Ehlert, (ISBN#0-15-205304-2)
- Fallen autumn leaves: look for twisted and folded shapes (let children collect for you!)
- Barred instruments in C pentatonic

Process:

1. Read *Leaf Man*; encourage the children to add vocal expression to the refrain (“A leaf man’s got to go where the wind blows.”). Discover the leaf creatures on each page. Lovely aesthetics in this book prepare the children for an artful movement and music experience.

2. Singing:

- Chant the leaf man refrain all on one pitch. Ask the children to choose a word or phrase from the refrain to move up or down relative to the chanting tone. Arrange the words on cards in a row and move them up or down as directed by the children each time they chant the refrain. For example:



- Add a soft tremolo on the chanting tone on a bass or alto xylophone to accompany the singing.

3. Movement:

- Scatter the autumn leaves on the floor and ask the children to study the shapes of the leaves. Can they make their body into the shape of one of the leaves? Does it lie flat on the floor...or curl up at the edges? Does it have a stem? Is it tightly twisted or loosely folded? Try again with another leaf...and another.
- Hold one leaf high over your head and ask the children to watch the pathway of the leaf as it falls to the ground. Does it fall quickly...or drift slowly? Can you trace the pathway, with your hand in the air, as the leaf falls again? Repeat with several leaves and compare the pathways. What is the sound of a leaf as it lands on the ground? What instrument might play this sound?
- Ask the children to stand up and attach themselves to a “tree”. What does it feel like to be gently pushed by an autumn breeze as you cling to your tree? What pathway will you take if the breeze pulls you off the tree and you begin to drift toward the ground? What will be your shape when you finally land?

4. On a xylophone: In which direction will your mallets move to play sounds like leaves drifting down? How do you play this as slowly and softly as falling leaves? Can you accompany one child in the class as she floats down from the tree and lands on the ground? Try not to get to the lowest bar of your instrument before she lands in her leaf shape.

5. Facilitate creation of a Leaf Man operetta: How will they include their chant? What instruments will add a soundscape (gentle breeze, landing of each leaf, etc)? Is there a way to extend the story of the leaf (e.g., swirling/rustling along the ground, raking, becoming part of a combined leaf shape)? What might be a good finale for the operetta?