

# Drumming with Children / Youth

James Wells

## Start with some good resources

- World Music Drumming – Will Schmid (1998)
- New Ensembles and Songs – Will Schmid (2004)
- More New Ensembles and Songs – Will Schmid (2007)
- World Music Choral Series – Will Schmid (2005)
- Part Singing Global Style – Michael Burkhardt (2007)
- Halle, Halle: We Sing the World Round – Michael Hawn (1999)

## It's meant to be taught in an oral tradition

The World Music Drumming approach is based primarily on the drumming traditions of West Coast Africa and the Islands of the Caribbean. Students and apprentices in these traditions learn through imitation and aural modes. Teachers actually do what the dictionary defines as teaching – “to show, demonstrate.” When music is learned in this fashion, it is much more circular and holistic.

## Enough academic talk...what's next?

- How to hold and play a drum – just the basics
- Low and high sounds (give it a voice)
- Simple 2-beat echoes
- “if you can say it you can play it”
- Questions and Answers / Call and Response
- Let them create (what's your name? what's for dinner?)
- Improvisation Games
- Introducing ensemble patterns
- Put them together (process is key)
- Try adding auxillary percussion
- Mix in a song (take time in life, halle halle, Glory to God)
- “loosen up and move a little”

### Classroom Management and Process

You must be in control of what's going on so that all the participants can be successful and are enjoying the music making. You just need a plan!

Here are few things that work for me (in no certain order)

- Set expectations (not rules).....HAVE FUN
- "super glue" (have them "glue" their hands down while listening)
- Keep the pace moving
- Use it to teach good character (compliment, respect, community)
- Know what you are going to do next (takes repetition)
- Make music more....talk less
- Stay positive
- Be prepared with a "Q and A" at any time.
- Keep reminding them to "say what they play"
- RHYTHM IS SOUND AND SILENCE (show "the rest"...make it fun)
- let them be lead by example...recognize them

### How can we use drumming in worship?

- Processional
- Call to Worship
- World Music Anthem
- Combine with Orff arrangement
- World Music Sunday?
- Remember that less is more ( it must compliment and balance)
- accompany a scripture reading liturgy

These tips come from years of experience using drumming in the public school classroom as well as in church music settings.

I have found the World Music Drumming Resources to be very helpful and very useful in church settings and the classroom.

Please email me if you have any questions. Some of the thoughts and ideas are easier to understand when in a live teaching situation.

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