

The



Tips and Suggestions....

Binder Use,
General Techniques,
Performing,
Signals,
Fussy???

You are all giving children a great gift!

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For more free PDFs that complement the xylophone videos on youtube,
plus a list and URLs to all those videos on youtube, just go to:

www.anybodycanplay.com

The xylophone page is under the "More" heading on the home page.

THE BINDER

The easiest way I have found to keep lesson sheets in order for both teachers and students is to use 3 ring binders.



The teacher's binder has all the instruction/suggestion sheets plus lessons sheets that can be printed out in addition to the xylophone sheets, flashcards, etc. that are laminated and punched.

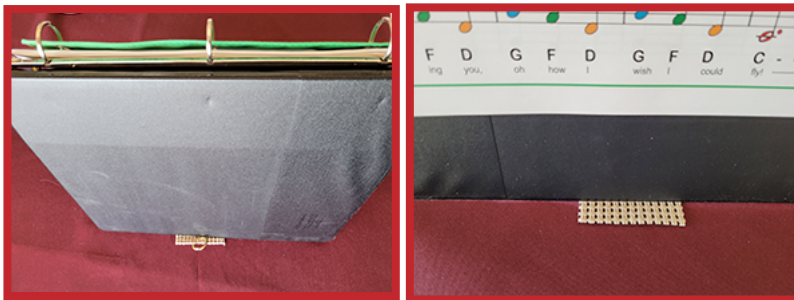


In addition the teacher binder has a zipper binder pouch so the parent “notes” for a particular lesson are all cut apart and ready to give to the students at the end of the lesson. That non-stick liner piece hanging on the binder ring is for stabilizing the “music stand” option of the binder.

The big question concerning the student binders is whether or not they go home. Sometimes they don't come back....”Oh no, I forgot my binder!” If the option is to keep the binder at church/studio, then I would suggest printing the lesson sheet(s) “of the day” to take home plus also give a laminated xylophone to students who have no xylophone at home so they have a way to practice. Perhaps all students would like a laminated xylophone for home use - a quiet way to practice anytime, anywhere!

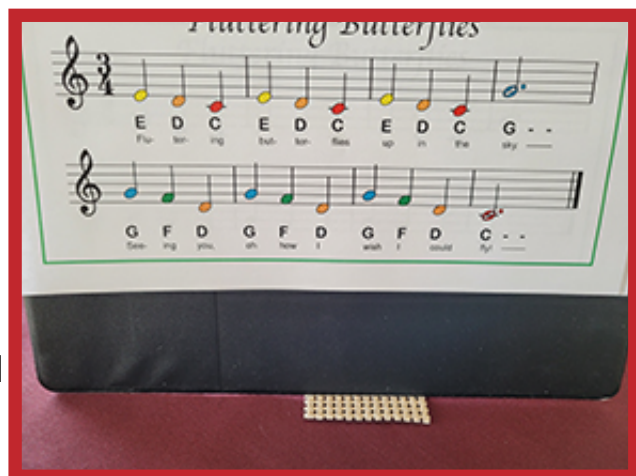


Binders also make great music stands. Cut a piece of non slip drawer liner about 3-4 inches wide and 8-10 inches long. I put a small ring in the middle of one narrow end so it can also be hung in each student binder through the middle binder ring.



When using the binder as a music stand, bend back the sides so the binder is “inside out” with rings at the top. Place the ringed piece of drawer liner under the back side with the ring exposed. Then run the liner under the binder and place the other binder side onto the liner. This non-stick liner keeps the binder from slipping on surfaces like tables!

Now the music being played can be left in the binder right behind the xylophone.



GENERAL LESSON TECHNIQUES

Always use youtube videos in each lesson so students not only realize they have a way to practice at home, but they keep hearing their lesson song being played properly as well. The videos also make learning seem more like a game. I try to make the videos so they are easily maneuvered just by a click, but sometimes my different timings do not become “hot” when I upload a video...sorry ‘bout that!

With each binder lesson I try to have sufficient instructions so parents/instructors who have not had a music background themselves are able to understand what to do to effectively help the students.

By the way, when I use the term “learned”, it means the song is memorized. In addition to being able to play the song more easily when memorized, this also trains the memory reflex in the brain which transfers to other subjects as well! When the song is memorized with the dominant hand, it is also much easier to concentrate on training the other hand...or playing with both hands.

I keep reminding everyone to learn to play each song with each hand. It is much easier to play with the dominant hand, but it is really important that each hand becomes trained. As a teacher, you can playfully “gripe” about how hard it is to play with the non-dominant hand, but tell the students they must try to be patient with that hand. If you personify the hand, the students are much more willing to work at making it function.... It will learn....trust me.....but will take some work especially at the beginning. Later students will be playing with both hands in the same song!

Also try to get to the point of playing and singing simultaneously. As with everything, take a small step at a time. Be joyous and congratulatory with each step that is learned. “WOW! You played that part really well!”

Once a song is initially learned with the dominant hand, start utilizing the performance techniques. If you remember to always use the performance signals during rehearsals, the signals will become habit and no one will “forget” what to do when performing - and the performances will be great!

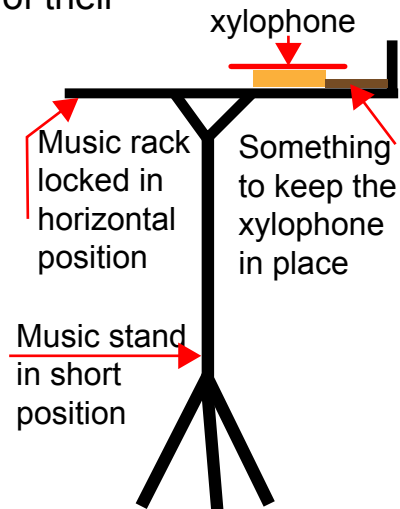
PERFORMING

There are several ways to perform.

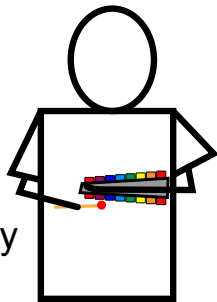
1. Tables are set up and xylophones are in position.
All that has to be done is for students to walk into the room in correct order and stand in front of their particular xylophone with arms at sides.

2. Students walk in carrying xylophones in Rest Position, then position their xylophone onto a rail or music stand that is in a flattened, horizontal position.
Xylophones could also be pre-positioned.

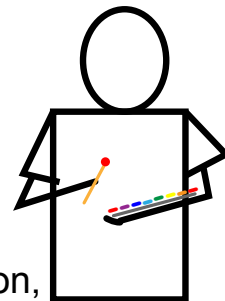
3. Students walk in carrying xylophones in Rest Position, then position xylophone onto their forearm at Play Position signal.



REST POSITION:
Xylophone is lifted against the body by the bottom part of the xylophone...NEVER lifted by the tone bars....tone bars touch the body. The mallet is held with the other hand.



PLAY POSITION:
Xylophone is carefully lowered from Rest Position to Play Position, tone bars facing upwards. The lower C is by the elbow, when held with the left arm (low C is by the hand if held by the right arm). At the end of each song, the xylophone is carefully lifted back into rest position so the arm holding the xylophone can rest and also to protect the xylophone while bowing.



BOWING:

When bowing, the xylophone is already in Rest Position or mallet(s) have been put down onto table or stand and student bows from the waist. Explain to students that they need to be gracious when applauded. They can either bow or personally say "thank you" to each person in the audience....bowing is easier!

SIGNALS

Generally speaking, audio signals are better than visual signals since not everyone is looking the same way all the time! What is remarkable is that the audience tends not to “hear” the signals.

PLAY POSITION: LOW C, HIGH C

When performing, the xylophones are either on a table or stand or are being held in Rest Position. An easy signal is to ding the low C followed by dinging the high C.

Those holding their xylophones in rest position then carefully lower their xylophone to Play Position and hold the mallet in a position ready to play.

Those with their xylophones and mallets on a table or stand simply pick up their mallet in a position ready to play.

READY PLAY: FIRST NOTE: DING, DING, DING, (DING)

To begin a song just ding the first note of the song 3 or 4 times - whichever is appropriate for the song. Always try to ding in the tempo or rhythm of the song so students not only know when to start, but have the proper speed/rhythm of the song in their head.

END OF SONG

At the end a song, students should automatically put down their mallet on a table or stand. Those holding their xylophone should immediately go to Rest Position.

BOW: HIGH C, LOW C

STAND UP: HIGH C, HIGH C, HIGH C

If audience applauds, give signal - ding high C followed by dinging low C.

Students stay in “down” position until the signal to stand up - high C dinged 3 times.

REMEMBER TO ALWAYS PRACTICE WITH THESE SIGNALS EACH TIME AN ALREADY LEARNED SONG IS PLAYED DURING REHEARSAL TIME.

WHY SO FUSSY???

Children love playing the xylophone, but besides learning to play and sing songs with precision, we need to instill ability to follow directions, ability to concentrate and focus, etc....all of which instill incredible confidence in all aspects of their lives.

When children walk in to perform, most audiences will take a look and think, "What cute kids!" HOWEVER, if the performance is great, that audience will think, "What a fantastic performance. We never knew kids could do such a wonderful job! We are so proud of you. This was so enjoyable!" And, you can remind the students, they shared something wonderful - the Truth of our Lord in the words of the songs and the Joy of their performance.

When children get such good responses it creates a tremendous sense of achievement and gives them the confidence that with some effort, a lot can be learned and shared...."I can do anything!"

Be really careful, however, when you are very particular about following signals, ding the tone bars well, etc. Make sure to be tremendously enthusiastic when the students do any part of a song well (even a couple notes) or follow directions well. Praise them to the sky!

If the children do not do as well as they could, personify parts of their body. "We need to speak to those hands." "Hands, you can do this. Just take your time. Let's try again.....slowly now." And if they improve be sure to praise those hands for trying again and doing a much better job. "Everyone, tell those hands they did a good job!" The students will think this is all funny, but it works!

Years ago I had a violin group that performed extensively. They ranged in age from 4 to 12. They performed in events where no other children's groups were allowed....on outdoor stages 12 feet high...for governors...on tv shows.... This gave them tremendous confidence and they worked really hard to always give their best and share with the audience! Children can give amazing, joyful performances.