The Music Effect

Creative, high-interest activities for standards-based music education

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Chapter 4: Question and Answer Form

Many of us have an innate sense or desire for form and order. We organize our bookshelves, our closets, or our daily appointment books. We tell stories that have a beginning, middle, and end.

In similar ways, musicians use form to organize their musical ideas. The form of most children’s songs is similar to the way in which questions and answers are used in everyday conversation. The first musical thought, or phrase, sounds incomplete, as if a question has been asked. The second phrase sounds complete, as if the question has been answered. Thus, the form of many children’s songs and rhymes is question and answer, or antecedent and consequent.

Experience with question and answer form provides a firm foundation for understanding and appreciating all forms of musical expression. The activities in chapter 4 invite young learners to experience and explore question and answer form. From an experiential perspective, the activities invite children to sing, move, explore, read, create, and improvise musical questions and answers. From a conceptual perspective, children discover that:

\[ \begin{align*}
\text{A phrase may be a question.} \\
\text{A phrase may be an answer.} \\
\text{The form of a song or rhyme may be \textit{“question and answer.”}}
\end{align*} \]

Track 15 Doggie, Doggie

Traditional

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Doggie, Doggie, where’s your bone? Some one took it from my home.} \\
\text{Who has my bone? I have your bone.}
\end{align*}
\]