

## Musical Instrument Activities

### Objectives:

- Students will listen to examples of African music.
- Students will make a musical instrument from a variety of materials.
- Students will determine that cultures make utilitarian objects that are also art.

**Vocabulary:** djembe, mbira, thumb piano, shakere

### Anticipatory Set:

TTW show students examples of African instruments and listen to their sounds. TTW ask students to give examples of art that is functional.

TTW explain that many African peoples use instruments as part of celebrations and special occasions. Masks are worn during performances with a costume while music is played.

Choose one or more projects from the suggestions below.

### 1. Djembe Drum

#### Procedures

- TSW select two cups with interesting shapes.
- TSW cut the bottoms out of the cups. They may need assistance from an adult or the cups can be pre-cut.
- TSW tape the cups together bottom to bottom.
- TSW cover the cups with a thin layer of paper maché using a paste made of flour and water and strips of newspaper.
- When the cups are dry, TSW paint over the newspaper with a thin layer of white paint to create a blank surface on which to paint designs.
- When this layer is dry, TSW paint the cups in their own design.
- To create the drum head, choose a punching balloon and open it by inserting the scissors and slitting it along the side. This can be done ahead of time.
- Stretch the rubber over the top of the drum and secure with a rubberband.
- Embellish the drum with yarn by cutting a long piece, tying it around the middle of the drum and another piece around the top. Weave yarn between these pieces.



#### Materials

Paper or plastic cups in a variety of sizes  
Scissors  
Tape

Newspaper strips  
Paint & paintbrush  
Punching balloon

Rubber Band  
Flour & Water  
Yarn

## **2. Flower Pot Drum**

### **Procedures**

- TSW paint the pot and let it dry.
- Using the rubberband, attach a piece of paper or piece of rubber balloon over the top of the pot.



### **Materials**

Terracotta plant pot  
Acrylic paints  
Sheet of paper or punching balloon  
Rubber band

## **3. Shakere**

### **Procedures**

- You will need one plastic container for each student or group of students. These should be washed out and dried before beginning the projec
- TSW begin by stringing beads onto lengths of ribbon or twine (nylon rope works well). They may want to space the beads out by tying knots in the string. The length of the beaded strings will vary depending on the size of the container. TSW measure one length by going from near the handle to the middle of the bottom of the container. Students should complete at least 6 – 8 strands for each Shakere.
- TSW create a small circle (bracelet size) of beads to which they will attach the beaded strands.
- When beading is complete, TSW secure them to the area of the container near the handle (upper portion) using tape.
- TSW connect the ends of the strings together by tying them around the circular strand of beads.
- TSW decorate the shakere using permanent markers and tying festive ribbons to the handle and/or lid of the container.

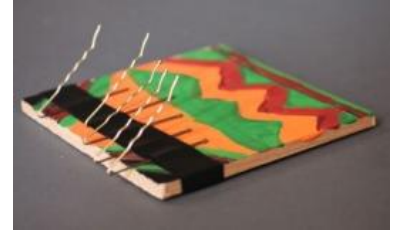


### **Materials**

Recycled plastic container (such as milk carton or detergent bottle)  
Yarn, nylon rope, string and/or ribbon  
Decorative duct tape  
Beads  
Scissors  
Permanent markers

#### **4. Mbira (thumb piano)**

Known as a *kalimba* in East Africa, the thumb piano is an instrument popular across all regions of Africa. Traditionally, the thumb piano is made from a hollow wooden box with a circular opening near the bottom. Some are made from gourds and other natural materials. Music is made by playing the keys, or tines, with the thumbs. Usually, the keys are made from metal, but are occasionally made from bamboo and other materials.



#### **Procedures**

- TSW paint the block of wood and let it dry.
- Open up the bobbie pins so that they make a wide V.
- Measure the length of tape needed to go all the way around the wooden block.
- Secure the bobbie pins under the tape with the flat side down. Use at least two layers of tape to make sure it sticks good!

#### **Considerations**

- How does the spacing of the tines affect the sound?
- Why do some westerners refer to this as a thumb piano?
- What causes the sound?

#### **Materials**

Cut wood  
Bobbie Pins (5 per student)  
Paint & paintbrushes  
Craft sticks  
Tape  
Scissors  
Black marker