

# LET'S GET SINGING!

## Down by the Bay

*Traditional*

**Down by the bay** (down by the bay)

**Where the watermelons grow**

(where the watermelons grow)

**Back to my home** (back to my home)

**I dare not go** (I dare not go)

**For if I do** (for If I do)

**My mother will say** (my mother will say)

*Have you ever seen a cat wearing a hat  
down by the bay?*

*Have you ever seen a whale with a polka-dot tail  
down by the bay?*

*Have you ever seen a dog dancing on a log  
down by the bay?*

*Have you ever seen a llama wearing pyjamas  
down by the bay?*

This song is an echo song. The leader sings the words in bold and then everyone copies them by singing back the echo. The final line, a nonsense rhyme, is sung by the whole group together, in unison.

## Teaching notes

- Clear diction is critical. The song is only amusing if people can hear the words.
- Be expressive and tell the story.
- Make sure that the students clearly understand which parts of the song are echoed and which parts are in unison.
- Take care with the words 'Have you' at the beginning of each unison section. These notes each have a pause and are a little longer than you might expect.

## About the presenter

Wellington-based singer and teacher, Jo Hodgson, was fortunate to have wonderful singing opportunities



growing up. She is a passionate advocate for singing and performance as a medium for connection through the joy and community it brings. In addition to regular appearances as both stage performer and music director in music theatre productions, Jo teaches groups and individuals from pre-school to tertiary level and beyond.

## Warm-ups

Warm-ups help to prepare us physically and vocally for singing. They help to relax our bodies and sharpen our minds. Jo's warm-up sequence takes the shape of a musical journey, where each warm-up is embedded in a larger story. This is a great model for how you could approach music-making in your classroom.

## Physical

1 Walking on the spot – to the count of four.

Objective: prepare and practice a steady beat; energise the body. This exercise will help students to get their bodies moving. Being able to keep a steady beat is an important foundational music skill and the best way to practice it is with large, gross motor action. If your students find walking to the beat challenging, try other actions such as patting their knees with both hands or patting their shoulders with both hands. Sometimes speeding up the beat

will also help as young children have smaller bodies and faster heart rates.

## 2 Massage face/jaw.

Objective: relax face muscles and release any tension in the jaw. Excess, unnecessary tension is counterproductive to producing a free, clear singing sound.

## Physical/Vocal

### 3 Descending sigh.

Objective: vocal range. This exercise will help students access the upper part of their vocal range. It is easier for students to find their singing voices if we approach from above. Using the arms to mirror the descending pitch also helps to reinforce ideas around high and low.

## Vocal

### 4 Calling out to a friend.

Objective: experimenting with different ways of using our voices. Students need opportunities to explore all of the ways they can use their voices – calling, singing, whispering, speaking. Using a range of pitch sequences and vocal timbres, or colours, helps students build confidence in using their voices artistically and expressively.

## Physical/Vocal

### 5 Buzzing bee.

Objective: vocal range and agility. This exercise helps students explore pitch changes with easy slides from high to low and low to high. Using the finger tracing around the hand helps to embody concepts of pitch, a visual reference for high/low.

## Vocal

### 6 Ladder – scale patterns.

Objective: vocal range; pitch-matching. Many of your students may already match the pitch accurately. However, it is not unusual for children to not be able to match pitch accurately when singing. Pitch-matching is a skill that can be taught and learned with practice. A growth mindset approach must be applied here – students may not be able to match pitch yet but with practice, they can learn over time.

## What else could you do with this song?

### Extension/Curricular links

- Explore rhyming words and make up new lyrics for the song.
- When the children are confident singing the song, have a small group of children sing the part of the leader.
- Create a picture book, either hard copy or digital. Have students illustrate the rhymes for each verse.

For a physical picture book, have students share it by performing for others. A digital version could have the singing recorded over the top of the illustrations.

- Choose a rhyme as a visual art inspiration. Explore through a variety of media.
- Create a dramatic performance incorporating movement, singing and instrumental accompaniment.
- Gather other songs that use echo as a performance structure.

## Glossary of musical terms

<b>Beat</b>	The steady heartbeat of the music that continues as long as the music does. It only gets faster or slower if the music requires it. Sometimes the beat is audible and sometimes it is implied. An ensemble stays together by sharing a sense of beat. Keeping the beat means keeping in time.
<b>Pause</b>	Musical term: Fermata. This indicates that a note or a rest is held longer than what is indicated by the rhythmic value.
<b>Pitch</b>	Highness and lowness of sounds.
<b>Scale</b>	A sequence of notes/tones that follow a particular pattern or structure. There are lots of different types of scales.
<b>Unison</b>	All voices/instruments singing/playing the same thing at the same time.

## Important messages

- Singing is fun!
- It is important for the health of children's voices that they are singing in a pitch range that is not too low.
- Never louder than beautiful. Let the natural beauty of children's voices shine. Understand that the volume they produce is directly proportional to their age, size and stage of development. Encourage healthy singing, not shouting.
- Singing voice, speaking voice, whispering voice – we can use our vocal mechanism in different ways. Ensure that children are using their voices in a 'singing' way. A light and ringing sound will help protect young voices from overuse and possible damage.
- Our body is our instrument. That means that no two voices will sound the same – we are each unique!
- We need our whole body to sing – energy, breath, posture, expression as well as a singing voice.
- Again – Singing is fun! And important! And good for us! Singing every day will energise you and your students.