



Classroom Reflections

Music experiences in the classroom

by Ruth Ann Darnall

Each day in my grade one classroom, we sang along with records, sang songs I had learned, or used the Silver Burdett music program. In addition, we learned dances from books and folk records. We enjoyed ourselves, but in all this I felt there was something missing. For one thing, I am not a gifted piano player, so I always had to give so much attention to playing that I could not be part of classroom experience.

It wasn't until I took courses from Sister Fleurette Sweeney through the University of British Columbia that I realized I had found an all-encompassing way of reaching "the whole child." One vital element of Fleurette's courses was the variety of experiences that evolved in and through song games. Along with learning melodies and activities, we were immersed in a philosophy that promoted education of the "whole child." We reflected upon how our view of learning would enhance the learning of the children in our care.

After participating in Fleurette's courses, her suggested music activities and teaching strategies became, for the first few months of every year, the backbone for learning in our classroom.

Through these activities the children learned to:

- listen (not only to the song but to each other as they sang or spoke)
- take turns
- make acceptable suggestions
- communicate
- use the spoken language
- look each other in the eye as they talked
- show respect to each other
- value their accomplishments
- cooperate
- be tolerant and considerate
- be active participants
- make decisions
- use space wisely
- use their bodies in a wise manner

.and on and on.....

Throughout the year, song games continued to be a popular part of our curriculum. No other subject covers all areas of learning as well as music. A song game activity is whole learning.