



More Ways Than One

Through the years, song game activities have been presented at summer courses and workshops where many of us were in attendance. Various activities from these courses and workshops have been adopted, adapted, and extended to meet the needs of our students. Following are but two of those adaptations for the song “Come and Follow Me” and the game for “Three Blind Mice.”

Come and Follow Me

Come and fol - low me in a line, in a
line. Come and fol - low me, we will go this way!
(Marilyn's version) stop like this!

Come and Follow Me

By Deb Eikenbary

As I prepare for school each August, my thoughts turn to the youngest new students I will have the opportunity to greet. The song, “Come and Follow Me,” and its accompanying activities have been a favorite for many of these students. I meet my students at the door, have a quick exchange with their classroom teacher and begin singing, “Come and follow me in a line, in a line” Perhaps it’s because of the unusual greeting but whatever the reason; I see surprise, and then delight as the students follow the leader into the room.

When all students are in the room, can see me, and have heard the entire song more than once, I invite them to sing with me. A statue pose may be added at the end as the leader models. When it seems appropriate, I invite students to lead the line. We focus on an individual by singing his or her name in the song, for example, “Come and follow Becca...” Sometimes children giggle the first time we sing a name in the song but soon the would-be leaders eagerly raise their hands for a turn. Eventually, I lead the students into a circle and the phrase, “We will go this way” becomes, “We will all sit down”.

Students enjoy this method of beginning music class. Moving, adding names, and focusing on others seem to be very satisfying for my students for a long while. The structure and predictability of this activity provide a comfortable starting point from which they can grow. It becomes a part of them and they take ownership. Some persist in singing it without me, as later in the year, I try to phase it out.

Additional Activities
“Come and Follow Me” affords so many possibilities for study that I need to remind myself not to add too much too soon. For example, phrases describing movement such as “tap your toe” or “nod your head” can be substituted for “in a line”.

In later years my students enjoy studying the rhythm and melody of this song through activities such as “Name That Tune” in which the solfeggio or the rhythm patterns are written on the board. The students read the patterns and try to figure out the name of the song.

Playing the rhythm of this song on rhythm instruments such as drums or woodblocks can be great fun. “in a line” and “Come and follow me” are repeated patterns that can be played on instruments as voices sing the rest of the song. Because of its pentatonic structure this is a good song to play on instruments such as xylophones and keyboards. In reference to the keyboard, if the low SO is played by the left hand, the rest of the song can be played with the right in one position – an important first step in keyboard study.

The pentatonic tonality, simplicity, and possibilities for repetition make this an excellent song for young voices

Come and Follow Me Partner Game

By Marilyn Winter

Playing “Come and Follow Me” in this way originated while working with a group of children ages four to eight. Some of the four year olds were not sure how to follow in a line. So the older students became leaders with the younger children following. Playing this game in pairs was so much fun that I have adopted this way of playing for my students.

The Game: Note that the cadence phrase in this version of the game is changed to “We will stop like this”.

Game formation: Seated circle

Dialogue and actions:

- “Listen to the words of this song, Figure out what we will be doing.” The teacher sings the song.
- “What does the song tell us to do?” (Discussion and modeling occur.)
- “What does it mean to follow someone in a line?”
- “Watch what happens as we sing this time.” Everyone sings while the teacher walks around the outside of the circle and freezes in a simple statue at the end of the song. “Raise your hand if you can tell what happened at the end of the song.” Discussion takes place.
- “Notice that my feet are closest to Sam. Sam, please stand up, turn around and look at me. Sam, will you follow me in a line?” Sam responds, “yes” or “no.” If he says, “no,” he can return to his seat, and the leader walks around and stops behind another child at the cadence of the song. If Sam responds, “yes,” the leader gives the following instructions: “Sam, when I begin walking, walk behind me. When we stop at the end of the song, make a statue look just like mine.”

The leader and Sam walk around the circle, stop at the cadence, and freeze into statues. For modeling purposes, the teacher may take several turns being the leader. If so, followers go back to their places in the circle when their turn is finished.

After modeling a few turns, say to the person standing behind the teacher, “Ann, who did you stop behind? “Who is closest to your feet?” Ann responds, “George.” “George, stand up and face Ann. Ann, look at George and invite him to follow you in a line.” “Now, Ann is the leader and George will follow her in a line. I will sit in George’s place.”

Continue playing in this fashion as long as student interest and time allow. When children need additional challenges, more pairs can be added. Eventually, all can be with a partner moving around the room. Continue to challenge students to move at random without touching another person or thing in the room. For an additional challenge, students can switch roles. The follower becomes the leader. It is also fun to have two pairs join another pair making a set of four. Play until all four have been leader.

1. **Source:** Come and Follow Me, Richards, M.H. (1985) Let's Do It Again Portola Valley, CA. Richards Institute of Music Education and Research, p. II.