



Lesson: Creating your own Brazilian Instrument - Caxixi

Artform: Visual Art and Music

Skill Level: Medium

Teaching Artist: Myrna Meeroff

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Introduce the culture of Brazil through one traditional instrument.

- Students will explore Brazilian culture through its musical instrument
- Students will learn about the Brazilian flag
- Students will create their own Brazilian Caxixi and color it in the colors of the Brazilian flag

BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Brazil is the largest country in South America. It is the only country in South America that speaks Portuguese. It became a Portuguese colony in April of 1500. There are many native tribes in Brazil including the Aymores and the Guarani. Brazil is the home of the Amazon rain forest.

The music of Brazil is combination of traditional native music, Portuguese music and West African music. Antonio Carlos Jobim is one of the most famous Brazilian samba and bossa nova. Much Brazilian music is tied to Carnival, a Christian holiday celebrating with parades and dancing before the Lent season.

The caxixi is a musical instrument that came over from Africa and became an important part of Brazilian music. The caxixi is a shaker made of a basket with a flat bottom filled with seeds.

MATERIALS

- Brown paper lunch bag
- Green, yellow and blue crayons
- Items to put inside the bag to make the seed shaking sound. You can use: plastic bottle caps, dry rice, dry beans, paper clips or any type of small hard item.
- Rubber band or string to close the paper bag

ACTIVITIES

1. Lie the paper bag flat and unopened on the table
2. Using the three colors of the Brazilian flag (yellow, blue and green) color the entire front and back of the paper bag using stripes of color. You can make the stripes thin or fat.
3. Open the paper bag as if you were going to fill it. Make sure the bottom of the bag is flat.
4. Place the "seeds" or whatever you have chosen to use as seeds inside the bag. Do not fill too much as it can rip the bag. I recommend 8 bottle caps, a handful of rice or dry beans.

5. Close the top of the paper bag by squishing it closed and twisting it, not by folding it over. Take a rubber band and put it around the twisted area to keep it closed and the seeds in.
6. Hold it from the squished part of the bag, this will be your handle, and shake up and down.

Play along with some of the suggested music below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7DNsBhfljO0>

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR INCLUDING ALL CHILDREN

- Have some larger crayons for those with motor issues
- Can use hand over hand for those with motor issues or provide handles such as a tennis ball with a slit in it where you can put a crayon for an easy grip on it
- Have an extra paper bag in case one is ripped or torn in the process.
- The handle can be adapted to make it easier to hold by making it longer. Simply squish as far down as the “seeds” allow. You can also tape if needed to make a stronger handle.

Example of a Brazilian caxixi



Flag of Brazil

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