

Second Line Arts Collective

Lesson 8: New Orleans Brass Bands

Lesson Overview

This lesson introduces students to the vibrant world of New Orleans brass bands and their connection to jazz culture. Students will learn about the instruments in a brass band, explore the history of jazz, and sing or play along with “When the Saints Go Marching In.”

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will:

1. Understand the role of brass bands in New Orleans jazz culture.
2. Identify the instruments commonly found in a brass band.
3. Learn and perform “When the Saints Go Marching In.”

Materials Needed

- Visual aids: Pictures or videos of [brass bands](#) and their instruments.
- Homemade instruments (e.g., paper towel roll horns, tambourines, shakers, drums).
- [Lyrics](#) or sheet music for “When the Saints Go Marching In.”

Lesson Steps

Introduction to Brass Bands (5 minutes)

- Show pictures or videos of New Orleans brass bands.
- Discuss the instruments typically found in a brass band:
 - Trumpets, trombones, clarinets, saxophones, tubas, snare drums, and bass drums.
- Explain the role of brass bands in parades, celebrations, and jazz music.

History of Jazz and “Saints” (5 minutes)

- Share a brief history of jazz as a blend of African and European musical traditions.

- Introduce “When the Saints Go Marching In” as a classic New Orleans brass band song.
 - Explain that it is often played to celebrate life and joy.

Learn and Sing “Saints” (10 minutes)

- Teach the melody and lyrics of the song:
 - First verse:
Oh when the saints go marching in,
Oh when the saints go marching in,
Oh Lord, I want to be in that number,
When the saints go marching in.
- Sing through the song as a group, repeating until students feel comfortable.

Play Along with Homemade Instruments (10 minutes)

- Distribute homemade instruments or encourage students to use body percussion.
- Assign roles to mimic a brass band:
 - Horn section: Humming or “playing” paper towel roll horns.
 - Rhythm section: Drums, claps, or stomps.
- Perform “Saints” as a group, encouraging students to add their own flair and movements.

Group Reflection and Discussion (5 minutes)

- Ask students:
 - How did it feel to play in your own brass band?
 - Why do you think “When the Saints Go Marching In” is such a popular song?
- Discuss how brass bands bring people together to celebrate and share joy.

Extension Activities

- Movement Connection: Turn the song into a mini parade with students marching and playing their instruments.
- Art Connection: Have students draw their own brass band or design a parade float. [Parade float reference photos](#)
- Music History: Introduce key figures in New Orleans jazz, like [Louis Armstrong](#), and their connection to brass bands.

Reflection Questions

- What did you enjoy most about playing in the brass band?
- How do you think brass bands make celebrations more exciting?
- Can you think of other songs that make people feel happy or want to march?

Teacher/Parent Tips

- Encourage students to be expressive and creative during the song performance.
- Simplify the lyrics for younger students or focus on the melody if singing is challenging.
- Reinforce the joy and energy brass bands bring to New Orleans culture.