



Music and Humane Education

by **Patty A. Finch and Willow Soltow**

Preschool and Primary Grades

“Piggyback songs” are songs that take a free ride on the shoulders of well-known melodies. You’ve used them to teach everything from counting to the alphabet! Now you can use them to teach children about the animals all around them.

Our piggyback songs include fun creative-movement gestures for kids to do as they sing. You can also have students make up their own verses and gestures to go with them. We hope you enjoy our piggyback songs. Be sure to send us any new ones that you and your students come up with.

1. The Wild Animal Song

Sing to the tune of “The Wheels on the Bus Go ‘Round and ‘Round.”

Verse 1.

The wild animals say,
(Hold up both hands to either side of the top of your head for pretend animal ears.)

“Don’t touch us, don’t touch us, don’t touch us!”
(Push away with both hands for each ‘don’t touch us.’)

The wild animals say,
(Same as above.)

“Don’t touch us!”
(Same as above.)

Then we won’t hurt you.
(Hunch your shoulders, hold your hands in front of you with fingers curved down like pretend claws, “scratching” the air in time to the music.)

Verse 2.

The wild animals say,
(As before, hold up both hands to either side of the top of your head for pretend animal ears.)

“Don’t catch me, don’t catch me, don’t catch me!”
(Cross both arms against your chest and shake your head no for each ‘don’t catch me.’)

The wild animals say,
(Same as above.)

“Don’t catch me!”
(Same as above.)

“I am wild and free!”
(Raise both of your arms up and out.)

2. The Ethologist Song

Who studies wild animals in the wild, where they normally live? The ethologist, of course! Ask your students how many of them have ever watched ants in an anthill outside or a spider spinning a web outdoors. Did they know that they were doing what an ethologist does—studying animals where those animals live?

Point out to students that some scientists don’t capture wild animals in order to study them. Instead, these scientists go to where the wild animals normally live and study them in their natural habitats. Then try our “Ethologist Song” with your class. When the song is over, ask students what other animals an ethologist might watch and what he or she might see them doing. Care to try making up a new verse or two, anyone? Sing to the tune of “Mary Had a Little Lamb.”

Verse 1.

Come and watch wild animals, animals, animals.
Come and watch wild animals.
(Pantomime looking through binoculars.)

Learn from the wild and free.
(Put both hands up to either side of your head for animal ears.)

Verse 2.

Do you see a kangaroo? kangaroo? kangaroo?
Do you see a kangaroo?
(Hold hands like paws in front of chest.)

It loves to jump along.
(Have students bounce up and down in their seats or as they are seated on the floor.)

Verse 3.

Do you see an elephant? elephant? elephant?
Do you see an elephant?
(Stretch arms out and down with hands held together to make an elephant trunk.)

It loves to walk along.
(Move body from side to side the way a slow-moving elephant might walk.)

Verse 4.

Do you see a bald eagle, bald eagle, bald eagle?
Do you see a bald eagle?
(Flap arms like wings.)

It loves to fly along.
(Move body from side to side as you flap your arms like an eagle soaring.)

Verse 5.

Do you see a chimpanzee? chimpanzee? chimpanzee?
Do you see a chimpanzee?
(Scratch head with one hand, side with the other.)

It loves to climb along.
(Put one hand over the other in a climbing motion.)

3. Animals We Love

Here’s a song that helps students learn animal names. Accompany the different verses with a picture of each animal to reinforce learning. Sing to the tune of “Old MacDonald Had a Farm.”

Verse 1.

Here’s an animal we love!
Ee-I-Ee-I-O
And don’t you know it is a bear!
Ee-I-Ee-I-O

With a bear, bear here
And a bear, bear there.
Here a bear, there a bear.
Everywhere a bear, bear.

Here’s an animal we love!
Ee-I-Ee-I-O.

(Note: some other animal names that work well include *owl, snake, duck, mouse, bird, worm, moose, goat, dog, cat, cow, and horse.*)

4. Ms. MacDonald Had a Dog

Here’s another variation on “Old MacDonald Had a Farm.” Before students begin singing, have them name some of the things that a pet dog needs. Possible student answers may include love, brushing, food, water, walks, shots, and so on. Have students sing the sample first verse and then make up additional verses based on the pet needs that they have named. Or challenge students to think of the needs of some other domestic animals—a cat, a cow, or a pig, for instance. Sing to the tune of “Old MacDonald Had a Farm.”

Verse 1.

Ms. MacDonald had a dog.
Ee-I-Ee-I-O
And this dog he needed...LOVE!
Ee-I-Ee-I-O

With some love, love, here;
And some love, love there.
Here some love, there some love,
Everywhere some love, love.

Ms. McDonald had a dog.
Ee-I-Ee-I-O.

5. Endangered Friends

This delightful round can be used to teach very young students about endangered animal friends and some of the things those animals need in their natural habitats to survive. Sing to the tune of “Scotland’s Burning.”

Verse 1.

Giant pandas, giant pandas.
Help them, help them.
Save land, save land.
We share the earth, we share the earth.

Verse 2.

Bald eagles, bald eagles.
Help them, help them.
Save land, save land.
We share the earth, we share the earth.

Verse 3.

Mountain lions, mountain lions.
Help them, help them.
Save land, save land.
We share the earth, we share the earth.

Verse 4.

Diving whales, diving whales.
Help them, help them.
Keep safe, keep safe.
We share the earth, we share the earth.

Verse 5.

Ridley turtles, ridley turtles.
Help them, help them.
Keep safe, keep safe.
We share the earth, we share the earth.♥

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