Name/Title: Fanga: A Cultural Experience for Everyone! (February 2012)

Purpose of Event: To share a cultural, rhythmical, creative, inclusive experience with all ages that originated in another country

Suggested Grade Level: K-12

Materials Needed: Percussion instruments

Recommended music: Students accompany themselves.

Beginning dance formation: Open in somewhat of a line left to right but can have rows. (Herd Formation)

Description of Idea

This dance, Fanga, originated in Kenya, Africa according to a former student, Joy Kagendo Wells, who shared it with me. However, it is now danced in most all of the African countries and all around the world for that matter. This is an inclusion dance to welcome people and is performed on happy occasions and celebrations.

It is performed as a chant accompanied by drums with everyone repeating the words of the cantor/leader with the appropriate movements.

The word “Fanga” means we welcome you with open arms and hearts,“Alafia” means we welcome you with love, and “Ashei” means that’s right, we all agree. Joy would emphasize that the whole village shared these feelings and wanted this to be expressed to all of their guests. The words and phrases are repeated twice for emphasis and strengthening of the message from the “village members.” The dance involves the entire body, a very complete workout to say the least.

Formation: Men, women, and children dance in a spread out formation, in which the ladies and children usually line up in front of the formation and the men line up on the sides and at the back with the drums and other percussion instruments.

Words and movements:
Chant/Song (Everyone stepping in place, side to side, and forward and backward, in time to the drum beat throughout the dance):

1. Cantor: Fanga Alafia, Everyone: Fanga Alafia, (Repeat)
Movements: Arms are straight out to sides and rolled in time to the drum beat
Cantor: Ashei, Ashei, Everyone: Ashei, Ashei, (Repeat)
Movements: Two claps for each syllable of Ashei and for each Ashei

2. Cantor: We welcome you with all our heart, Everyone: We welcome you with all our heart,

(Repeat)
Movements: Hands to chest and then raised to sky openly each time it is chanted
Cantor: Ashei, Ashei, Everyone: Ashei, Ashei, (Repeat)
Movements: Two claps for each syllable of Ashei and for each Ashei

3. Cantor: We welcome you from the North and South, Everyone: We welcome you from the North and South, (Repeat)
Movements: Raise hands to the sky and then lower to knees each time it is chanted
Cantor: Ashei, Ashei, Everyone: Ashei, Ashei, (Repeat)
Movements: Two claps for each syllable of Ashei and for each Ashei

4. Cantor: We welcome you from the East and West, Everyone: We welcome you from the East and West (Repeat)
Movements: Right arm extends to right side and left arm extends to left side with the chant
Cantor: Ashei, Ashei, Everyone: Ashei, Ashei, (Repeat)
Movements: Two claps for each syllable of Ashei and for each Ashei

5. Repeat number one or entire song for as long as you want. Can add other movements as well to signify other messages to the "guests." The ideas are limitless and should be encouraged as an extension of the dance and "brain." Don't hesitate to move the entire group forward, backward and sideways to expand on expressions related to the "celebration."

Assessment Ideas:

Checklist of learnings, i.e., words and their meanings, create a dance using similar movements and make up their own words and dances, repeat all parts from memory, use different cantors/leaders in the class, set up groups to create their own similar dances.

Teaching Suggestions:

For more ideas on this dance and many others, go to: Bennett, J. P. and Riemer, P.C. (2006). Rhythmic activities and dance. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics. Note: A CD of music accompanies this book.

Adaptations for Students with Disabilities:

This is designed for total inclusion and the abilities of any one student should not exclude them from doing this particular dance or being included in groups to create new dances.

Submitted by **John P. Bennett, Ed.D.,C.P.M.** who teaches at University of North Carolina Wilmington in Wilmington, NC. Thanks for contributing to PE Central! **Posted on PEC: 1/31/2012**.

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