Name/Title: **Celebrate Oktoberfest with the Polka (October 2009)**

Purpose of Event: Students will learn the basic polka step, a polka dance combination, counting from 1-10 in Czech, Polish and German, history of the polka dance, and the Oktoberfest celebrations.

Suggested Grade Level: 5-12

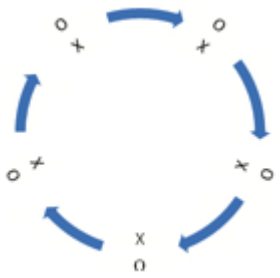
Materials Needed:

If students do not like holding hands provide one scarf for each child. The scarves should be held in the right hand.

Music can be purchased from iTunes: Type “polka music” into the search box. There are 2 very good selections: Tuba Polka by the Backyardigans. This cut features children singing, but it is only 1:23 seconds long. The second selection is an album called Polka, Polka, Polka. The entire album is $9.99, but individual songs can be purchased. The best cuts on the album seem to be: Liechtensteiner Polka or the Beer Barrel Polka. This album also has a fast paced version of the Chicken Dance on it.

Full Lesson Plan (PDF)

Beginning dance formation: This polka can be done in a double circle. The members of the class are in partners with students holding hands or scarves. One partner (the leader, X in the diagram) will have his/her back to the center of the circle. The other partner (the follower, O in the diagram) will face the leader, looking into the center of the circle. The dance can also be done in a scatter formation with partners spread randomly around the floor.



Description of Idea

Full Lesson Plan (PDF)

Anticipatory Set: Legend has it that the polka was originally danced by a Czech-Bohemian peasant girl in 1830. Because of its quick movement from one foot to another, it may be named

from the Czech word “pulka” which means half-step. The citizens of Poland contend that the polka was first danced by Poles who resided in southern Hungary. In fact in Polish, the word “polka” means Polish woman. By the mid 1840s the polka had reached New York and was the dance performed by the upper class citizens. Soon the immigrants from Germany and Eastern Europe came to America with their own music and the polka became a dance for everyone! Polka music symbolized happy times as the immigrants were very optimistic about their lives in the new country. Today, the polka is the official state dance of Wisconsin.
www.bratwurstpages.com/polka.html

A map of Central Europe is included. This area of the world is truly a crossroads for many different peoples, cultures, and commerce. The cultures are varied and well preserved especially in the old Polish capital of Cracow (Krakow), Hungary and the Czech Republic.



www.europeetravel.com/maps/central-europe-map.htm

How to count to ten in:

Polish Czech German
1. jeden jeden eins
2. dwa dva zwei
3. trzy tri drei
4. cztery chryri vier
5. piec pet funf
6. szesc shest sechs
7. siedem sedm sieben
8. osiem osm acht
9. dziewiec devet neun
10. dziesiec deset zehn

Proper pronunciations for these words can be found on the internet; check videos on youtube.

History of Oktoberfest: The first Oktoberfest was held in Munich, German in 1810 to celebrate the marriage of a Bavarian Crown Prince to a Saxon-Hildburghausen Princess. Oktoberfest in Munich, Germany actually lasts 16 days and brings in over 6 million visitors to the city. The largest Oktoberfest in the US occurs in Ohio. Oktoberfests all over the world are known for traditional music, marches, and polkas. Many of the annual festivities would not be complete without the Chicken Dance. Be sure to include it in your warm ups!

www.vistawide.com/german/oktoberfest/oktoberfest.htm

Basic Polka Dance Step: The traditional polka step begins with a hop that can be called the preliminary beat before count #1. The leader, as described above, will begin with the weight on the R foot. The follower will be the mirror image. The partners will move away from the center of the circle.

The movement of the basic step is:

Counts: Steps:
&1&2 Hop on the R foot, (&) step LRL moving forward, similar to a chasse (1&2)
&3&4 Hop of the L foot (&) step RLR moving forward, similar to a chasse (3&4)

The cue words are “hop-step-step-step”. The leader will be moving forwards; the follower backwards.

Polka Combination – Done in double circle formation
1-16 8 basic polka steps –Steps 1-4 move the couple away from the center of the circle. Leader moves forward and follower moves backward.
Steps 5-8 reverse the direction and move the couples back towards the center of the circle to return to original spots.

1-16 Heel-Toe Polka – Leader hops on R foot and places L heel to front (1)and hops on R foot and places L toe next to instep of R foot (2) Step LRL (3&4). Leader hops on L foot and places R heel to front (5) and hops on L foot and places R toe next to instep of L foot (6) Step RLR (7&8)
Follower does the same step, but mirror image.
Repeat the above 8 counts.
1-16 Partners hit own thighs 2x (1-2), clap 2x (3-4), hit R hands 2x (5-6), hit L hands 2x (7-8)
Partners stomp R, stomp L (1-2), hit both hands together (3-4), follower moves to the L by stepping L closing R, stepping L closing R (5-8) to meet a new partner, leader marches in place RLRL.

Begin the polka combination again with a new partner!

Variations:

The polka combination can be done in a scatter formation. Couples can move around the dance floor in various directions. When the slides occur at the end of the dance the “followers” can move to a new partner, and the dance begins again! Encourage the students to have fun with the basic steps moving in various patterns and even adding turns, etc!

Assessment Ideas:

Students can be asked to count the dance steps in various languages or research their own communities’ cultural history and celebrations.

Submitted by **Brenda Goodwin** who teaches at Missouri State University in Springfield, MO. Thanks for contributing to PE Central! **Posted on PEC: 8/2/2012**.

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