
For the Classroom, Inside and Out

Excerpts from *Let's Dance and Sing!*

— Freya Jaffke
with brief descriptions by the Editor

Freya Jaffke's book, *Let's Dance and Sing!*, includes classic images of workers doing the chores and crafts that have filled human, practical activity for generations. Each of these crafts or professions provides an

archetypal picture of human work with the materials of earth that sustain our lives. It is important—and a great deal of fun—for the children to enact these different movements as part of our human heritage.

“Rhythmic Games for Harvest Time” begins with workers going into the field to gather the grain. The grain is scythed, bound into sheaves, and loaded on the wagon to be driven back to the barn with a dramatic rainstorm thrown into the mix. The book continues with more imaginations of threshing, milling the grain, and baking a pie.

Rhythmic Games for Harvest Time

Note: A different version of the following circle can be found in *Dancing As We Sing*, edited by Nancy Foster (Acorn Hill/WECAN)

*With happy stride and scythe in hand,
We go to mow the meadow land. REPEAT*

Walk clockwise while shouldering the scythe.

*Silvery scythes twinkling,
Golden sheaves sinking,
Spikey crowns, stems straight and tall,
The sun has ripened them all. (TITMANN)*

Walk rhythmically while “mowing with the scythe.”

*We tie the sheaves,
We bind them tight,
We tie, we tie,
In the bright sunlight.*

“Tie a bundle of stalks”; alternate lifting first the right arm and then the left.

*We build a house of sheaves,
Where we can hide with ease, REPEAT
We swiftly slip right in,
And peek outside again.*

Lift the sheaves with both hands and put in place.

Crouch down and indicate a peephole with the hands.

While sitting in the house of sheaves, we are sometimes surprised by a thunderstorm.

Say each line twice, knocking on the floor each time:

*It's sprinkling ... It's sprinkling ...
It's raining ... It's raining ...
It's hailing ... It's hailing ...
It's rumbling ... It's rumbling ...
It's thundering ... It's thundering ...
It's lightning ... It's lightning ...
The friendly sun is shining again.*

Gently tap index fingers together
Gently tap all the fingers together, one after the other
Knock finger knuckles together
Clap with palms on the floor
Drum with fists on the floor
Quickly dart in the air with both index fingers
Form a sun with both arms

If it is a heavy thunderstorm, the movements become strong too; small storms go with gentle movements.

In the distance, we hear the farmer's wagon coming.

*We load up the wagon with the golden crop,
REPEAT
And when we are done, we climb up on top.*

A few "farmhands" stand to the side of the group "in the wagon" and catch the sheaves as they are tossed up. Everyone "jumps up."
Holding the reins with both hands, we walk and trot, taking the wagon back to the barn and singing:

Words: M. Garff; Melody: F. Jaffke



*We're bring - ing in our ri - pened wheat, it glit - ters just like
One sheaf we leave u - pon the field for lit - tle birds to
A lit - tle gnome picks up a grain and bakes him - self a*



*gold, In - to the clean and fresh - swept barn the
eat, They sing a song of thanks to us that
loaf, He sits be - hind a ber - ry bush and*



*har - vest wa - gon rolls.
sounds so ver - y sweet.
thinks he has e - nough.*



“The Merry Tradespeople” presents work of all kinds through a lively and amusing song. The cobbler, tailor, cook, joiner, baker, painter, fisher, and even a “jumper” sing about their work. Gestures to show large and small, short and tall, fat and thin, and so on, invite a playful experience of contrasts that give a “breathing” quality to circle time. ♦

The Merry Tradespeople

Melody: F. Jaffke

The musical score consists of four staves of music in a single system. Each staff has a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The lyrics are written below the notes. The first staff begins with the melody. The second and third staves continue the melody and lyrics. The fourth staff concludes the piece with a double bar line.

*I am the cob- bler Lea-ther-fine, I make fine shoes:
I am the tai - lor Ti - mo - thy, I sew fine skirts,
Great big shoes, ti - ny shoes, high - heeled shoes,
Quite full skirts, quite straight skirts, quite long skirts,
flat - soled shoes. I am the cob - bler
quite short skirts. I am the tai - lor
Lea - ther - fine, I make fine shoes.
Ti - mo - thy, I sew fine skirts.*

3. *I am the good cook Catherine, I cook fine soup:
So much soup, a little soup, very sweet soup, sour soup.
I am the good cook Catherine, I cook fine soup.*
4. *I am the joiner Jeremy, I make fine stools:
Great big stools, little stools, high-up stools, down-low stools.
I am the joiner Jeremy, I make fine stools.*
5. *I am the baker Pretzelgood, I bake good bread:
Great big loaves, little loaves, long loaves, short loaves.
I am the baker Pretzelgood, I bake good bread.*
6. *I am the painter Brushinhand, I paint fine walls:
Great big walls, little walls, long walls, short walls.
I am the painter Brushinhand, I paint fine walls.*
7. *I am the fisher Catchalot, I catch fine fish:
Quite big fish, quite small fish, quite fat fish, quite thin fish.
I am the fisher Catchalot, I catch fine fish.*
8. *I am the little Springfield, I jump so well:
Quite big jumps, quite small jumps, quite long jumps, quite short jumps.
I am the little Springfield, I jump so well.*

With each verse, a different small group of children goes to the middle of the circle and does the movements that go with that verse. Naturally, all the other children do the movements along with them. For the last verse, “little Springfield,” everyone jumps around clockwise in a loosely formed group.