This activity sheet is for teachers, parents, and all kids who love oldies! Aside from the fact that many teachers and parents remember this music with love, and that the 50s era is history now, this music is just plain FUN. And fun is often the bottom line of positive learning experiences. As Dr. Stevanne Auerbach says in Early Childhood News, “...children learn best when they experience fun as a natural part of learning. They will be more enthusiastic learners, retaining and responding more, if learning is engaging, enjoyable, spontaneous, stimulating and playful.”

Appealing to anyone with a love of fantasy and fun, the novelty songs on Funny 50s & Silly 60s provide ample opportunity for kids to stretch their “immini-ma-ma-ma-gin-A-tions”! They inspire loads of games, projects, and activities, created to accommodate different learning styles and tie in with the “7 intelligences,” as delineated by Howard Gardner.* So branch out and have fun! And know that you are indeed teaching to the whole child!

— Diana Winn Levine, M.Ed.
Co-producer

Put on a Parade
The Re-Bops have rounded up a Hit Parade of the 50s and 60s’ most peculiar personalities—The Purple People Eater, Surfin’ Bird, The Witch Doctor, and Wooly Bully, just to “Name-Game” a few! Put on your own parade or variety show with all these characters portrayed in kid-created costumes. Include the girl in the Itsy Bitsy Teeny Weeny Yellow Polka Dot Bikini, the Martians from The Martian Hop, and the jungle natives, pilot, and parrot from Stranded in the Jungle. Perform an impromptu fantasy play where all the characters from the various songs meet and interact. Who knows what wacky plot might unfold?

Dramatizations, Costumes, Mask-making, and Video Productions
Almost all the songs on this album have stories conducive to acting out or theatre games and costume or mask-making. For example in Witch Doctor, have children make a witch doctor wig, necklace with magic charms, and various regalia, create a face paint design, and make up a chant and a dance ritual. Video the performance.

Purple People Eater
- Discuss whether a Purple People Eater is a purple creature who eats people or a creature who eats purple people. Let’s hope it’s the latter (unless you happen to be purple)!
- Can you say Purple People Eater fast seven times in a row?
- Have small groups act out different verses. Put it together for a neat play!
- Using the purple theme, introduce the theory of monochromatic painting and have each child produce one. Paintings could be prospective designs for the cover of a Purple People Eater rock ’n’ roll album!
- Imagine The Purple People Eater coming into your classroom. How would you make him feel welcome? Have you ever known somebody very different from you who at first you were wary of but then became your friend? How was that person different, and how did you learn to appreciate those differences?

* Howard Gardner is a researcher and author who has contributed greatly to the field of education by helping to redefine what it is to be intelligent, literate, and educated. Through his research with brain damaged hospital patients, he was able to discover separate intelligences within the brain. Two of these intelligences — Verbal & linguistic and logical & mathematical — have been the focus of classrooms for many years. The other five are musical & rhythmic, visual & spatial, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and body kinesthetic. Having this knowledge is exciting because not only can we rationalize (to any school board!) the cognitive attributes behind activities like those in this worksheet, but it helps us see the strengths of all children in a whole new light.

We are indebted for these activities to the theories of other educators as well. For example: Bloom’s Taxonomy, Kohlberg’s moral development theories (when the Purple People Eater comes to YOUR classroom and gets teased...), those dealing with learning styles (let’s give more attention and balance to right brainies!), learning modes (visual? Tactile? Auditory?), and divergent questioning.

Consider, for example, the forced association model: How is the Purple People Eater like the girl in the bikini? This also supports Madeline Hunter’s theories of anticipatory sets and complete teaching models.
Wooly Bully

- Make lists of other animals with rhyming adjectives, e.g. Sleepy Sheepy, Pretty Kitty, Groggy Doggy, Lucky Ducky. Role play animal movements to go with the rhymes.
- Make masks of Wooly Bully. Since the song lyrics give very few clues as to what he looks like, you’re sure to get a lot of individuality expressed in their interpretations.
- Write a newspaper headline and article about Wooly Bully’s antics around town.

Martian Hop

- Design and construct a model of the Martians’ 50’s-style spaceship. Make a backdrop and paper dolls of girl and boy Martians dancing by the spaceship.
- How many different dances are mentioned in the song? Make up a Martian dance. Make up other movements like a Martian skip, tip-toe, crawl, etc.
- Use the song background vocals as the basis for a new Martian language. What does “It in meh pa-pa in pa-pa in pa-pa in meh meh pa-pa” mean in Martian talk?

Mahna, Mahna

- Make up other funny voices to sing this song (a baby, monster, granny, chipmunk, the godfather?)
- Have your character speak this one word language Mahna-Mahna to the Martians, where the only way to say what you mean is through inflections, facial expressions, tone of voice and body language.

Name Game

Just follow the instructions she sings in the song for great fun phonics. Be sure to use everyone’s name in the pattern! (...Linda, Linda, Boe Binda, Banana-Fanna Fo Finda, Fee Fi Mo Minda... Linda !)
Can you decipher the pattern? Count how many names are used in the song.

Yakety Yak

- Pair off and act out the song with one being the child and the other, the parent.
- The song is a humorous and child-friendly way of stimulating dialogue on:
  1) “Yakety Yak, Don’t Talk Back” type parent-child conflicts.
  2) Give and take in a family — what’s fair and not fair.
  3) Getting an allowance, including discussion on money, coin names and values.
- If you were a parent in this situation, what would YOU do? Think about a time when you and your parent(s) had an argument. How did you resolve it?
- Make a list of all the chores the singer has and what she gets in return. Have children makes lists of things they do to take care of themselves and their possessions, then a list of their other responsibilities that help the whole family.
- What is a Yak? Where do they live? What do they look like? Do a mini-science/social studies unit on Yaks, a fascinating but little-known animal.

Surfin’ Bird

This song is just plain fun to loosen up those lips and improvise on. The ridiculously redundant nature of the lyrics allows the children much latitude in creating their own story about the Surfin’ Bird. Give him a funny voice, a personality, peculiar manerisms, tell where he lives, what he does all day. “Everybody’s heard about the bird”, but what exactly have they heard? Is it bad or good? Invent some dilemma Surfin’ Bird got into and how he got out again. Try add-on collaborative storytelling. Use a kazoo to hum along with the tune.

Itsy Bitsy Teeny Weeny Yellow Polka Dot Bikini

**Sequencing:** In pairs or teams, have the children draw pictures of each part of the story on a 4”x 3” paper. Then, mixing them up, have them try to put them in the right order. The bridge of the song is especially fun — did she go from the locker to the shore, or from the locker to the blanket? The shore to the water or the shore to the blanket?

**Writing:** Tell of the most embarrassing thing that has ever happened to you!

Act out the story, using props like swim fins, snorkel, inner tube, blanket and towel.
Gimme Dat Ding

- The tongue twisting chorus in this song is irresistible for kids to sing along with.
- This song uses the word gimme many, many times! Have the kids as a group count all the gimme's.
- Context Clues: What could a bugaloo be? Can you puzzle out what you think this song is about?
- What makes you “sad and blue”? Pick a friend to share this with.

Stranded in the Jungle

This is a shining example of a tall tale set to music. The lyrics are highly visual and lend themselves to illustrations for a big book or a comic strip... the plane crash in the jungle, the chase, the poor pilot in a cooking pot (Great Googamooga!), hitching a ride on a whale to get back to the states. One unique art project that lets the children get right into the story is to incorporate photographs of themselves in their own drawings. Kids do action poses as if they are the hero in the various predicaments, you take their photos, and they glue them on their painting of the scene. For example, the child poses as if riding a whale, cuts out and glues their image on the paper and draws the whale, ocean, etc.

What is a jungle? What would it be like to be stranded in the jungle? Where are jungles found? Why protect jungles? What is the difference between a rainforest and a jungle? What are the different types of rainforests? (a good chance to encourage map skills and global awareness)

Witch Doctor

- Introduce the concept of witch doctors as healers, medecine men, or magicians of sorts who used spells and remedies to cure sickness, make rain, foretell the future, and give respected advice.
- Have each child make up a recipe for their own witchdoctor magic to treat various maladies, including lovesickness! Publish in a group “Potions and Lotions” book.
- Play "Magic Box": Everyone climbs inside their own invisible box and when the Magic Word is said (Ting Tang!), everyone comes out and performs the given task — you are a tiger, you are climbing a mountain, you are cooking bubbly brew in a big pot, etc. “Walla Walla Bing Bang” means the magic is over and you climb back into your “box” for more instructions.

Don’t You Just Know It

- This is a fun song to introduce the concept of echoes. Discuss what an echo is. Where do they happen? Children take turns being the leader on the chorus, laughing in all kinds of weird, contagious ways while the others mimick or echo the Ha Ha’s and Gooby Gooby’s!
- Each verse is a simple nonsensical rhyming couplet. Make up your own verses! Have the kids sit in a circle on the floor and slap their laps on all four beats while singing. You give a first line such as: “A funny frog sits on a rock (Donchya just know it)...” and see if the next person can find a rhyming line— “He has no door so his friends can’t knock! (Donchya just know it)”
- Pick one person to act out each of the activities in the verses, being sure to give everyone a turn.

Does Your Chewing Gum Lose Its Flavor on the Bedpost Overnight

- Have you ever pondered the history of chewing gum? It dates back to the American Indians who chewed resin from spruce bark. But who got the idea to market gum? Research and give a serious or funny speech about gum to the class (snapping and wad-stretching demonstrations with teacher's permission only!)
- What is a bedpost? Does anyone’s bed have a bedpost? Design a bed that would have a special place to keep gum fresh overnight.
- Ad Campaign: Do a magazine ad or poster to sell chewing gum. Name it, tell what’s so special about it, come up with a slogan and an attention-grabbing graphic.
- Challenge for older kids— Can you think of other silly questions that would fit the chorus? Try making it fit the syllables. For example: Can you scuba dive in Gatorade that’s 35 feet deep? Can you blow your nose with a rubber hose and honk yourself to sleep? (Beep! Beep!)

While this album obviously stimulates lots of creative and divergent thinking, the main attraction remains the music itself. What better reason for giving kids a chance to sing and dance along than for the pure wiggling, jiggling joy of it?

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