



## Oldies for Kool Kiddies • Activity Worksheet

*Welcome to teachers, parents, and especially to all the kids who love oldies.*

*This activity sheet is designed to be both educational and fun. History, social studies, music, dance, art, drama, language arts, and even ornithology — all are subjects touched on by the activities suggested here.*

*We hope you enjoy working with these suggestions, and we know you'll get years of enjoyment from the music. Please let us know what you think, particularly if you come up with new creative ideas for activities; we'd love to hear them.*

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

### 1. The Pop Culture of the Fifties and Sixties: Not-So-Ancient History

Develop the 50s theme by holding a “Relive the Fifties” Day. Kids and teachers come dressed in poodle skirts, crinolines, saddle shoes, letter sweaters, dad’s oversized white shirt with rolled up jeans, leather memorabilia from parents and friends. Talk about the fads (autograph hounds, wearing his ring around your neck, I.D. bracelets), the hairdos (sideburns, slicked back Ducktails, ponytails, flips), the cars, the teen idols, and of course the music (all on 45s!). Hold costume and dance contests. Give away old 45s as prizes!

### 2. Name Your Group or Band

Give some examples of band names from the 50s, e.g. Danny and the Juniors, the Penguins, the Monotones. Then have kids make up a name for their own band, using alliteration (Robin and the Redheads), rhyming (Robin and the Bobbins), or naming according to certain categories (birds, flowers, cars, names starting with “Sh”). Watch imaginations run wild!

### 3. Doo Wop Silly Syllables

Have the kids pick out the silly syllable backups on the tape, e.g. the “Papa Oom Mow Mow” or the Blue Moon bass voice, and imitate them. (Be prepared for a good laugh!) Then have them make up their own. Here are some suggestions to get the bah-bah-bah-ball rolling!

- Have kids make up one or two syllable words that don’t mean a thing! (ba, da, dom, yip, diddle)
- Make up onomatopoeic words that sound like something in nature (ding, swish, woosh, drip, pop, rattle)
- Have them make a sound like a sheep (baa), a horn (beep), a bell (ding), a cow (moo)

Using the above as building blocks, string them together to get funny combinations of sounds. Have them say the syllable 2 or 3 times in a row and tack BOOM or BOP on the end. Now have the kids say the phrase in a rhythm. Then sing the phrase. Sing it in a low bass voice. In a high falsetto voice. There you have it — an all-original doo wop backup. Now sing it in all kinds of ways — happy, speedy, funny, soft, sad, loud, scary, slow, bouncy, and so on. You’ve just demonstrated a lot of musical concepts!

### 4. Doo Wop Phonics and Spelling

Since there are no right or wrong spellings when it comes to the above silly syllables, it’s a great way to get kids to make up their own reasonable spellings, getting the rest of the class to guess what their doo wop phrase is by how they spelled it.

### 5. Sign Language: Communication Through Doo-Wop Hand Motion

Singers in the 50s groups often did hand movements that illustrated the lyrics. Have the “lead singer” choreograph some hand motions for Duke of Earl, Monster Mash, Rockin’ Robin, or Blue Moon. then teach his or her backup singers to do the motions all together, while performing.

## 6. Dramatizations, Costumes, and Mask Making

The songs that lend themselves best to acting out are **Monster Mash**, **Rockin' Robin**, **Splish Splash**, and **Alley Oop**. For example in **Splish Splash**, have 1 to 4 kids behind a cardboard bathtub, soaping up, scrubbing each others' backs, washing hair, etc. Then do the motions suggested by the lyrics — "Jump out of the tub put my feet on the floor, wrap the towel around me, and I open the door..." The rest of the class is posed ready to dance in pairs, jitterbug style, when they get to the "Party goin' on" section. Costumes and props could include bathing suits, goggles, inner tubes, flippers, snorkels.

## 7. Songwriting: Song Structure and Key Elements in 50s Songs

50s songs are wonderful in their simplicity. Kids can learn to identify the verse, the chorus, the bridge, the intro, and the close. They can then look for sequence and patterns in how the song's components are ordered. The songs afford great listening exercises — who can hear the bass voice? the falsetto? the scream? the harmonica? the kazoo? the saxophone? How many voices can you hear in the background?

Once the children have learned to listen for the above, they can begin writing their own new "oldies"! An easy way to start is to make up new verses for one of the songs on the tape — "I Love Onions" is a perfect one to start with, as kids love to come up with lists of things they don't like!

## 8. Dances

**The Locomotion:** Make a train, hands on the waist of the person in front of you. Every once in a while lift one hand and pull the whistle.

Try to "Jump up! Jump back!" as a group (very tricky). Make train sounds, chugging, puffing, and tooting along.

**The Monster Mash:** Putting your weight first on the ball of one foot, then the other, move your toes as if you're squashing a bug or putting out a small fire with your foot! Sort of like doing the polka, but with no hop, and with the additional sideways back and forth mashing motion of the ball of the foot.

### *Additional Activity Ideas for Specific Songs*

#### **Lollipop**

- Have fun practicing cheek pops and the bouncing lips "ba-bomp-bomp" bass part.
- The clap pattern in the beginning is VERY challenging!
- Kids love to sing along with the chorus — good tongue twisting practice for the consonant "L"! This is also an easy song to introduce concept of three part harmony.

#### **Monster Mash**

- Make monster masks
- Illustrate a "Big Book," with each child doing a different illustration for the six verses, the bridge, and the choruses.
- Act out the words, which are hysterical.
- Make a recording of scary sounds for Halloween fun house — chains, bubbles, eating potato chips, slurping, evil laughs, squeaking doors, etc.
- For a game, blow up balloons. Start song and sit on balloons, popping as many as "poppable" by end of song.

#### **I Love Onions**

- As a spontaneous thinking exercise, have kids suggest funny culinary concoctions, the more bizarre the better. For example, liver and onions is an acceptable suggestion, but peanut butter and onion sandwich or jive chive ice cream sundae with whipped cream and chopped onions on top are great! (The louder the "yucks" from the kids, the better the answer!)
- Design an "I Love Onions" cookbook with illustrations and made-up recipes.

**Blue Moon** — See if the kids can come in with a strong "Dip de dip de dip" whenever it comes around!

#### **Alley Oop**

- Let the kids draw what the visual and descriptive words suggest to them. See how many different interpretations of Alley Oop you get. Then bring in an old book of Alley Oop cartoon strips, to show what the original Alley Oop looked like.

#### **Rockin' Robin**

- Have kids look up in a bird book all the birds in the song (robin, sparrow, chickadee, owl, crow, raven, buzzard, oriole). Have the children paint their bird (with all its identifying markings), only playing an instrument! Cut them out and put them in a giant tree on the Bird Bandstand. Makes a great bulletin board.

#### **Little Star**

- A good winding down song, almost a lullaby. When it's over, ask the kids which were their favorite songs on the tape. Ask questions like: What did it make you think about? What did you like most about it? What didn't you like?

.....

*While the oldies but goodies and the times they reflect are well worth studying, keep this in mind: after all the talk, what the essence of this record comes down to is the music — how does it make you feel and, well, can you dance to it?*