

Fifty Fun Things for Suzuki Families to Do

With the summer coming, you might have time to try some of the fun things listed below - viola and cello students, please make adaptations if necessary.

1. Draw a picture of your instrument.
2. Write out Twinkle theme on manuscript paper.
3. Count the number of sharps in Lightly Row.
4. Find the words to the Book 1 folk songs.
5. Go to a concert.
6. Look up the lives of composers in the encyclopedia, or check out a book from the library about composers.
7. Clean your strings in rhythm to your Suzuki tape.
8. Label your case with a fancy name tag.
9. Start a Suzuki scrap book.
10. Draw 10 treble clefs.
11. Check out a classical tape or CD from the library.
12. Tape record your playing.
13. Hum a piece from Book 1.
14. Make up goofy words for that piece.
15. Make a practice chart.
16. Clap rhythms of all Book 1 pieces.
17. Make up a story about a violin.
18. Write the story down and illustrate it.
19. Give a secret concert to yourself.
20. Dance to your Suzuki tape.
21. Pick out a tuning "a" on a piano.
22. Invent a new bow exercise.
23. Follow the notes in your music while listening to the tape.
24. Bake quarter note shaped cookies.
25. Exchange mothers for a practice.
26. Draw a picture of yourself playing the violin.
27. Sing a trill.
28. Sing a song with vibrato.
29. Invent a new Twinkle variation (rhythm).
30. Time yourself - how long can you play violin non-stop with a great posture?
31. Write out "Lightly Row" on manuscript paper.
32. Let the child decide when and where to practice for a week.
33. Plan a recital (for stuffed animals, a friend, or the family). Prepare for it for a week, make and decorate a program for it, and serve refreshments afterwards.
34. Put a small surprise in a securely stapled bag. After 50 "Thank you's" during home practice, the child gets the treat.
35. Practice outside on a warm day.
36. Make up a tune on your instrument. Write it out on manuscript paper and give it a title.
37. Record yourself playing your tune.
38. Purchase a "practice plant" and watch it grow because of all the beautiful music it hears (Be sure it is a hardy, and well-tended plant).

39. Light a birthday candle and have that be the length of the practice session (for older students, the length of scales, review, or another portion of practice).
40. Let the student be the parent for a day of practice.
41. Take the student on "tour" playing something different in each room.
42. Parents, challenge yourselves to spend a whole week without saying one negative thing during practice. Graduate school: spend a week without feeling one negative thing.
43. Make a practice puzzle by cutting a paper into pieces and writing a task on each piece. Put the puzzle together as you accomplish the various tasks.
44. Make signs for the practice room - reminders such as "Nose, Bridge, Elbow, Toe", or compliments such as "FIRST PLACE for COOPERATION". Make each sign unique (vertical or horizontal, written upside down, backward, in glitter, or Technicolor).
45. String Cheerios on yarn for each good practice session, then wear the necklace/bracelet. Or, one cheerio for each review piece or repetition of a "tricky spot".
46. Count the number of notes in Twinkle theme.
47. Learn the names and composers of the Book 1 pieces.
48. Clip a clothespin to the child's clothing each time he does something well (or he meets a specific practice objective). See how many are hanging at the end of practice. Try to increase the number each session, or set an achievable goal. Let the child try to shake them off at the end of practice.
49. Make cold juice or hot cocoa to enjoy together during practice.
50. Make 8-10 practice rocks by painting smiling faces on flat, round stones - half with eyes open, half with eyes shut. Each review piece is given a rock. Eyes open means the parent can help and correct during that piece, eyes shut means the parent listens and enjoys without saying anything. One day the parent chooses which review pieces to play each way, the next day the student chooses.

Ideas taken from Helen Brunner's "A Hundred and One Things for Suzuki Families to Do" and from Susan Kempter's book Between Parent and Teacher.