

Colors of the Rainbow

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This activity is an extended movement study based on the theme of color. It will take about an hour to an hour and a half, including the time it takes to help the children make ribbon bangles. If you expand it into a presentation, plan to add about an extra half hour to hang the large sheet of paper on which you write the children's suggestions in the opening section of the lesson, hang the paper plate rainbows, place the bangle props, get your music set up, and have the children in their spots ready to begin the dance.

What You Need

- ☀ a large space
- ☀ "Catsup" instrumental (disc 1, track 17), "Goldie Rock" instrumental (disc 2, track 23), "Care of the Earth" instrumental (disc 1, track 16), and "Shine & Brighten" instrumental (disc 2, track 37)
- ☀ a large roll of paper; red, yellow, and blue markers; the book *Color Dance* by Ann Jonas; pipe cleaners and precut ten-inch strips of ribbon in many different colors; crayons of many colors; paper plates

What You Do

Begin with the children seated in a circle. These places will be their home spots as you introduce each new color. Say to the children:

Today we are going to dance about all the colors! What is your favorite color? Why is it your favorite color? How does thinking about that color make you feel?

First let's talk about red. Can you think of some things that are red? Let's name as many red things as we can think of, and I will use a red marker to write them all down on this big sheet of paper.

Now let's dance about the color red, how it makes us feel, and all of the red things we just named. You may dance freely in the space during the dance. At the end of the music, stop in the shape of something that is red. Play "Catsup" instrumental.

Return to your home spots in the circle, and now let's talk about yellow. Can you name some things that are yellow? Using my yellow marker this time, I will write down the yellow things you think of below the red items.

Let's dance about all of these yellow things, and how the color yellow makes us feel. Finish in the shape of something yellow. Play "Goldie Rock" instrumental.

Follow the same steps with blue—play "Care of the Earth" instrumental. Then, using the markers and paper, demonstrate to the children how green is a mixture of blue and yellow. Say:

All the rest of the colors—orange, indigo, violet, and everything in between—are made from the first three: red, yellow, and blue. These three colors are called "primary colors," because you can make all of the other colors by mixing them together in different ways.

Staying in the circle, read *Color Dance* by Ann Jonas. Say to the children:

This book shows how the primary colors mix together to make other colors, which the children in the story demonstrate by dancing with colorful scarves. Now let's make some colorful bangles as we prepare to do our own color dance.

The colorful bangles can be used as props to expand the color exploration. The children can use them during the final color dance and to enhance the presentation. Bring ribbons of many different colors, enough for at least five ribbons per bangle. Cut the ribbons into ten-inch strips ahead of time.

With the children still seated in the circle, give each one a pipe cleaner that has been twisted and fastened into a circle (be sure to tuck in any sharp ends) and five or six different-colored ribbons. Help the children tie the ribbons on the pipe cleaner so that they hang together off the bangle. The children will each hold a bangle and manipulate it while they are dancing.



If you use “Colors of the Rainbow” as a presentation, decorate the space and further explore the color theme by making rainbows from paper plates, markers, a hole punch, and yarn. Cut the plates in half so the children can use the shape of the plate as the rainbow, filling it in with many colors of crayons. Give the children time to make their rainbows, and then use them as a backdrop during the presentation. Punch a hole in the top-center of each one, and hang them from the ceiling with yarn. You can also tack them to a wall, if that works better in your space.

Now the children are ready to do the color dance. Tell them to find a home spot on the floor so they are evenly spread throughout the space. Play “Shine & Brighten” instrumental. Say to the children:

When the music begins, let’s start dancing! You can move throughout the space and dance about all the color ideas we’ve explored.

- **Think about all the red, yellow, and blue items we wrote down.**
- **Think about all the colors we can make by mixing the primary colors.**
- **Dance about the book we read, and the children who were mixing the colors in that story.**
- **Look at the rainbows you made that are hanging up around the room, and dance about the rainbows.**
- **Use your colorful bangles and move the ribbons while you dance!**

Finish the “Colors of the Rainbow” dance with the children taking a big bow in a line while shaking their bangles.

Presentation Ideas

The “Colors of the Rainbow” dance makes a colorful and fun presentation for family, friends, and/or fellow students. The presentation can last from fifteen to thirty minutes, depending on how you expand the dance.

Modifications

Because this is an activity that explores color through so many different media, there are numerous opportunities for participation. Some children may be able to respond by doing smaller movements in response to all of the prompts. In addition, a child could hold the paper and markers for you during the first part of the activity. He could hold the book for you as you read it. He could run the music. He could call out prompts such as “Dance about the color red!” and hold and manipulate his prop while the others are dancing.

Hang the large sheet of paper on which you documented all of the children's different color ideas as a background and the paper plate rainbows the children made. Before the children dance, take a few minutes to explain to the audience the explorations that led up to the dance: learning about primary colors, naming objects of those colors, dancing about each color, reading and discussing ideas from the book *Color Dance* (you can show and describe the book), making colorful bangles, and drawing rainbows.

Ask the children to take their places. They can come out as a group, or one by one, to find their home spots. Or the children can already be standing in their home spots. Talk to them ahead of time about how they want to begin the dance so they can contribute to structuring the presentation. Play "Shine & Brighten" instrumental while the children do the color dance. End with the children lined up to take a bow.

To expand the presentation, divide the children into three groups and ask each group to dance about red, yellow, or blue. Play "Catsup," "Goldie Rock," and "Care of the Earth" instrumentals, respectively. After each group has danced about its primary color, have the children do the "Colors of the Rainbow" dance together as a group, using the bangle props. Finish with the children in a line facing the audience, and have them bow while shaking the bangles.

Here are more ideas for expanding and enhancing the presentation:

- Suggest to the children that they wear their favorite color for the presentation.
- If you begin the presentation with the three groups each dancing about a primary color, make a separate set of bangles using ribbons of that color for each group.
- Elicit ideas from the children about how they would like to expand the exploration. For example, you could ask them: "Would you like to do a dance just about your favorite color?" "What kind of music would you like to use for that dance?" Offer a selection from the list of thirty instrumental pieces included on the CDs that accompany this book. Incorporate the children's ideas into the presentation.