
This book is not a guide to performing storytimes, nor does it include full sample storytimes. Instead, it focuses entirely on using more music in storytimes. In the introductory pages, the author offers hints on how to do this, offering some commentary on the benefits, a few strategies she has developed in her own programming, and suggestions for the reluctant singer.

The bulk of the book is composed of short songs of her own composition, each bundled with presentation tips, patterns for craft or visual aids, and picture book titles to pair with the songs, all organized by the theme of the song. These snippets could be added into a programme to bring a more musical element to it, which is Dailey’s whole point, but they are, being snippets, merely supplements to a programme that is already mostly set.

Music is included for each song, for those who can read it, as well as a CD, for those who can’t. Dailey notes that she is not a professional musician, and intends the CD for learning purposes, although she does offer that it could be used by the especially shy as a sing-along leader instead. The CD does double-duty as a CD-ROM, also containing printable versions of all the art project patterns, which is perhaps my favourite feature.

This most certainly, is at best a supplementary addition to a collection already strong in programme planning material, because it does not stand alone. Even as somebody who enjoys having a strong body of professional storytime resources at her command, I cannot strongly recommend this as a necessary purchase. While the themes are popular ones and many librarians and teachers would be eager for new songs, these are too slight to be worthy additions to the body of wonderful material available, and lack the catchy, singsong quality that makes for great and memorable children’s material. The CD, as she notes herself, is not of professional production, and it shows. What struck me the most is not that it understandably lacks polish, but that Dailey seems to be writing in too high a register for her own voice, straining to sing her own songs. This makes not only for uncomfortable listening, but also makes it difficult to discern what the song should really sound like, particularly as the songs are not especially melodic to begin with.

I did enjoy many of her presentation ideas, and the patterns for visual aids and crafts are generally good, useful for programming, and quite manageable. I was very pleased that the patterns were printable from the CD, a great time- and aggravation-saver. I would certainly encourage others to follow this lead.

Most of her picture book selections were also quite good and she notes in the introduction that she has taken great pains to find recent material, currently in print. This is an effort I appreciate, since it can be hard to find older books, and
nearly impossible if your library system doesn’t have them. On occasion, however, she seems to include choices that do not address the theme directly, such as Lois Ehlert’s *Leaf Man* for an apple theme.

On the whole, while I am always keen for new songs, I found little in this new volume that I would see adding to a programme. Instead, I would recommend visiting the song book section of your library or looking up some professional children’s entertainers for CDs of songs that are fun to sing along with and listen to. Libraries with an extremely large budget might want to add this to their professional resources for the crafts and visual aids if not for the songs and musical component, for it is certainly not lacking in good ideas overall.

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