

collected by **PATRICIA C. McKISSACK**
illustrated by **BRIAN PINKNEY**

LET'S CLAP,



JUMP,



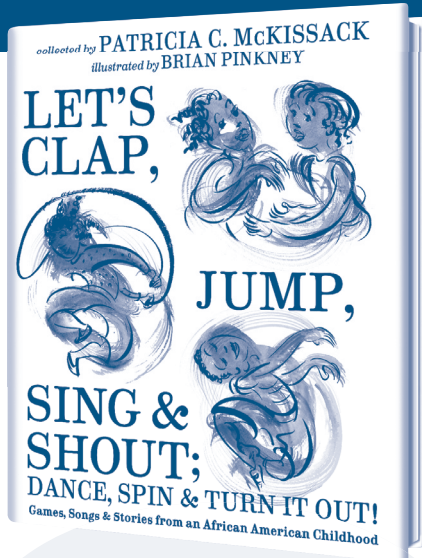
SING & SHOUT;



DANCE, SPIN & TURN IT OUT!

Games, Songs & Stories from an African American Childhood

EDUCATORS' GUIDE



Let's Clap, Jump, Sing & Shout; Dance, Spin & Turn It Out! • Patricia C. McKissack;
Illustrated by Brian Pinkney

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A NOTE TO EDUCATORS

This engaging treasury of games, songs, and stories reflects the rich tapestry of the author's African American childhood. Along with an array of activities, award-winning author Patricia C. McKissack weaves in anecdotes from growing up and facts about black history. The collection will appeal directly to students while also tying into the curriculum. Children will recognize hand claps like "Patty-Cake," jump rope rhymes like "Hot, Hot Pepper," and songs like "Amazing Grace." Many children will have learned games and songs from their families that are similar to those in the book but not exactly the same, reflecting our diverse cultural heritage. These connections will draw in students and create enthusiasm for the meaningful curricular activities suggested in this guide. Students can share what they've learned with younger children as service projects, performing for them or making them books.

McKissack, once a teacher herself, relates the material to important historic events such as slavery, segregation, and the civil rights movement. These connections provide jumping-off points for discussions and research projects. The online resources listed toward the end of this guide will help bring history to life with videos of Gullah dancers and historical recordings of the Fisk Jubilee Singers.

A chapter with poetry from Langston Hughes and Paul Laurence Dunbar fits into language arts studies, while possible writing assignments stem from other chapters. The entire collection will lend itself to activities in the arts, from singing to dancing to theater performances.

This wonderful collection illustrated by two-time Caldecott Honor winner Brian Pinkney, celebrates African American social history in a way that invites students from all cultures to see similarities among their traditions and bring in songs, rhymes, and games from their own lives.

★ **"A comprehensive treasury of memories, verbal art, and play."** —*Kirkus Reviews*, Starred

"A rich compilation to stand beside Rollins's *Christmas Gif*' and Hamilton's *The People Could Fly*." —*The Horn Book*

ACTIVITIES

1. Handing Down Traditions Children learn clapping rhymes, jump rope rhymes, and circle games at home, at school, at camp, and from friends. Have students interview their family and friends to collect ten examples of rhymes or games. They could be the same as ones in the book or different. The student should write down each example and make a note of who told them about it and where that person learned the rhyme or game. Share the findings of this fieldwork in class, comparing the examples to the ones in the book to see where they overlap. Create a bulletin board with all the examples.

2. Survey and Chart Together, analyze the rhymes and songs that the class collected, and single out any that were collected three or more times. Make a list of those popular items and photocopy it for each student. Students should then go to other classrooms in pairs and conduct a survey on which songs and rhymes students in that class know, making a checkmark next to the item for each student who's familiar with it. Have the class compile the results of all the surveys and make a bar chart that shows which rhymes and songs are most and least familiar.

3. Little Hands Clapping Have students choose at least six clapping rhymes and make them into a small illustrated book for a young child. The illustrations can demonstrate the movements that go with the rhyme, or they can simply decorate it. Students can choose to donate their book to another classroom, to a nearby child care center, or to a family with a baby or toddler. The students should be ready to demonstrate the clap games to the book's recipients.

4. Roll the Cameras Have pairs or small groups choose an activity such as a hand clap or song to practice until they have mastered it. They should also prepare a short explanation about the activity and its source. Once everyone has mastered their skill, have students film each other giving the explanation and performing the activity. Edit the videos to make one long video to share with other classrooms or post on the school website.

5. Make It a Play Have small groups choose a fable or other story from the book and rewrite it to work as a performance, using reader's theater techniques. They should create a narrator to set the scene and provide transitions, and create dialogue to tell the story. They can also add new dialogue to reflect actions in the story. After typing up the parts, students should practice and then present the story to the class. They can read aloud instead of memorizing parts, and perform with or without costumes and props.

6. More Stories, Please The chapter "On the Porch or by the Fire" retells traditional stories about Br'er Rabbit, Anansi, and Ol' John. Have students find more stories about these characters, either from collections or as illustrated single stories. Have each student choose one story to share, meeting in small groups to read to each other. Students should also learn more about the particular type of story, such as where Anansi's stories were first told, and who collected and recorded them. Have students discuss what they learned.

7. Time to Party Invite younger children or families to a party to learn some of the games and listen to some of the stories in the collection and from your students' research. The classroom, gym, or playground can be organized with stations staffed by your students for games, stories, and even jump rope, space permitting. Your students can give a brief background and explanation for each station, then demonstrate the activity and invite the visitors to join in. Wrap up with a group sing-along.

8. Cold Hands, Warm Heart Every culture seems to have superstitions. Compile a list of superstitions as a class, starting with the ones in the book and adding others that students know. Have each student choose a superstition and write a short story based on it. Since so many superstitions relate to good or bad luck, they provide inspiration for plots in which something eventful happens, for better or worse. Have the students work together in small groups to peer edit their work. Print and decorate the final stories and publish them together in a class book.

9. Delving Deeper Many of the introductory notes by the author mention such important historical people, groups, or events as Langston Hughes, Paul Laurence Dunbar, the NAACP, the Harlem Renaissance, and so on. Have pairs of students choose a subject and research it further in print and digital sources. They should prepare a multimedia presentation to explain the significance of their topic to the class.

10. Decode the Songs Slaves "learned how to communicate through coded language, called double speech or double talk." (p. 54) A chart on page 54 shows the coded words, their spiritual meanings, and their meanings to runaways. The following pages contain songs that incorporate the coded words. Have students choose one or two stanzas from a song, and translate it using the meanings in the chart so they can see the messages the songs had for runaways. Have them share the decoded stanzas in small groups and discuss the role of such songs in the lives of slaves.

11. Teaching Tools In the introduction, the author talks about the educational benefits of the games, stories, and wordplay in the collection. For example, children learn to count from hand claps and jump rope rhymes. Have students work in pairs or small groups to come up with a list of at least five other ways that the play activities in the book help children learn. Come together as a class and share the lists.

12. Exploring Patricia McKissack's Childhood In many of the introductory notes to sections and activities, Patricia McKissack refers to her childhood. Have each student write a short essay about McKissack's childhood, citing specific examples from the text and addressing questions such as: Who was in her family? Where did she live? What was her schooling like? How did segregation affect her life?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why do you think clapping games and jump rope rhymes have been handed down over so many years? What makes them appealing? How do children learn them? What makes them easy to remember and repeat?
- What connections does the book make between the games, songs, and stories, and slavery? Are they connected to segregation and civil rights? Discuss how specific material in the book ties in with these topics.
- Slaves were typically punished if they tried to learn to read. Why do you think that was the case? What might have been different if slaves had learned to read and write? How did slaves use some of the rhymes and songs in the book as forms of communication? Give specific examples.
- Do you believe in any superstitions? Why or why not? Why do you think other people do? Review the superstitions in the book and see if you can detect similarities and patterns. Why are so many superstitions about luck?
- Reread the Proverbs and Mama Sayings in the book. Compare the two categories, noting how they are alike and different. How are sayings like these helpful in life? Why do you think they exist in so many different cultures? Choose two proverbs that have the same meaning and analyze their similarities and differences.
- The book is illustrated with joyful pictures full of movement. Talk about what the pictures add to the text in terms of emotion and content. To what extent are the pictures realistic? In what ways are they unrealistic? Why do you think the illustrator chose to use this style?

INTERNET RESOURCES

Fisk Jubilee Singers

pbs.org/wgbh/amex/singers/sfeature/songs.html

Listen to songs such as “Steal Away” and “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” performed by the current Fisk Jubilee Singers and others.

npr.org/2011/02/26/134028602/at-fisk-university-a-tradition-of-spirituals

Two songs by the Fisk Jubilee Singers, one recorded in 1909 and one in 1915.

Gullah Island Ring Shout

loc.gov/today/cyberlc/feature_wdesc.php?rec=5109

Recorded by the Library of Congress, this 57-minute video shows the McIntosh County Shouters performing the Gullah-Geechee Ring Shout in 2012.

Double Dutch

youtube.com/watch?v=3mRa8tgNQVY

Girls demonstrate Double Dutch on the Parents YouTube Channel.

The Game of Limbo

pbskids.org/zoom/activities/games/limbo.html

A short description of how to play limbo.

Five Popular Superstitions

cbc.ca/kidscbc2/the-feed/whats-the-story-popular-superstitions

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation’s website for kids explores superstitions.

Reader’s Theater

aaronshp.com/rt/Tips.html

Tips from reader’s theater expert Aaron Shepard on writing and staging scripts.

This guide was created by Kathleen Odean, chair of the 2002 Newbery Award Committee and a youth librarian for seventeen years. She is the author of *Great Books for Girls*, *Great Books for Boys*, and *Great Books About Things Kids Love* (all published by Ballantine). She gives workshops on new books and the Common Core State Standards.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



PATRICIA C. McKISSACK is the author of *The Dark-Thirty: Southern Tales of the Supernatural*, a Newbery Honor Book and Coretta Scott King Award winner, and its companion, *Porch Lies: Tales of Slicksters, Tricksters, and Other Wily Characters*, an ALA-ALSC Notable Children's Book.

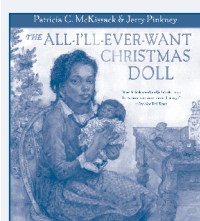
Ms. McKissack has also written many award-winning picture books, including *Goin' Someplace Special*, a Coretta Scott King Award winner; *Mirandy and Brother Wind*, a Caldecott Honor Book; and *Never Forgotten*, which received five starred reviews.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

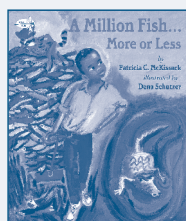


Brian Pinkney received Caldecott Honors for *Duke Ellington* by Andrea Davis Pinkney and for *The Faithful Friend* by Robert D. San Souci. He has illustrated many highly acclaimed books for children, including *Hand in Hand: Ten Black Men Who Changed America* by Andrea Davis Pinkney, a *Boston Globe-Horn Book* Honor Book; and *In the Time of the Drums* by Kim L. Siegelson, a Coretta Scott King Award winner. He lives in Brooklyn, New York, with his wife, Andrea, with whom he often collaborates, and their two children. Learn more at brianpinkney.net.

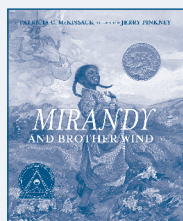
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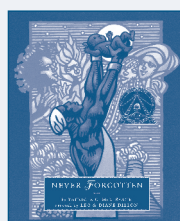
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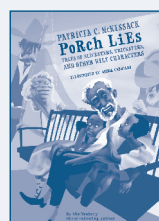
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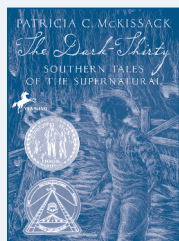


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