

Fun Summertime Ideas
By Michelle Vivan Payne

Summer is always a little scary for private music teachers, but with a little creativity and confidence, you can find some fun ways to bring in extra income. Group activities are great for the summer. Kids are already in camp mode, so why not take that camaraderie into your music program? You can host these events anytime, really. In the morning, afternoon, evening, weekend.

1. Music Video Day

Find an easy song that most of your kids know and write an easy to follow script for a music video. The key to doing a successful music video is lip-singing. When musicians make a video, they don't sing live. They may sing out-loud along with the track, but the recorded track is always what's heard over the video. If you want to have your student's voices and instruments on the actual video, then consider requiring that they first participate in a "Recording Day."

2. Recording Day

Maybe you have some kids who are ready to play together in a band, duet, or ensemble. Why not take advantage of this and teach them how it works? You could spread this out into a 3-4 day workshop. Spend the first day teaching them all the different parts of the song. Another day would be needed for rehearsal and of course another for the actual studio time. For this, you could use Garage band or any other software program and record it yourself, or team up with a recording engineer. There are always recording students willing to help out for cheap, too. This is super fun for the kids.

When the kids need to rest their hands and voices, teach them how to make their own CD covers. There are some great ideas in the book "Rock n Roll Camp for Girls."

3. Indie Rock Week

Take the previous idea a step further and teach the kids how to start their own rock band, play a show, and promote it! You can plan to have a show in someone's backyard, and charge \$1 admission. Use the money to buy something for the kid's school and you also teach the kids about musical community service.

Spend some time teaching them how to make flyers, CDs, band T-shirts as well as how to use microphones and other band equipment. Again, "Rock n Roll Camp for Girls" is an excellent source of information.

4. Instrument/Vocal Workshops

Trying hosting this in a public place like a library community room. That way you can also get some marketing done at the same time. I love to multitask! Put up some flyers and advertise that you will be hosting a 1-2 hour workshop for musicians. They will be expected to play in front of the group and you will offer advice for how to improve their skills.

5. Music Field Trip!

Plan a morning trip to a music studio, music museum, music-themed movie, etc. Recruit a parent or two to help with transportation, and charge them just a little more than admission to help pay for your time. Check up on liability information for your area first. You may need to have each parent sign a waiver form that protects you.

6. Music Career Lecture

Offer to teach other advanced music students about how to start offering music lessons, getting gigs, etc. When I was in college, I attended a lecture by a guest speaker who was a working musician. She taught us about what a typical day is like, self-promotion, cheap marketing ideas, releasing an independent album. The information she gave us was priceless, but I'm sure the school paid her nicely.