

# TROMBONE SHORTY Activity Ideas

CHICAGO  
PUBLIC  
LIBRARY

with National Summer Learning Association  
and Museum of Science and Industry



Celebrate Summer Learning Day with Ambassador Bryan Collier and his award-winning book, *Trombone Shorty*.

Use Chicago Public Library and the Museum of Science and Industry's favorite icebreakers, activity ideas, and websites to plan fun summer programming around *Trombone Shorty* by Troy "Trombone Shorty" Andrews!

## ICEBREAKERS

### "Where Y'At?"

- You will need speakers and some of Trombone Shorty's [music](#).
- Gather together in an open space.
- Tell the children that, according to Trombone Shorty, in New Orleans they have a special way of saying hello—"Where y'at?" Practice it together!
- Play Trombone Shorty's music and allow kids to mill, walk, or dance around the room.
- When the music stops, the children must find the person nearest to them, partner up, and greet each other by saying "Where Y'at."
- Then, tell them to find out their partner's favorite color.
- Play the music and do another round, using a different question this time! Some fun questions to try:
  - Favorite singer or band
  - Favorite book
  - Favorite movie
  - Favorite food

**VARIATION:** Allow a volunteer to come up with the question each time.

# ICEBREAKERS CONT.

## “Musical Gumbo”

In this icebreaker, make some “musical gumbo” like Trombone Shorty by creating a human orchestra!

- Divide into groups of 2-3.
- Explain to them that each group is an instrument in your human orchestra. Give each group a few minutes to decide on what noise they will make.
  - They can use their voices to hum, buzz, etc., or they can use their bodies by snapping, stomping feet, etc.
  - The most important thing is everyone taking part and making noise.
  - Encourage groups to try out a few different ideas, and when they decide on one, to practice doing it together a few times.
- Once each group has their sound, bring everyone together and tell them that you are the conductor. Establish some conducting hand gestures:
  - When you point to a group, they should start making their noise.
  - If you raise your hand higher, they should get louder.
  - If you lower your hand, they should get quieter.
  - If you slice your hand across the air in a cutting motion, they should stop.
  - If you give the “okay” signal, they should keep doing what they’re doing.
- Tune up’ your orchestra by pointing to each group one at a time, then silencing them before moving on to the next.
- Then, start playing! Play around as much as you like, adding and removing instruments to make interesting sounds.
- When you feel all of the children have had plenty of practice, build it up to one final crescendo with all of them ‘playing’ at full volume!

### *VARIATIONS:*

- Give each group a different emotion (happy, sad, excited, etc.). Now when you point at them they have to make noises that convey this emotion. For example they might cheer with happiness or moan with sadness.
- If you have a small-sized group, do this individually, with each child contributing a sound.
- Ask for a child volunteer to be the conductor and start again!

# ACTIVITIES TO TRY

## “The Pitter Patter of Rain (sticks)”

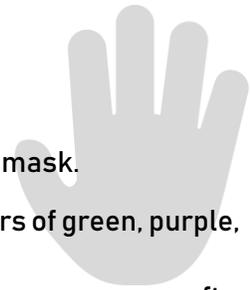
A rainstick is a type of musical instrument that mimics the sound of rain. Traditional rainstick materials included dried out plants like cactus or bamboo and filled with pebbles. This rainstick will be made with more common materials like cardboard tubes, nails and beans, but will still make a cool rain-like sound. Experiment with the design to make different sounds and use the instrument to tell stories about the weather.

[Visit Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry online for instructions for The Pitter Patter of Rain \(sticks\)!](#)

## “Mardi Gras Handprint Mask”

In honor of the rich history of New Orleans and Mardi Gras, make a handprint mask.

- Materials needed: Construction paper in traditional Mardi Gras colors of green, purple, and gold; pen or pencil; glue; tape; scissors
- Start out by tracing both hands on two different colored pieces of heavy paper or craft foam. It is easiest to have someone else trace your hands!
- Cut out your two handprints. Hold up your two handprints so that the palms overlap about an inch, and determine where you want your eye holes to be.
- Cut an eye hole in the center of each hand.
- Overlap the palm area of the hand about an inch and glue the hand cut-outs together.
- Decorate your mask. Use whatever craft supplies you have on hand to embellish your mask. Try using sequins, feathers, craft foam, pipe cleaners, buttons, etc.
- Make a handle for your mask using a large piece of paper. Start in one corner and roll it tightly, on the diagonal.
- Once you have rolled the entire piece of paper, tape the end down to hold it into a tight tube.
- Use tape to attach one end of the handle to the back of your mask.



# ACTIVITIES TO TRY CONT.



## “Household Material Orchestra”

Make instruments to form your own band using everyday household materials. Try one of our suggestions or experiment and make your own!

- **Plastic Egg Maracas**
  - MATERIALS: plastic eggs, plastic spoons, uncooked rice, masking or washi tape
  - Pour white rice into some empty plastic eggs and close them.
  - Take 2 plastic spoons and put the heads of each on either side of the egg.
  - Wrap tape around the spoons.
  - Tape the bottom of the spoon handles together.
- **Kazoo**
  - MATERIALS: cardboard tube (toilet paper or paper towel); wax paper, rubber band, sharp pencil; crayons or markers
  - Cover the end of your cardboard tube with wax paper and secure it with a rubber band.
  - Poke a few holes in the side of the tube using a sharp object like the point of a pencil.
  - Decorate your kazoo!
  - To use: hold the kazoo up to your mouth and hum into it. Cover the holes and see how that changes the sound.
- **Tissue Box Guitar**
  - Materials: empty tissue box, rubber bands, empty paper towel tube, rubber bands, glue, scissors, pencils, crayons or markers
  - Lay the tissue box short-side up, place the empty paper towel tube in the center of the short side, and trace around the circle.
  - Cut a hole where you traced, and insert the tube into a hole. Glue the tube in place and let dry.
  - Decorate the tissue box and paper towel roll tube!
  - Stretch five to ten rubber bands lengthwise around the tissue box and over the tissue box hole.
  - Play your guitar by strumming the rubber bands (tip: using rubber bands with varied lengths makes for different sounds).

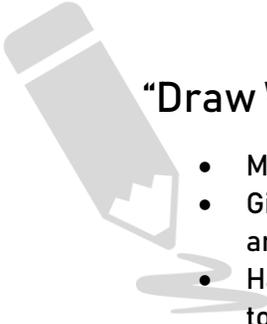


## “Sound Sandwich”

A “sound sandwich” is a simple musical instrument you can make with just craft sticks, straws and rubber bands. The rubber band vibrates to make a pitch just like a guitar string. This musical instrument can be used to investigate the principals of sound including frequency and amplitude.

[Visit Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry online for instructions for a Sound Sandwich!](#)

# ACTIVITIES TO TRY CONT.



## “Draw What You Feel”

- **MATERIALS:** speakers and some of Trombone Shorty's [music](#), paper, drawing utensils
- Give each child a blank piece of paper and access to markers, colored pencils, crayons, and/or paint.
- Have each child write their name on the back of the paper and then turns the paper over to the blank side to start.
- Play 1 minute of music and encourage children to draw what they feel or draw what the music reminds them of. Maybe the music reminds them of a birthday party, a thunderstorm, playing with friends, etc.
- After a minute, pause the music and says, “Pass It!” Children pass their paper to the person to the right of them, as does all other students, until all students receive the paper from their immediate left.
- Begin playing music again and have the children add to what has been drawn on the paper in front of them.
- This game continues until all students receive their original work with their name on the back.
- Discuss the activity. What do you see on your paper? Are the drawings all more similar or different? Did you enjoy drawing/painting to music? Do you think Bryan Collier, the illustrator of *Trombone Shorty*, listened to music while he created pictures for the book?
- Pass out new blank pieces of paper. This time, play music for extended period of time, but allow children to create their own artwork, without passing to another child.

# WEBSITES



## [Jazz for Kids](#)

Jazz is a uniquely American form of music. The links at Jazz for kids take you to various websites that offer kid-friendly information about the history of jazz, famous jazz musicians and, of course, the music itself!

## [Compose Your Own Music](#)

You can be a composer too! Compose your own music by choosing the type of note you want to use and then choosing its pitch from the piano.

## [Sphinx Kids Music Games](#)

Play lots of fun music-related games at Sphinx Kids, an extension of the Sphinx Organization's Classical Connections program, which brings classical music into underserved schools nationwide.

## [Creating Music](#)

Learn the science behind pitch, playing music, and hearing music at this interactive site for kids.

## [Coretta Scott King Book Awards Discussion Guide](#)

Explore activities, discussion questions, and related Coretta Scott King titles suggested by the American Library Association.