

Grandma's Records

by Eric Velasquez



Introduce *Grandma's Records*

Eric recalls music-filled summers with his Grandma in El Barrio (a neighborhood in Spanish Harlem, New York), playing records, dancing, sharing stories of her home in Puerto Rico, and having fun together.

Get kids curious about *Grandma's Records*. Bring in old records and show kids how people listened to music before there were cassette tapes or CDs. If possible, play a record for the kids. Or ask kids what they like to do with their grandparents or aunts and uncles.

Discuss *Grandma's Records*

After reading *Grandma's Records* aloud, ask kids whether they liked the book and why. Help them understand the plot and connect with the characters by asking:

1. Did Eric like the visits with his Grandma? What parts of the story make you think so? Have you ever visited a family member who lives somewhere else? Where? What do you remember about the visit?
2. Where did Grandma and her nephew Sammy, the musician, come from? Is it part of the United States? What languages are spoken there?
3. Why would Grandma put her hand over her heart when her favorite record was playing? Have you ever felt a song was "just for you?" Do you have a favorite song? What is it?
4. Did Eric like Sammy's concert in New York? Have you ever gone to a music concert? Where? Who was playing? What did you enjoy about the music?

Activities

Doing a hands-on activity that connects to the story makes the experience more personal and memorable for kids. Choose one (or more) of the activities below, or make up one of your own.

1. **Make a record cover.** Have kids design, draw, and decorate their own record cover. Bring in album or CD covers for ideas. Ask *What kind of music will be on your record? Is it a band or individual singer? What will you name the album?* Have them write the name on the album cover.
2. **Learn Latin dances.** Ask a parent, dance teacher, or other volunteer to show kids how to dance salsa, merengue, or other Latin dances. Or invite local dancers to perform for the group and teach a few Latin dance steps.
3. **Listen to different types of music.** Bring in a variety of music, such as jazz, Brazilian, and Puerto Rican (like *bomba* and *plena*) and play them for kids. Discuss which music kids liked best and why. Have them use percussion instruments (their desks, hands, or musical instruments) to create their own beats and rhythms.
4. **Explore the sounds.** Ask the children in your group who play musical instruments (or music students from a local school) to play for your group. After the performance, have the group describe what each musical instrument sounds like. For instance, they might say an elephant's roar, a humming sound, or thunder.

5. **Make a music calendar.** Have the kids search local newspapers and entertainment Web sites for free music-related events. Then, have them make a calendar of events to share with their families and friends. They can do a weekly or monthly calendar.

Week of June 12						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Dance across the City! at City Hall, 11:00 a.m.				World music concert in the park, 7:00 p.m.		Free guitar lessons at music store, 2:00 p.m.

Get Involved

Have the kids learn a song(s) to **sing at a local senior program or senior center.** They might also want to do a series of “concerts” over a period of time.

Web Explorations

Listen to or make all kinds of music on the following sites:

pbskidsgo.org/arthur/games/crankitup/index.html

Add everyday items to the **Crank It Up** wheel and play different music. The keyboard also adds animal sounds, horns, bells, and more.

pbskids.org/jazz/bandleader.html

Kids choose the instruments they want in their band, then listen to them play at **Bandleader!** Change the instruments and listen to the new music.

pbskidsgo.org/mayaandmiguel

Listen to instruments, beats, and sounds from around the world. Go to “Games,” then **Global Groovin** (Spanish and English Web site).

pbskidsgo.org/buster

Listen to **Songs** from all the Postcards from Buster™ shows. These songs take kids around the country to learn about different cultures.

More Suggested Books

The Orphan Singer by Emily Arnold McCully

Zin! Zin! Zin! A Violin by Lloyd Moss

Duke Ellington: The Piano Prince and His Orchestra by Andrea Davis Pinkney