Cut the Cake

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**Tips for making a circle:**
Plan and teach students how to make a circle. An easy way with K-1 is to follow the leader (teacher) when you are tapped on the shoulder. Older students should be able to move directly from their normal seating to the closest place in a circle. The goal is to make a circle safely, quickly, and quietly. Every now and then, a class might need to have assigned places in the circle. Some teachers find it helpful to have place markers on the floor.

**Tips for teaching the song and the motions:**
- Teacher sings and students listen for verbs (action words).
- Practice appropriate action for each verb or line of the song.
- Echo singing and motions at the same time. Why fight it?

**Tips for teaching the game:**
- Practice cutting the cake gently and slowly.
- After cutting the cake, “it” stands in place with hands out to each side making “stop signs.”
- Some students who get “cut” will be confused about which direction they go around the circle. Have them go away from “it” as if “it” pushes them away after “cutting the cake.”
- Practice moving around the circle safely with each kind of movement you are using. When you first play the game, have students “race walk.” Later, after they are singing and playing the game safely, you can add variations to the movement students do after being “cut.” See examples on the other side of this handout.
- Decide what to do after students have a turn. Options include stay in the circle but sit down, sit in the middle of the circle, sit out, line up, chose an instrument to play, etc.

**Tips for teaching rhythm:**
- Match lyrics to rhythm cards.
- Find phrases that are the same and different (rhythmic form = abab).

**Tips for teaching melody:**
- Find the descending scale, the highest note, and the repeating notes.
- Match lyrics to melodic contour or melody cards.
- Find phrases that are the same and different (melodic form = abac).

**Suggestions for adding instruments:**
- Play tambourines – tap 4 beats, shake 4 beats, tap 4 beats, tap rhythm (ti-ti, ti-ti, ta), tap hip (rest)
- Play Boomwhackers™ - broken bordun (C-G)
- Play xylophones – broken bordun (C-G)
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Many circle games involve one child breaking through a circle from either the inside or the outside. In several versions of these games the circle represents a cake, and the child who is “it” slices the cake by bringing open hands together and using them in a slicing motion at some point in the circle to “cut the cake.” One old set of words goes:

Here I brew and here I bake,
Here I make a birthday cake.
Here I bake and here I brew,
And here I must and shall break through.

Children in a school in Halifax, Nova Scotia, brought the following rhyme and its accompanying game to their teacher, who added the tune. Later that year she chanced to hear a group of children on the other side of town playing the game and singing her tune. The tune had obviously been passed orally child to child.

Clap your hands to-get-her, Give your-self a shake.

Make a hap-py cir-cle, And then you cut the cake.

The child chosen as “it” steps around the outside of the circle while the song is sung. On the first phrase, the children clap their hands; on the second phrase, they shake themselves; and on the third phrase, they join hands. On the words “cut the cake,” the child who is “it” brings hands down in a slicing motion between two children, breaking their clasp. These two children run around the circle in opposite directions. The one who gets back to place first is the new “it,” and the game continues.

CELEBRATING BIRTHDAYS:
1. “Apples, Peaches, Pears, and Plums” (Silver Burdett Making Music, Gr. 1)
2. “Happy Birthday to You” (Silver Burdett Making Music, Gr. K)
3. “Going Over the Sea” (Singlish, Vol. 1)
4. “Cut the Cake” (120 Singing Games and Dances by Choksy and Brummitt)