

Thailand: Wirag and His Xylophone

I Love Music Series

Subject Areas: Social Studies, World Geography and Cultures, Multicultural Studies, Music

Synopsis: Ten-year-old Wirag takes private xylophone lessons once a week. He learns to play his instrument by ear, without any musical score. One day, as he is practicing on his own in front of a Buddhist temple, the boy is invited by a monk to come and play on a magnificent xylophone.

Learning Objectives:

- Objective 1)** Students will be able to compare and contrast their culture, family and activities with Wirag's culture, family and activities.
- Objective 2)** Students will be able to demonstrate an appreciation for the diversity of cultures on our planet.
- Objective 3)** Students will be able to locate Thailand on a map or globe.
- Objective 4)** Students will be able to identify cultural traditions of Thailand.

Vocabulary:

Bangkok, Thailand, xylophone, resonate, instrument, "play by ear," memorize, concentrate, perform, particular, province, represented, float, traditional, jury, precious, Polang, accompanying, brag, Buddhist, temple, melodies, monk, ancient, exception, overwhelmed, comparison, intricate, and masterpiece

Pre-Viewing Activities:

- 1) Locate Thailand on a map or globe. Ask students on which continent Thailand is located. Point out Bangkok, China, the Sea of Japan and the Pacific Ocean on the map. Make sure viewers know where Thailand is in relation to the rest of the world, including the United States and North America.
- 2) Discuss general characteristics of Thailand such as climate, geographical features, the people, customs, etc.
- 3) Ask students to identify favorite hobbies or activities. In what kind of activities are they interested? Do they take lessons for their activities? What kinds of lessons do they take? Is anyone interested in music? Ask the students to describe their interests and if possible, show them a xylophone. Does it look familiar to anyone?

Post-Viewing Questions and Discussion:

- 1) Describe Wirag's town. Compare the city where Wirag lives to your own town. How is it similar or different to your own? Describe the people. Are they similar or different from people you know?

- 2) Compare and contrast Wirag's activities to your own. How are they similar or different? Why does Wirag take lessons? Do your activities involve lessons of some kind? Where does Wirag go for his lessons? Do you take lessons in a school or in a home? Have you ever performed in public like Wyrag? What kind of performance was it? Have you ever been in a parade? What are parades like where you live? Compare and contrast your religious experience with Wyrag's. How is his experience like or unlike your own?
- 3) Why does Wyrag like to go early for his lessons? What makes him laugh when he watches the other classes? Why? Where does Wyrag sit when he is taking a lesson? Why is this necessary?

Additional Activities:

- 1) Have students research the history and origination of the xylophone. Visit a band at your school or invite a xylophone player to perform for the class. Have the students create a xylophone using whatever materials they choose.
- 2) Have students prepare a geographic profile of Thailand noting its size, location, climate, natural resources, and outstanding cultural traits. Have the students describe Thailand's history, people, language, principal industries and major tourist attractions.

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