Frère Jacques
(Are You Sleeping, Brother John?)

Frère Jacques is a traditional French nursery rhyme. This song is about a monk who has overslept and is urged to wake up and sound the bells for the matins, the midnight or very early morning prayers for which a monk would be expected to wake.

National Standards

Objectives

1. Students will learn a multicultural song in English or French.
2. Students will learn ostinato patterns by rote on ringing instruments.
3. Students will keep a steady beat for song using rhythm instruments such as jingle bells or jingle sticks.
4. Students may learn about canon form (round) and sing in canon.

Process

1. Begin by teaching the song in English by rote.
2. Starting with Ostinato # 1, assign one handchime per student and teach the pattern by rote before continuing with Ostinati #2, 3 and 4.
3. Encourage other students to keep a steady beat on non-pitched percussion instruments and then, have some create complementing rhythmic patterns.
4. Encourage all students to sing and play.
5. Once mastered, split students into two groups and teach the song in canon.
6. Once mastered, add the ostinato accompaniment.

Notes
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Traditional French Nursery Rhyme

1

Are you sleeping? Are you sleeping? Are you sleeping? Are you sleeping?
Frère Jacques, Frère Jacques, Frère Jacques, Frère Jacques

2

Brother John Brother John Brother John Brother John

3

Dormez-vous? Dormez-vous? Dormez-vous? Dormez-vous?

4

Frère Jacques, Frère Jacques, Frère Jacques, Frère Jacques

5

Morning bells are ringing, can you hear them ringing?
Sonnez le matin, sonnez le matin

6

Ding, dong, ding, ding, dong, ding, ding, dong, ding

7

Din, din, don, din, din, don, din, din, don

8

Ding, dong, ding, ding, dong, ding, ding, dong, ding

Sonnez le matin, sonnez le matin
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Handchimes Needed: Three Octaves (C₄ – C₇)

Ostinato #1
Ostinato #2
Ostinato #3
Ostinato #4