

ON STAGE AT THE CENTER

Teacher's Guide

Somos Amigos: Songs on Common Ground



ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

Friendship is at the heart of this joyful new collaboration between Mexican songstress and Latin GRAMMY® nominee Sonia De Los Santos and the GRAMMY® Award-winning Americana folk duo The Okee Dokee Brothers. This bilingual program for kids includes both old and new songs that span the musical traditions of North America and illustrate the collective power of singing together and learning from each other. With an adventurous spirit and a common vision of peace and understanding, Somos Amigos encourages young and old to explore, dance, sing and laugh together, hand-in-hand.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

As childhood friends growing up in Denver, Colorado, Joe Mailander and Justin Lansing were always exploring the outdoors. Now, as the GRAMMY® Award-winning Okee Dokee Brothers, they have put this passion for the outdoors at the heart of their Americana Folk music. The five-time Parents' Choice Award winners have garnered praise from the likes of NPR's All Things Considered and USA Today, and have been called "two of family music's best songwriters."

Sonia De Los Santos was born with a smile on her face in Monterrey, Mexico, and in 2007 started touring the world, singing in English and Spanish, playing guitar and jarana, and lighting up the stage with Grammy Award-winning group Dan Zanes And Friends. In 2015 she released her first solo family music album titled Mi Viaje: De Nuevo León to the New York Island (Parents' Choice Foundation Gold Award Winner) a collection of songs that reflect her experiences growing up in Mexico, moving to another country, learning about other cultures, and in the process, feeling closer to her own heritage.

BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE

Questions to Ask:

- Do you have a favorite type of music? What do you like about it?
- Do you have friends who speak another language you don't speak? Which language? Can you ask them to teach you a few words?
- Have you ever been on an adventure? What activities did you do on that trip?

THEATER ETIQUETTE

Please share these tips on how to be a respectful audience member.

1. Be an engaged and polite listener. The show requires your full attention!
2. Refrain from talking to your neighbor. Students enjoy the performance more if they can hear and pay attention uninterrupted.
3. Applaud if you like something. Normally, the audience applauds at the end of an act or scene. However, great audiences applaud when they are impressed with a scene or laugh when something is funny.
4. Entering and exiting the performance space in an organized and calm manner is important for your safety and the safety of the performing artists.



AFTER THE PERFORMANCE

1. Could you recognize any of the instruments being played? What instruments did you see?
2. Did you have a favorite song? Why did you like it?
3. Are you curious about visiting any of the countries the songs are from? Where and why? Would you want to learn that country's language before you visit?
4. What are some of the songs that have been passed down from your culture? Do you have a favorite song for a certain holiday? Where did you hear this song? Does your family still sing these songs?
5. Did any of the songs make you feel like you were on an adventure? Which ones and why?

FOLLOW UP ACTIVITIES

This Land is Our Land!

Sonia's "Esta Es Tu Tierra" celebrates all the great things about our country. As a class, pick one state and research a few facts about each state. Is the state known for a certain food? A certain type of music? A national monument? What is this state's flower or bird? Now have the students decorate a page with all the fun facts they have learned.

Instrument Improvisation

The people who first played Folk, Bluegrass, and Old-Time music often used musical instruments they crafted themselves out of ordinary objects they found around them. Have your students look around their environment and find objects that could be used to make music! Brainstorm all the ways you could make sounds with an object; blowing, plucking, tapping, shaking, scraping, or banging together. Have the students make their own band and play along with their new instruments to a favorite song!

Let's Move!

Music is a great way to show different emotions and feelings. Ask your students how different songs in the show made them feel. Separate your class into pairs. Have the students listen to a song by Sonia and create their own dance for the chorus. Then play a song by the Okee Dokee Brothers and have the pairs create a dance to that chorus. Compare how the different styles of music made the students express themselves differently. After, put on a favorite song and have a dance party to share their new dances!

Create an Adventure

The Okee Dokee Brothers sing lots of songs about traveling and going to new exciting places. Split your students into groups and have them create their own unique adventure. Would you want to go camping near a waterfall or hike up a mountain? Do you want to sleep under the beautiful stars or in a cozy log cabin? Let the students work on creating the perfect trip and then let each group share with the class. Compare each group's activities and learn more about the great outdoors.

Our Class Song

Sonia has written her own version of "This Land is Our Land." Challenge your students to adapt a song of their own! Can they write a new version of "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star?" What about a new "Old MacDonald?" Have the class write their own song together. Decide on a song to rewrite and write an opening line at the top of a piece of paper or on the whiteboard. Ask one student to write or say out loud the next line of the song. Ask each student to add one line to the song until every student has contributed. At the end, read or sing the song out loud and see what the class has created!