

# Why Do We Dance?



## teacher information

### unit overview

Dance and movement are a part of every community. It can be an impromptu expression of feelings or part of a more formal celebration. Dancing occurs in all communities, often prompted by cultural or family events such as holidays, weddings, birthdays, religious events, and friendly gatherings.

Students are naturally interested in dance and movement. It can either be an impromptu expression of emotions or part of a planned event or celebration. This lesson will facilitate connecting this interest to students' personal experiences. You will provide opportunities to view and discuss examples of dance events and will provide an opportunity in the classroom for students to interpret what they have experienced in a classroom dance area.

### focus art work

Joseph Henry Sharp (1859–1953)  
United States (Cincinnati)  
*Harvest Dance*, 1893–94  
Art Museum Purchase, 1894.10

### focus book

M.C. Helldorfer  
*Got to Dance*.  
New York: Doubleday Books for  
Young Readers, 2004

**grade level: pre-K (ages 3–5)**

# unit objectives

- Students closely examine several works of art from the Cincinnati Art Museum's permanent collection, including Focus Artwork *Harvest Dance*, by Joseph Henry Sharp.
- Students experience dance and movement in the classroom and connect it to their own personal and cultural experiences.
- Students discuss what they see in the Focus Artwork and relate it to personal experiences.
- Students view the Focus Book *Got to Dance*, which relates feelings to dance and movement.
- Students participate in a discussion connecting the students' ideas and feelings as they relate to the Focus Book and Focus Artwork.
- Students participate in a follow-up art-making experience, connecting what they have experienced in class.

# about the artist

A traveler at heart, Joseph Henry Sharp's art and teaching have made significant contributions to the city of Cincinnati. Sharp was born on September 27, 1859, in Bridgeport, Ohio, and was raised by his father William Henry Sharp, a merchant. Although Sharp and his brother, Avery, were brought up in Ironton, Ohio, by 1873, Joseph sought art instruction in Cincinnati. Upon arrival in Cincinnati, Sharp needed to earn money for the tuition costs to attend the university. Working as a water boy in the stockyards, he was able to raise enough money to enroll in the School of Design of the University of Cincinnati in 1874.

During his three years at the university, he managed to establish himself as a credible portrait artist. In 1879 and 1880, Cincinnati hosted the Industrial Expositions where Sharp had the opportunity to exhibit some of his portraits. By the summer of 1881, he had moved to Antwerp, Belgium, to study under artist Charles Verlat for one year. During the year, Sharp worked for Verlat, he took a trip to France to visit artist S. Jerome Uhl. This visit proved to be very beneficial for Sharp as he confided in a letter to his hometown paper, the *Ironton Register*, "Antwerp don't agree with me. Paris is clearly the great art center of the world. I have been lost about forty times. I don't care though, I have no place particular to go, until my money is gone, then I will be in America."

Sharp's traveling took a different turn upon his arrival back in America. As a child, he was fascinated with American Indian lore, and in 1883, he visited several Native American reservations in New Mexico, Arizona, and the Pacific Northwest. He chose to visit these specific reservations at the suggestion of fellow artist Henry Farny.

During the following nine years that Sharp lived in Cincinnati, he traveled to Europe twice in 1886 and 1889 to study at the Royal Academy in Munich. There, he continued to develop his skills in oil painting under the instruction of Carl von Moor and Nicholas Gysis. In 1892, Sharp was asked to take a position teaching drawing and painting at the Art Academy of Cincinnati. That same year, Sharp met and married his wife, Addie Josephine Byram. Addie shared with Sharp a love for Native American culture. She joined him every summer to live alongside the Crow, Sioux, Cheyenne, and Pueblo tribes.

While working at the Art Academy of Cincinnati, Sharp was able to take a leave of absence from teaching, during the spring of 1894, to go to Spain, Italy, and France with Frank Duvencck. During his trip, Sharp spent the majority of his time in Paris studying at the Academy Julian. In 1896, Sharp had entered a drawing of a nude in pastel titled *La Paresseuse* accepted into the Salon in Paris, France, for exhibition. After his exhibition, Sharp spent the next ten years in Cincinnati working out of his new studio at 118 East Fourth Street. Sharp and his wife continued their summer travels, which included stops in Montana and the Dakotas.



During these years in Cincinnati, Sharp showed his work at the Art Institute of Chicago, the National Academy of Design, the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, and the Society of Western Artists. By all accounts, he developed a solid reputation as a painter of Native American subjects. Because of his success, Sharp was honored by the Cincinnati Art Museum with a solo exhibition. He felt such a connection with Native American culture that he acquired a plot of land at the Crow Indian Agency, near the Custer battlefield in Montana, in order to build a cabin and studio.

After resigning from the Art Academy in 1902, Sharp moved to Taos, New Mexico, permanently and split his time between there and Pasadena, California, where he died on August 29, 1953.

## about the art

*Harvest Dance* was painted after Sharp's first visit to Taos, New Mexico, in 1893. Intrigued and inspired by the Native American people, in this painting the artist has captured a religious ceremony held by the Pueblo Indians during the summer months. The purpose of the ceremony was to ensure good weather and plentiful crops. The young men and women are seen dancing while the older men chant and sing to a drum beat; in the background a crowd lines the roofs of the pueblos to observe the ceremony.

Featured in an article in the October 14, 1893, issue of *Harper's Weekly*, Sharp described the harvest ceremony seen in the painting as

*a striking scene of gorgeous color: The brilliant sunlight illumines the gaudy trappings of the dancers. Rows of gayly [sic] dressed Apaches, Navajos, and Pueblos on horseback encircle in quiet dignity the enthusiastic actors, while a little farther off the whole scene is framed in by the gleaming walls of the white and yellow houses.... The dancing was kept up for seven long hours... Any sign of fatigue would be met with renewed vigor of the chanting chorus, while the drummer would reverse his drum and thump harder...*

Upon his return to Cincinnati, Sharp exhibited several paintings, including *Harvest Dance*, at the Fourth Annual Exhibition of the Cincinnati Art Club. The Art Museum trustees were very impressed with the painting and purchased it for the Art Museum.

## information on focus book

M.C. Helldorfer, *Got to Dance*

*Got to Dance* by M.C. Helldorfer, with illustrations by Hiroe Nakata, is the story of a little girl and her grandpa who dance their way through a hot summer day. With her mother at work and her brother at camp, the little girl has nothing to do but dance. Throughout the story, she and her grandfather spend a busy day playing outside, going to the zoo, and enjoying a rainstorm. The story depicts the emotion and animation of a child expressing her joy through dance.





## Lesson #1 Let's Dance

## materials

dance clothing, costumes, and shoes (tap & ballet)  
ribbons or scarves for movement to music  
various types of music from various cultures and with various tempos  
simple instruments for accompanying dance  
videos and pictures that show people dancing in costume and from various cultures (including copy of the Focus Artwork *Harvest Dance* or other works of art)  
mirror      dance books      portable tape/CD player

## procedure

1. Invite students to join you in the dance studio. Introduce the theme of dance by asking students these questions:
  - What is dancing?
  - Do you ever dance? Where? Why?
  - When do you dance?
  - What is a special time or place where you might like to dance?
  - What could you be celebrating?
  - Who might be there with you?
2. Share a favorite dance with students and ask them to join in, listening and moving to the music.
3. Encourage students to try on available costumes, move to the music with scarves and ribbons, and model the dance movements on the videos, in the books, and in the pictures used in class.
4. Encourage students to visit the dance studio repeatedly during this unit, and relate student activity to the discussions concerning the Focus Book and Focus Artwork.

## national standards

### DANCE

Standard 1: Identifies and demonstrates movement elements and skills in performing dance.  
Standard 3: Understands dance as a way to create and communicate meaning.

### MUSIC

Standard 6: Knows and applies appropriate criteria to music and music performances.  
Standard 7: Understands the relationship between music and history and culture.

### PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Standard 1: Uses a variety of basic and advanced movement forms.

## time/setting

As support for this unit on dance, the dramatic play area of the classroom will be set up as a dance studio.

## objectives

- Students interact in the dramatic play area—dance studio—and will identify and demonstrate movement elements and skills in performing dance.
- Students interact in the dance studio and use a variety of basic and advanced movement forms.
- Students use costumes and music to extend movement activities.
- Students relate previous activities to pictures displayed in the dance area, extending the active looking process.

## vocabulary

(Definitions from Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary [www.webster.com](http://www.webster.com))

costume: *prevailing fashion in apparel of a period, country, or class*

stage: *part of a theater on which dancing takes place*

music: *vocal, instrumental, or mechanical sounds having rhythm, melody, or harmony*

dance: *series of rhythmic and patterned movements usually performed to music*



# head start outcomes

## CREATIVE ARTS

### MUSIC

CA 1: Participates with increasing interest and enjoyment in a variety of music activities, including listening, singing, finger plays, games, and performances.

CA 2: Experiments with a variety of musical instruments.

### MOVEMENT

CA 7: Expresses through movement and dancing what is felt and heard in various musical tempos and styles.

CA 8: Shows growth in moving in time to different patterns of beat and rhythm in music.

### DRAMATIC PLAY

CA 9: Participates in a variety of dramatic play activities that become more extended and complex.

CA 10: Shows growing creativity and imagination in using materials and in assuming different roles in dramatic play situations.

## SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### SELF-CONTROL

SED 6: Demonstrates increasing capacity to follow rules and routines and use materials purposefully, safely, and respectfully.

### COOPERATION

SED 7: Increases abilities to sustain interactions with peers by helping, sharing, and discussion.

### SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

SED 11: Shows progress in developing friendships with peers.

## PHYSICAL HEALTH DEVELOPMENT

### GROSS MOTOR SKILLS

PHD 4: Shows increasing levels of proficiency, control, and balance in walking, climbing, running, jumping, hopping, skipping, marching, and galloping.



## Lesson #2 Learning to Look Let's Celebrate with Harvest Dance

## time/setting

Large Group Time

## objectives

- Students examine closely a reproduction of Focus Artwork *Harvest Dance* and respond to guiding questions about what they see.
- Students participate in a discussion using effective interpersonal communication skills.
- Students discuss how the painting makes them feel and share when they might have participated in events at which there was dancing and music.

## vocabulary

(Definitions from Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary [www.webster.com](http://www.webster.com))

painting: work produced through the art of painting

celebration: *to observe an occasion with appropriate ceremony or festivity*

harvest: *act or process of gathering in a crop*

costume: *prevailing fashion in apparel of a period, country, or class*

culture: *customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group*



# materials

large reproduction of Focus Artwork *Harvest Dance* or class set of laminated copies  
paper and pencil to document students' comments about the painting

# procedure

1. Arrange students in a group so that all may participate in a focused looking activity.
2. Give each student in the group his or her own copy of the Focus Artwork to explore. Teacher may also use a large reproduction for this activity. Encourage silent/quiet looking, followed by the use of guiding questions to elicit their responses to what they see. Questions may include these:
  - What do you see?
  - What do you think the people are doing? Why?
  - Do you think they are celebrating? Why? What makes you think that?
  - Do these people look like you? How are they the same? Different?
  - What are they wearing?
  - What are they holding? (Expand on musical instruments observed.)
  - What kind of music are they listening to? You may also choose to enhance discussion by sharing with students examples of Native American clothing and musical instruments as depicted in the painting or by listening to Native American music.
3. Explain to students that this painting depicts a Native American harvest celebration. To tie this to student knowledge discuss Thanksgiving and that this holiday originated to celebrate the harvest.

# national standards

## VISUAL ARTS

Standard 4: Understands the visual arts in relation to history and cultures.

## HISTORY

Standard 1: Understands family life now and in the past and family life in various places long ago.

# head start outcomes

## LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

### SPEAKING & COMMUNICATING

LD 6: Progresses in abilities to initiate and respond appropriately in conversations and discussions with peers and adults.

## SCIENCE

### SCIENTIFIC SKILLS & METHODS

SC 2: Develops increased ability to observe and discuss common properties, differences, and comparisons among objects and materials.

## SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### COOPERATION

SED 7: Increases abilities to sustain interactions with peers by helping, sharing, and discussion.

### KNOWLEDGE OF FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES

SED 14: Progresses in understanding similarities and respecting differences among people, such as genders, race, special needs, culture, language, and family structures.





## Lesson #3

# We Just Got to Dance!

## procedure

1. Arrange students in a group so that all may see the book.
2. Share Focus Book asking students what they think the story might be about from looking at the front cover.
3. Read the book and allow time for questions and discussion of each page.
4. Ask questions and facilitate discussion about the book:
  - When did the character in the book dance?
  - Where did the character in the book dance?
  - Why do you think she wanted to dance?
  - How did that make her feel?
  - Where could you dance?
  - Do you have a special outfit that you need or like to wear when you dance?
  - What kind of dance music do you like?
5. Relate and connect the Focus Book to the Focus Artwork. Ask students to find the similarities and differences between the painting and the book.
6. Make this book available in classroom reading area so that students may choose to revisit the book during the length of the unit.

## time/setting

Large Group Time

## objectives

- Students look at, listen to, and discuss the Focus Book *Got to Dance* using the general skills and strategies of the reading process.
- Students look at, listen to, and discuss the story using effective interpersonal communication skills.
- Students pay attention to the cadence and rhyming of the text.
- Students discuss how the story makes them feel and share when they might have danced.

## vocabulary

(Definitions from Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary [www.webster.com](http://www.webster.com))

*dance: series of rhythmic and patterned movements usually performed to music*

*celebration: observe an occasion with appropriate ceremony or festivity*

## materials

Focus Book *Got to Dance* by M. C. Helldorfer  
large reproduction of Focus Artwork *Harvest Dance* or class set of laminated copies

## national standards

### LANGUAGE ARTS

Standard 5: Uses the general skills and strategies of the reading process.

Standard 6: Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of literary texts.

Standard 8: Uses listening and speaking strategies for different purposes.

### WORKING WITH OTHERS

Standard 1: Contributes to the overall effort of a group.

Standard 4: Displays effective interpersonal communication skills.

# head start outcomes

## LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

### LISTENING & UNDERSTANDING

LD 3: Understands an increasingly complex and varied vocabulary.

### SPEAKING & COMMUNICATING

LD 5: Develops increasing abilities to understand and use language to communicate information, experiences, ideas, feelings, opinions, needs, and questions, and for other varied purposes.

LD 6: Progresses in abilities to initiate and respond appropriately in conversations and discussions with peers and adults.

LD 7: Uses an increasingly complex and varied spoken vocabulary.

## LITERACY

### PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

LI 3: Progresses in recognizing matching sounds and rhymes in familiar words, games, songs, stories, and poems.

### PRINT AWARENESS & CONCEPTS

LI 12: Demonstrates increasing awareness of concepts of print, such as that reading in English moves from top to bottom and from left to right, that speech can be written down, and that print conveys a message.

## Lesson #4 I Feel the Music

## time/setting

Large Group Time. A selection of music will need to be gathered for this lesson.

## objectives

- Students listen to music from various cultures and with various tempos.
- Students understand that different kinds of music make people dance in different ways.
- Students experiment with dancing to different types of music.
- Students create a dance drawing while listening to various types of music.

## vocabulary

*(Definitions from Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary [www.webster.com](http://www.webster.com))*

music: *vocal, instrumental, or mechanical sounds having rhythm, melody, or harmony*

## materials

music with various tempos and from various cultures  
CD player  
paper  
crayons





# procedure

1. During group time, have students listen to music from various cultures and with various tempos.
2. With each piece of music, ask students the following:
  - Is this music fast or slow?
  - Do you think this music is happy or sad?
  - How do you think you would dance to this kind of music?
  - At what kind of celebration might this music be played?
3. Play the piece again. Students should be encouraged to get up and move to the music.
4. Tell students that they are now going to create a dance drawing based on what they hear. Tell them that instead of dancing with their feet they are now going to dance with their crayons on a piece of paper.
5. Give each student several sheets of paper and a choice of crayons. Start the music and tell students to draw to the beat or tempo of the song. Students should continue drawing until the music is stopped.
6. After each song or segment of music, ask students to discuss how the music affected what they drew. Repeat this activity with several pieces of music of different tempos and from different cultures.
7. As a follow-up discussion, ask students to pick their favorite drawing and explain why they like it and what kind of music was playing when they created it.

# national standards

## MUSIC

Standard 6: Knows and applies appropriate criteria to music and music performances.

## VISUAL ARTS

Standard 1: Understands and applies media, techniques and processes related to the visual arts.

Standard 5: Understands the characteristics and merits of one's own artwork and the artwork of others.

## LIFE SKILLS

### SELF-REGULATION

Standard 2: Performs self-appraisal.

Standard 4: Demonstrates perseverance.

Standard 5: Maintains a healthy self-concept.



# head start outcomes

## CREATIVE ARTS

### MUSIC

CA 1: Participates with increasing interest and enjoyment in a variety of music activities, including listening, singing, finger plays, games, and performances.

### ART

CA 3: Gains ability in using different art media and materials in a variety of ways for creative expression and representation.

CA 5: Develops growing abilities to plan, work independently, and demonstrate care and persistence in a variety of art projects.

CA 6: Begins to understand and share opinions about artistic products and experiences.

## SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### SELF CONCEPT

SED 3: Demonstrates growing confidence in a range of abilities and expresses pride in accomplishments.

## APPROACHES TO LEARNING

### INITIATIVE & CURIOSITY

ATL 3: Approaches tasks and activities with increased flexibility, imagination, and inventiveness.

# resources

Andrews, Sylvia. *Dancing In My Bones*. New York: Harper Festival, 2001.

Cocca-Leffler, Maryann. *Edgar Degas: Paintings that Dance*. New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 2001.

Dillon, Leo. *Rap a Tap Tap: Here's Bojangles—Think of That!* New York: Blue Sky Press, 2002.

Gauch, Patricia Lee. *Tanya and the Red Shoes*. New York: Philomel Books, 2002.

Helldorfer, M.C. *Got to Dance*. New York: Doubleday Books for Young Readers, 2004.

Jonas, Ann. *Color Dance*. New York: Greenwillow Books, 1989.

Jones, Bill T. *Dance*. New York: Hyperion Books for Students, 1998.

Lowery, Linda. *Twist with a Burger, Jitter with a Bug*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1995.

Pinkney, Andrea Davis. *Watch Me Dance*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1997.

Schick, Eleanor. *I Am: I Am A Dancer*. New York: Marshall Cavendish, 2002.

Smith, Cynthia Leitich. *Jingle Dancer*. New York: Morrow Junior Books, 2000.

Thomassie, Tynia. *Mimi's Tutu*. New York: Scholastic, 1996.

Walton, Rick. *How Can You Dance?* New York: C.P. Putnam's Sons, 2001.



## Art-Making Experience Costume Collage

## materials

large reproduction of Focus Artwork *Harvest Dance*

fabric glue

strips of fabric 3 to 5 in. wide and long enough to be tied around the student

collage materials: feathers, sequins, buttons, beads, fabric shapes, etc.

## procedure

1. Ask students to look at the Focus Artwork *Harvest Dance*. Then ask them to talk about what the people are wearing, why they think they are dressed this way and why we may dress differently when we dance.
2. Tell students that they are now going to create a sash to wear while they dance, very similar to those seen in the picture. Introduce/review the term sash with students.
3. Give each student a strip of fabric that is long enough to be tied around the student's waist. Offer fabric in several colors and patterns for students to choose.
4. Encourage students to collage/decorate their sash using collage materials and glue. Students should be given enough time to create a sash that meets their liking.
5. Once sashes are dry, encourage students to share with their classmates the type of dance they would do wearing their sashes. Sashes may then be worn in the dance studio for continued dance exploration.

## time/setting

Fabric and collage materials will need to be purchased or gathered prior to activity.

## objectives

- Students examine closely a reproduction of Focus Artwork *Harvest Dance*, and discuss the clothing worn in the painting.
- Students understand that people wear different types of clothing when they dance.
- Students create a sash, similar to those worn in *Harvest Dance*.

## vocabulary

(Definitions from Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary [www.webster.com](http://www.webster.com))

collage: *artistic composition made of various materials (as paper, cloth, or wood) glued on a surface*

sash: *band worn about the waist or over one shoulder and used as a dress accessory*

## national standards

### VISUAL ARTS

Standard 1: Understands and applies media, techniques, and processes related to the visual arts.

Standard 4: Understands the visual arts in relation to history and cultures.

Standard 5: Understands the characteristics and merits of one's own artwork and the artwork of others.

### LIFE SKILLS

#### SELF-REGULATION

Standard 2: Performs self-appraisal.

Standard 4: Demonstrates perseverance.

Standard 5: Maintains a healthy self-concept.



# head start outcomes

## CREATIVE ARTS

### ART

CA 3: Gains ability in using different art media and materials in a variety of ways for creative expression and representation.

CA 5: Develops growing abilities to plan, work independently, and demonstrate care and persistence in a variety of art projects.

CA 6: Begins to understand and share opinions about artistic products and experiences.

## SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### SELF-CONCEPT

SED 3: Demonstrates growing confidence in a range of abilities and expresses pride in accomplishments.

## APPROACHES TO LEARNING

### ENGAGEMENT & PERSISTENCE

ATL 5: Grows in abilities to persist in and complete a variety of tasks, activities, projects, and experiences.





Joseph Henry Sharp, *Harvest Dance*, 1893–94, Cincinnati Art Museum, Art Museum Purchase, 1894.10

## Dear Adult Friends and Caregivers,

As you know, your child recently participated in an art-integrated curriculum created by the Cincinnati Art Museum which explored why people dance. During this series of lessons, your child had the opportunity to discover this painting by famed American artist Joseph Henry Sharp. The painting, entitled *Harvest Dance*, inspired a variety of responses and conversations.

We hope that you will look at *Harvest Dance* together with your child and talk about it. Below please find a variety of extension activities that you and your child may wish to try to expand the learning they have begun in class.

1. Make up dances for everyday events. Examples could be the “Ice Cream for Dessert Dance” or “Beautiful, Sunny Day Dance.”
2. Dancing doesn’t have to always be done standing up. Try chair, sofa, or bed dancing.
3. Check with your local dance company to see if they offer open rehearsals that you can go and watch for free.
4. Cut shapes out of colored paper and glue them randomly onto a larger piece of colored paper. Then take a crayon or marker, put on a favorite piece of music, and draw lines around the shapes to show how they would dance.
5. Try dancing in water (in the bath or in a pool). Does it feel different or the same?
6. Visit the Cincinnati Art Museum. Call (513) 721-ARTS for more information, or go online at [www.cincinnatiartmuseum.org](http://www.cincinnatiartmuseum.org). You can see the original *Harvest Dance* while here.

Not from Cincinnati? Visit your local museum and look for images of people dancing and dance along.





**Joseph Henry Sharp (1859–1953)**

United States (Cincinnati)

*Harvest Dance*, 1893–94

Art Museum Purchase, 1894.10