

A Simple Listening Activity for Your Kids!  
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## The Main Idea

The goal here is to really get your kids to listen actively, and not just hear the music. They'll be doing a visual representation of what they see in their minds eye, so there are no wrong answers! It's simple and open-ended.

## What You'll Need

### The Music

There are tons of examples of music you could use [here, in every genre](#); however, here are a few classical pieces I recommend for this kind of listening activity. They're great for associating something visual with what you hear!

- *The Firebird Suite* - Stravinsky
- *Carnival of the Animals: The Cuckoo, The Aquarium, The Aviary, Fossils, etc.*  
- Saint-Saens
- *Night on Bald Mountain* - Mussorgsky
- *The Planets: Jupiter, Mars, Venus, etc.* - Holst
- *Rhapsody in Blue* - Gershwin
- *You can also use classical soundtracks to movies or shows your kids know and love. I do suggest picking music without lyrics, as you want your kids to use their brains and their imagination, and not get too much direction of what to do from the song itself.*

### The Art Supplies

Feel free to pick and choose the art supplies which you think would be appropriate for this listening activity!

- Paper
- Crayons, colored pencils, markers, chalk
- Stickers
- Glitter
- Scissors
- Glue
- *Alternatively, you could have your kids sculpt or carve in clay or playdoh.*

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## What to Do

If you have time, play the piece once first without giving your kids any supplies. I try to do this with as little talking as possible. It's fun to make your kids really open up their ears instead of being explicitly told what's going on or what to do. Just... listen.

*What do they hear?* You can have a discussion after the recording is complete, and ask them to answer simple questions about what they heard, like:

- Loud or soft?
- Fast or slow?
- Happy, sad, angry, mysterious?
- What did the music make you want to do?
- What colors or shapes did you see in your mind?

Then, after your kids have some idea of what they want to create, pass out the music supplies and play the music again!

## Final Thoughts to Keep in Mind

Really encourage your child to just make what they want: there is no right or wrong answer. And sometimes they may be so transfixed with their new musical epiphany that they don't make much art at all. That's ok! The goal here is to open their ears and make them active listeners.

If I'm doing this lesson with multiple children, I try to position them in a way that they can share supplies without really looking much at each other's work. This may be a new concept for your child, especially if they're drilled on traditional "there's only one right answer" schooling. As long as they can justify why they did what they did, their creation is perfectly fine. Even if it looks completely different from someone else's.

*Some follow-up questions you could ask your child:*

- How did this music make you feel?
- Why did you choose the colors that you did?
- Tell me the story that you drew here.
- If this music was a food, what flavors would it be?

Additionally, you could do this same music lesson, with the same piece of music, with your child in a few months or a year. See how their art has grown, and what ideas they come up with next!