Ten Ideas for Your Pre-Twinkle Violin/Viola Group Class

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1. **Think like a 3/4/5 year old, have lots of energy and quicken your pace.** Plan more activities than you think you need to keep them engaged.
2. **Have a clear technique goal for each activity when planning.** Be clear in your instructions to students on what they need to do to meet that goal.
3. **Be creative with every activity.** Use puppets, games, toys but make sure to incorporate them into activities that reinforce proper technique.
4. **Have routine be a part of every class every week.** Start with a basic lesson plan and change out a few activities each week. This age group needs lots of repetition, during the lesson and week to week, to reinforce activities.
5. **Involve the parents in the group class.** This is a great opportunity to watch your parents working with their children one on one and offer suggestions on how to nurture that relationship.
6. **Be silly!** Be willing to act a little out of character and you will win them over. This age group loves pretending, imitation, and stories.
7. **Balance group, solo, partner and parent activities throughout the class.** This will keep students engaged and excited.
8. **Do LOTS of repetitions!** Once you find a fun activity that is reinforcing your goals stick with it and find ways to continue the repetitions (all together, teachers turn, individual student's turn, all together again).
9. **Have high expectations**, **even for your littlest student.** Pre-twinkle lessons lay the foundation for future study on the instrument. Shouldn't we be expecting the most at this stage?
10. **Have good "classroom management"**. Make sure kids know where to unpack, sit, and go to the bathroom and what behavior is expected during class. Lack of organization can be a big waste of time if these routines aren't established. Don't be afraid to be firm with parents.

Activities for your Pre-Twinkle Group Class

1. **My all-time favorite piece for beginner group and recitals: <u>Pop Goes the Weasel</u>.** Teacher plays the melody, kids pluck the E string with pinky of left hand, and thumb is up on curve of neck. Reinforces posture, watching the leader, standing still, listening for good tone, playing as a group, correct left hand position, and it's so darn cute to watch! Simple piano accompaniment can be found in the Essential Elements orchestra books and may need to be transposed depending on what instrument you are playing. Start on open D for the violin melody and kids pluck open E string. Violas melody starts on open G and kids pluck open A.
2. **Buy some wooden sticks. www.WestMusic.com 6 Inch Lummi Sticks - 12 Pairs $16.** These sticks are a great size for little hands. Tap all of the rhythms together as a group, use different dynamics, different speeds, teacher demonstrates, kids repeat, etc. Kids love them! It's easier to tap sticks than clap and some kids are more successful at the beginning stages with the sticks. When students are at different levels, some kids can "play" their sticks along with other students playing on instruments. So many different uses for this tool. Reinforces rhythm training, watching the leader, following directions, taking turns, steady beat.
3. **Have fun with bow holds and puppets.** Ikea carries lots of different types of finger puppets that are inexpensive. Have the kids pick their favorite. The parent makes the bow hold, put the puppet on top of the stick and watch the puppets dance. Sing Rocket song, while maintaining the bow hold and keeping the puppet on top of the stick. End the activity with the kids having their puppets "kiss" each other. Other songs you can use: <u>The Wheels on the Bus</u>, <u>Monkey Song</u>, <u>Flower Song</u>. You can also have them draw letters or their names to build strength in that bow hold.
4. **The Hello Song and Goodbye Song.** A great way to learn names, feel a part of the group and start and end class on a positive note. Reinforces singing, listening carefully to pitches, following directions, establishing community, starts and ends class in a routine, upbeat way.

   Hello Song
   "Let's sing hello together, hello hello hello. Let's sing hello together, hello hello hello.
   Let's sing hello to _____, hello hello hello. Let's sing hello to _____, hello hello hello."

   Goodbye Song- repeat song with Goodbye instead of Hello in each verse.