

2016 Discussion Questions

To help initiate a productive discussion, below are some leading questions for a parent get-together. Ideas for arranging such gatherings can be found on the Parents as Partners site, both under Studio Ideas and Parent Gatherings. (Note: questions listed are for the new 2016 talks)

Week One (January 25):

Guitar Hero?! VIOLIN Hero!!

Treesa Gold

- We as humans find it important to measure progress in our minds. Yet, it is hard to quantify music as it is truly an art form. Treesa Gold offers several creative ways to help your child take ownership of their skill building and quantify their abilities in a fun, engaging manner. What games for repetition purposes have helped your child feel a sense of accomplishment and achievement?

If You Can Sing It, You Can Play It!

Mary Hofer

- The title reflects the important role of singing when learning an instrument. How have you incorporated singing or humming into your home practice? What benefits have resulted?

Parent to Parent: Creating the Link of Community for All

Janelle Severson

- Having a strong Suzuki community---both in the lesson and beyond the lesson---makes learning and practicing more enjoyable. What social activities or gestures have you done in your studio or program? Whether it's passing a "heartfelt" note to a fellow Suzuki student (or parent) or arranging a "play-in play date," reaching out to fellow Suzuki families will increase your relationships tenfold.

Suzuki Parenting: An Exercise in Leadership

Janis Wittrig

- Janis Wittrig presents six points of leadership to guide parents in a consistent and positive practice routine, and thus, become truly skilled at one's instrument. Which of these six are part of your daily routine, and which ones would you like to improve upon in the upcoming months and how?

Week Two (February 1)

No Time to Practice?

Kathleen Bowman

- With time being our most valuable resource, how do we determine what is most important? What are ways you've found to make practice a habit? Share an enjoyable part of your practice routine.

Three Important Words

Edmund Sprunger

- The power of Dr. Suzuki's three words is important to understand when working with children. In what ways could you as the practice parent examine your internal state of being to initiate a more effective practice interaction?

Discover What Encourages Teens to "Get Up and Go"

Colleen Fitzgerald

- Connection is what music-making is all about. Teens need to feel connected to their music, to their peers, and to a larger community. Colleen Fitzgerald shares some “tried and true” ways of motivating teenagers. What has worked for your child?

DIY: Do-It-Yourself Practice Games

Kathleen Schoen

- Creating fun activities to assist in practice are key to having a productive session. Kathleen Schoen describes five steps for structuring a game: pick a task, pick a number, keep track of repetitions, add some action, and assess. How could you transform your practice assignments into a more creative activity?

Week Three

Playing By Ear...Unlocking the Mystery

Ed Kreitman

- Knowing the why and how of playing by ear are crucial to studying via the Suzuki method. Internalizing the piece first, before beginning to play it, can be done by daily CD listening. What steps could you incorporate into your home environment to facilitate your child’s ear development and playing by ear?

Tech Talks V2.0 - Studio Updates Available for Download Now

Ian Salmon

- From interval work to ear training to note recognition to having your own personal orchestra at practice, which apps have you found useful?

The Practice Lizard

Suzy Perelman

- Repetition CAN be fun! And choosing one item to fix at a time at practice can be challenging as a practice parent. As Suzy Perelman suggests, break concepts down into a small “nugget” and try a counting device to help measure one’s progress. What aids have you used in home practice to encourage your child in adequate repetitions?

Musical Elements from Twinkle to Mozart

Holly Smardo

- Holly Smardo addresses five elements that are cornerstone points to your child’s development. Which of these are evident in your foundation? Which do you feel may require more attention?

Week Four

The Value of Listening

Kelly Williamson

- Kelly Williamson emphasizes that “We must value listening as much as we value time on the instrument.” When and where are your most effective times and ways of incorporating listening into your home environment? How could you strive to improve your listening commitment?

Musical Rewards**Darbi Green and Connie McCullough**

- Offering various events to create a sense of community---both locally and at large--- helps further the Suzuki connection. What skills do you have to offer your program or studio to “help make the magic happen”?

Nurtured by WHAT??? When You Are Not Feeling the Love During Practicing Zachary Ebin

- All parents feel the frustration of practice at some point in time. How do you cope with practice struggles in a positive manner?

The Theory of Multiple Intelligences: Ideas in Practice**Fernando Pinero**

- Fernando Pinero states, “We can use different kinds of approaches in order to develop higher musicality in different situations.” Which approach(es) of Howard Gardner’s seven intelligences work(s) most effectively for your child and why?

Week Five**A Measure of Progress****Sue Baer**

- Sue Baer reminds us that every child can learn AND that various factors influence a child’s rate of progress. With each situation being unique, ask yourself: “Is my child gaining fluency on their instrument? Are his listening skills becoming more refined? Is she gaining independence through self-evaluation? Are we all making our best effort? Is our understanding and love of music growing? Is my child developing fine character and a beautiful heart?”

Review that Works!**Julie Bamberger Roubik**

- Julie Bamberger Roubik presents an efficient and thorough way of making review feasible. What review pieces need to be in your “every day” pile and why? What makes some of your pieces “stick” more than others? Why?

Work Together, Stand Back, and Admire**Beth Titterington and Sarah Beth Titterington Ibbett**

- Dr Suzuki stated, “How fortunate it is that we have challenging lives in which we are walking together holding hands.” As you work with your child, what suggested practice tips may enable you to be more effective as a team? And, how could “step back” and give your child space to allow them to “step forward”?

Recipe for Citizenship: Key Ingredients for Teaching Children to be Members of a Community**Katie Bast**

- Katie Bast presents seven crucial items in the recipe for creating a noble human being. Which ingredients are well nourished in your Suzuki journey? Which ones might you benefit from further baking?

Week Six

Take Your Teacher Home! Creative and Effective Uses of Video Recording in Your Individual Lesson **Lillie Mannis**

- “A lesson is an aural and visual experience.” Having the benefit of seeing and hearing your teacher between lessons often facilitates home practice or even clarifies questions. How have you recorded lessons or practice to assist your study?

Five Years Later...Where are They Now?

Rebecca Martin with Suzuki parents Jen Blackenship and Julie Stibbards

- This talk touches base with the parents featured in the 2011 PPO talk entitled “The Suzuki Triangle”. Now that their children are in their teen years, these parents share what has changed, addressing managing busy schedules and what they had wished they had known five years ago. Looking back on when you started (whether earlier this year or several years ago), share what you have come to learn in balancing your practice and making it an important aspect of your child’s upbringing.

Making Suzuki Feel Good in 2015

Liza Barley

- Busy lifestyles in a world of many commitments are having a profound impact on our children’s environment and development. Liza Barley shares five simple things to keep Suzuki relevant in our current day and age. What aspects of her talk resonate with your situation?

Triangle Distortion: Confessions of a Suzuki Teacher who is also a Suzuki Parent

Andrea French

- Navigating the challenges of being both the Suzuki parent and the teacher are key points to Andrea French’s presentation. Her wise words “trust the process” are true for all parents, no matter the role. How could you approach your next practice focusing upon “being kind to yourself...and being realistic with your standards and expectations”?

Week Seven

Everything I Needed to Know about the Suzuki Triangle I Learned from a Dog

Meret Bitticks

- From having faith that a task will be accomplished to celebrating the successes of each achievement, there are a lot humorous parallels between the Suzuki triangle and dog training. What parts of this talk brought a smile to your face as you thought about your own practice sessions?

Group Class: Creating an Environment of Community in Our Isolated Society

Mark Mutter

- Today’s “techno-focused society” is forcing us to re-examine our behaviors and priorities. As you think about the benefits of group class and how Suzuki education may counter a feeling of isolation, what could you do within your own local program or studio to encourage more interactions?

How to Make Sure Your Child Will Never Ever Set Foot on Stage to Perform Again! Diana Galindo

- Diana Galindo's humorous approach to preparing your child for recital will surely guarantee a successful performance! What preparation do you typically do with your child that produces a positive concert experience?

Creative Strategies for Effective Review -- a Survey of Favorite Activities from within the Suzuki Triangle Rafael Videira

- Review is the cornerstone of the Suzuki method, providing the foundation for a student's playing. How do you get the most out of your review time? What suggestions can you share that have been effective with your child's review routine?

Week Eight

"I've Been to the Lesson and Now What?"

Brittany Gardner

- Decoding a lesson can often be tricky! Brittany Gardner offers three ways she's structured home practice based upon the lesson assignment and age/level of her child. What road maps are you finding useful at your house?

Seven Secrets to Sanity with Suzuki Siblings

Rebekah Waggoner

- Secret #5 relates to identifying what motivates your child. Share some helpful tools you've used at practice that other parents may find beneficial.
- What types of "celebrations" does your family do to recognize the hard work of ongoing practice?

Suzuki Training and Body Mapping: A Great Combination for Playing Better While Avoiding Injury Kerry Travers

- As Kerry Travers mentions, playing well while being pain free is the ultimate goal in enjoying a long life of music-making. Try the arm swings and deep knee bends prior to practice, as well as a welcome practice break half way through!

The Importance of Educating a Really Beautiful Human Spirit Danette Schuh

- "Music is the vehicle through which we teach such character development points as patience, respect, sharing, empathy..." (Danette Schuh). What other traits do you see your child developing through their studies?

Week Nine

A Thousand Bowholds? Are you kidding? Barbara Balatero

- Applicable to all instruments, Barbara Balatero shares numerous creative ideas to accomplish the desired number of practice repetitions. Which ones would work best for your child? Do you have other repetition activities you've used that have been effective?

Why ARE we doing Suzuki, anyway???

Joanne Martin

- As Joanne Martin states, “Being a Suzuki parent can bring tremendous joy...and from time to time can be challenging.” What have you appreciated about your Suzuki studies? What have you found frustrating? How could you offset such frustrations?

Want Consistent Progress in Your Practicing?? Use These Reminders to Help Your Child at His Lesson **Beatrice Blanc**

- You as a parent have an important role at each lesson. Of the reminders shared, which areas would help your lesson, and consequently home practice, be more productive?

Week Ten

Teachers’ Perspectives on Practicing with their Children

Amy Gesmer-Packman, Stacey Brady, Flori Muller, Heather Hadley

- This panel reflects on practicing with their own children, offering ideas on establishing a regular routine, activities to develop ownership, and choosing appropriate words in one’s feedback. When you look at Suzuki studies as a long-term endeavor, the daily challenges are put into a healthier perspective. What strategic words have you used when providing feedback of your child’s playing? How have you “checked” your mental state before starting a practice session?

Fun with Trouble Stops? What?

Shu-Yi Scott

- Think of a trouble spot in your child’s current piece. What are the components or issues of this tricky passage? How could you simplify the spot for mastery? How could you make the drill more fun?

A Parent’s Perspective on Summer Suzuki Institutes

Cindy Schreuder

- What better testimonial about institutes than Cindy Schreuder’s statement: “Go because of the music...return because of the relationships.” Have you considered attending an institute? If you have gone, what benefits have you experienced?

Practicing in Loops

Leo Kitajima

- Tapping into the world of technology can assist practice to be more productive. If you’ve tried any of these techniques, what results did your child experience?

Week Eleven

Overcoming Practice Challenges...I promise you are not alone!

Christine Wilson-Goodner

- What are the six building blocks for successful practice? Which ones do you feel are working well? Which ones need more emphasis in your daily routine? How could you create a “To Be” list instead of a daily “To Do” list?
- What “Zone of Learning” does your child spend the majority of his/her practice in? How could you adjust the balance to make each practice less of a struggle?
- Be sure to download Christine’s handout posted on the PPO site below her talk.

Music for 1000 Children**Tammy Linn**

- Sharing the gift of music can be done in so many ways, in so many places. What types of performances is your studio or program currently doing? What were some outreach ideas that you heard in the talk that were of interest?
- Check out the “Tally 1000” sheet and “Music for 1000 invitation” letter that is posted with Tammy’s talk.

Orchestra and the Suzuki Student**Daniel Gee**

- What are some of the benefits of a Suzuki student participating in a public school orchestra setting? What skills are further developed? If your child currently is a member of an orchestra, how are their skills growing?

Week Twelve:**Partner Up!****Lucy Shaw**

- Interested in being part of the larger Suzuki community? Go to www.suzukiassociation/forms to learn more about parent and associate memberships.

Are You Inadvertently Sabotaging Your Child’s Lesson?**Teri Einfeldt**

- “The success of the child depends upon following the path the teacher has built for your particular child.” (Teri Einfeldt) Reflecting on the ideal behavior before, during or after the lesson, what areas could you as a parent be more effective? How could you work together within the Suzuki triangle to enable your child to have a productive lesson?

Don't Just Practice...Go Do Something!**Rebekah Hanson**

- Practicing IS important, but putting that practice into action results in much motivation and builds community. What events that Rebekah shared sound feasible for your situation?

Hands Separate Practice: Techniques and Tips for Success**Ellen Kogut**

- Isolating one hand at a time helps the learner know the function of each hand. It also allows the brain to master each part separately before combining and putting back into context. What examples from your child’s current piece could be better approached with “simplifying the task” into either the left or right hand?