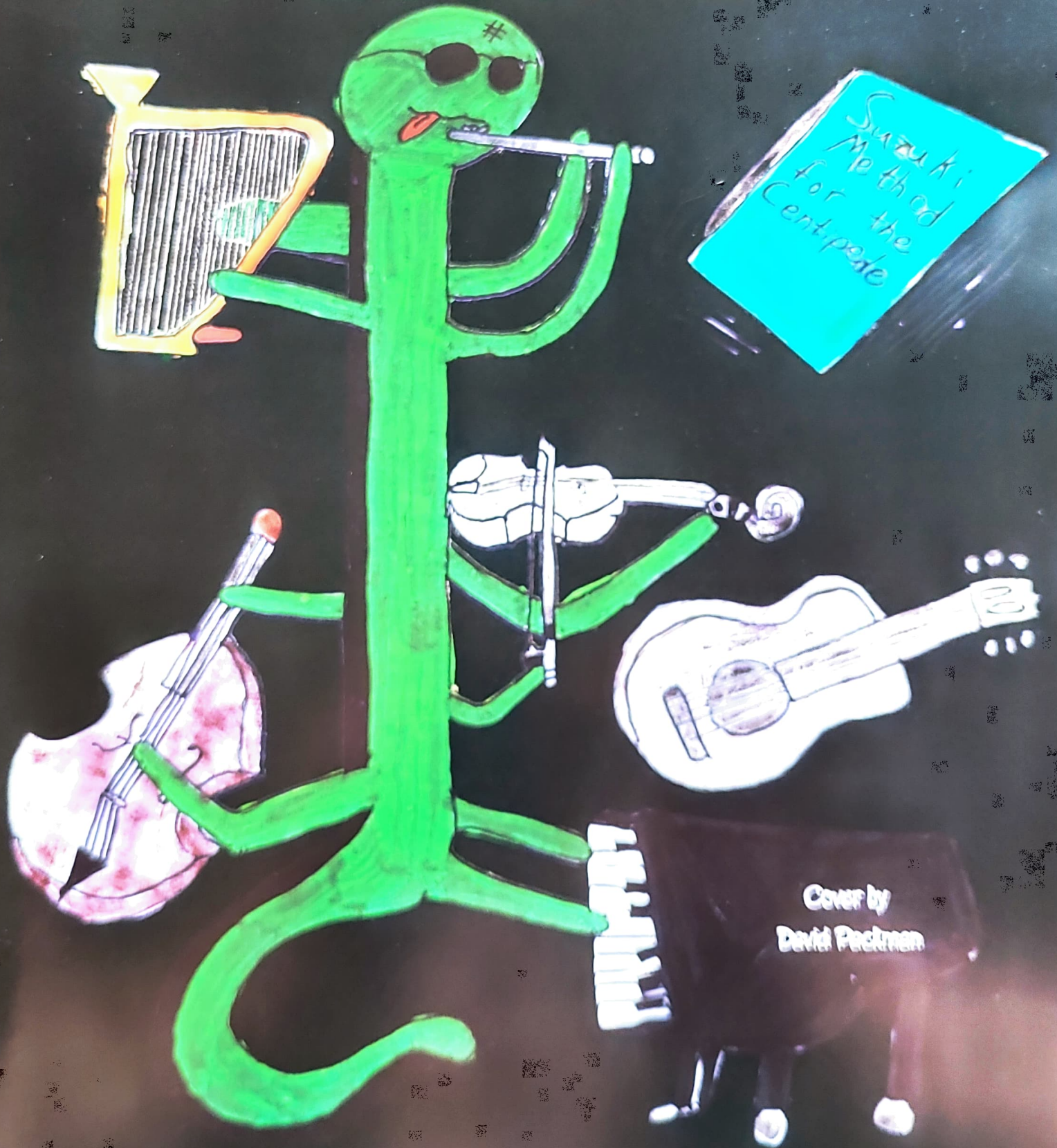


Minijournal 2000



Cover by
David Fectman



"I Love To Practice!"

by Joanne Bath

Excerpted from a talk given to parents of the Greenville Suzuki Association, November 1999.

"I love to practice!" That's what we all want our children to say. Here are some ideas for how parents can get there without resorting to things they wish they hadn't! These suggestions can keep you motivated so that you can help your children have the best possible musical experience.

Enjoy the process. If you can figure out how to have pleasant practice sessions, you and your children will succeed. This may be the hardest part of the whole process, and perhaps the most crucial. Suzuki said that little children should "practice three minutes, five times a day, with joy." The main goal for practice should be *with joy*.

Be consistent. If your child knows that you will practice every day at the same time, it is easier for you and more secure for your child. Find a time that works best for your family. If you can, practice for ten or fifteen minutes before school.

Don't negotiate. If you practice only when your child feels like it, you will probably never practice. Get in the habit of regular practice and do it. Say, "Practicing is what we do in our family." I have found that "in our family" is one of the greatest phrases you can use. If children believe that something is done in their family, they will do it!

Be reasonable—don't expect perfection. One of the parent's most important jobs is to show children that life is not a matter of being perfect, but one of trying new things and growing. We do not want children to be overly cautious about learning. We want them to be interested in a variety of things, and willing to accept a challenge.

Work for an accomplishment rather than a set amount of time. One of the best ways you can teach your children to be efficient workers is to stop early

when they have accomplished the goals for a practice session. If students can learn to reach their goals in less time, they learn efficiently.

Do not ask for too much. If you stop the practice session before the child is ready to stop, the child will want to play again the next day. Suzuki said, "Move slowly and never stop."

Gradually lengthen practice time. Children need to slowly gain physical stamina. They will also have more repertoire as time progresses, and practicing will automatically get longer as they review. Some of my students review a whole book each day.

Focus on quality rather than quantity. Small manageable sections can be worked out with a feeling of success. Do one measure thoroughly so the child can really master it. More is not always better. It is better to play fewer pieces and play them well, so move slowly and carefully.

Move at your child's pace. Compare only so you have a general idea of what others are doing. Allow your child to move at a pace that is natural for her.

Know what you are doing. You are the home teacher. To learn what you should be doing at home with your child, ask the teacher. Take notes or tape the lesson.

Be in charge. The secret to successful practicing is that the parent must be in charge to a greater or lesser degree depending on the child's age.

Focus on what is right. Tell children what they are doing well. Parents often ask if they can help their children successfully if they are not musicians themselves. Actually, non-musician parents often have a much easier time than musician parents. Musicians are trained to find mistakes so that they can correct them, while people who are not musicians tend to hear the music and not the mistakes.

Stay positive. Be of good cheer. Avoid statements like, "You're not even trying," "That's terrible," or, "You're just trying to irritate me!" If you feel something hurtful coming, put your hand over your mouth. Do not say something that could destroy weeks of positive growth.

Remember the power of praise. Praise always accomplishes more than criticism. Sometimes it is not just praise but acknowledgment. Acknowledge what the child is doing. Keep a running list of all the wonderful things that your child does. If your child is just starting

to read, make the list in large print so the child can read for himself all the things that he did well.

Give rewards. From the beginning, try to establish the desire and pattern of practice. You don't have to always give rewards, but if you do at certain times, you'll find that you will get good work from your child. Austin, our six-year-old grandson, will work hard for shiny pennies, which we call "gold coins." I sometimes give him one for everything he does well in a practice session.

Consider listening part of practicing. Listening makes the practicing and learning easy. Put your child to bed every night with a tape of the next piece. He will be able to learn the notes to that piece very rapidly, and all you will have to do is show him the bowings. If you are in a time crunch, and simply can't practice one day, listen. If you have to choose between practicing and listening, listen. If you go on a camping trip and you can't take the violin, take the tape player and listen.

Give projects and assignments. Deadlines and performances are very motivational. A performance could be just making a video or audio tape for the grandparents, or playing over the telephone. Get children to play as much as they possibly can.

Review everyday. Most of my students have a review chart. When they are more advanced, they may do three pieces from each book or they may do one book a day. The students at the end of Book 2 should play all of the pieces in Book 2 every day. This may mean two practice sessions. If your child is in Book 1, he should be practicing all of the pieces in Book 1 every day.

Play review games. Children love "Lucky Dip." Write cards with the names of all the pieces that the children play and put them in a box. The children draw the name of a piece of music from the box, and play the piece. Or have your child play along with the CD.

Divide practice sessions in approximate thirds: one-third review, one-third preview, and one-third polishing. Polishing means working on the last three pieces and getting those so that they are performance ready.

Help older children find time to practice. One of the best things you can do is to excuse your teenager from some household tasks in exchange for practicing. Make it easy for them.

This is a very special time that you have with your children. You have your child one-on-one during practice. Sometimes that is the only time that a parent and child have alone together. Treasure your children and their accomplishments. Be understanding, encouraging and loving and I promise you that you will have success beyond anything you could have ever imagined! ★

Joanne Bath is the director of the Suzuki Pedagogy Program at East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina, where she teaches pedagogy courses leading to a Master of Music degree in Suzuki Pedagogy. She teaches a large private violin class of students between the ages of two and eighteen, and since 1973 has had many students win or place in significant competitions. A former Suzuki Association of the America's board member, Joanne currently serves as the SAA's Institute Liaison.

Instilling the Desire to Learn

by Shinichi Suzuki



Art: Marshall Johnson

Excerpted from *Nurtured by Love*, pp 95-96.

We encourage them to think of violin training as fun
We begin by training the parent rather than the child. Although we accept infants, at first we do not have them play the violin.

First we teach the mother to play one piece so that she will be a good teacher at home. As for the child, we first have him simply listen at home to a record of the piece he will be learning. Children are really educated in the home, so in order that the child will have good posture and practice properly at home, it is necessary for the parent to have firsthand experience. The correct education of the child depends on this.

Until the parent can play one piece, the child does not play at all. This principle is very important indeed, because although the parent may want him to do so, a three- or four-year-old child has no desire to learn the violin. The idea is to get the child to say, "I want to play too," so the first piece is played every day on the gramophone, and in the classroom he just watches the other children (and his mother) having their lessons. The proper environment is created for the child. The child will naturally before long take the violin away from his mother, thinking, "I want to play too." He knows the tune already. The other children are having fun; he wants to join in the fun. We have caused him to acquire this desire.

We encourage them to "play" with the violin

This situation having been created, lessons are led up to in the following order. First the parent asks, "Would you like to play the violin too?"

The answer is, "Yes!"
"You will practice hard?"
"Yes."
"All right; let's ask the teacher if you can join in next time."

This always succeeds. What a thrill the first private lesson always is!

"I did it too," the child boasts. "Now I can play with the other children." ★

3000 Minijournal
Published for SAA-approved Summer Institutes as an introduction and supplement to the *American Suzuki Journal*, official quarterly publication of the Suzuki Association of the Americas, Inc.

Cover: Drawing by Minijournal Cover Design Contest winner David Packman of Boulder, CO. Photos on pages 2,3 and 5 by Art Montka.

Additional copies @ \$5.00 or \$2.00.
Suzuki Association of the Americas, Inc.
P.O. Box 17310, Boulder, CO 80508
Ph: (303)444-0948; Fx: (303)444-0984
suzuki@smi.net & web: suzukiassociation.org
SAA membership includes subscription to the *American Suzuki Journal*.

Practice Time

by Carolyn Meyer

It's time to practice. Our son has watched me do this all his whole life and is eager to try it himself. This is a big moment in parenting: will the positive environment we have tried to create pay off? Have we *done* as well as *said* the right things? Will his good habits become automatic so that he can concentrate on new things?

Our son tries practicing. I fight my impulses to give him too many instructions: "You're doing fine," I say when an opportunity arises. "Good job."

I try to reinforce what our son learned from his teacher. "Let's do that again. You did fine, but your teacher wants you to do it several times." He is quite cooperative and willing to practice over and over. Sometimes we check to see what is printed in our book. This is truly Talent Education in action!

My husband and I take turns practicing with our son. We try to practice every day, but we don't always get around to it. Dad is less uptight about the whole thing than Mom is, and Son would rather practice with Dad. Dad just sits back and enjoys. Occasionally he throws in a comment, but he never ends a practice session with clenched teeth.

Soon our son won't need us to help him practice; we'll just come to occasional performances. He doesn't seem interested in making a career of this, but I think he is building a life-long, enjoyable skill. He's done an excellent job of developing his abilities. He observes, listens, concentrates, and memorizes instructions. He has shown discipline and perseverance and can concentrate on his own part even when others around him are doing different things. He knows what to do about keys and flats and controlling the speed. Soon he'll get his...*driver's license!* *

Carolyn Meyer has experienced being a Suzuki student and parent as well as teacher. She has taught violin, viola, and music and movement while living in Austria, Illinois, and Wisconsin.



Drawing by second place winner Sheridan Gallagher. 8. Sheridan has studied viola for 19 years with Mary Kay Hoffman in Glenview, IL.

Tongue Twisters for Twinklers ...

Too Much Fun to be Good for Them

by Henry Goodman

Early learning of music and mem ory skills are fostered in the Goodman Suzuki violin studio with funny tongue twisters. Verbal teasers are entertaining for pre-twinklers. Older students love drawing their parents into the act, and grownups welcome the chance to challenge kids with their own favorite tongue tanglers remembered, sometimes not very accurately, from distant childhood. To do tongue twisters, you must speak clearly and fast and be able to memorize. But don't tell the kids that something this much fun is also good for them and helps them learn.

In his books *Nurtured by Love* and *Talent Education for Young Children*, Dr. Suzuki discusses the use of haiku to develop the ability of memorization. These short Japanese poems are memorable for their crystal imagery. The youngest violin students in Dr. Suzuki's class could learn many haiku and recite them from memory when asked. The children learned haiku by Issa, a famous Japanese poet, such as:

*The little kitten, see,
Tries to catch between its paws
A falling autumn leaf.*

After learning many haiku, the children begin to make up their own:

*In the dark night sky,
How they twinkle, how they shine
All the little stars.*

Cover contest winner David Packman, 12, has studied violin and attended institutes for as long as he can remember. He is a student of Sue Levine in Boulder, CO. Thanks to all the students who participated in Cover Design Contest 2000! Guest judged by April Christenson, flute and art instructor, Mesa Elementary School, Boulder, CO. (See back cover for information about 2001 Cover Contest.)

There are many tongue twisters, and like these short haiku verses, as they can be written or simply made up by anyone. Here are a few of my own:

- * *Tongue twisters, leasers, and tanglers for tiny twinklers.*
- * *Vigorous vibrato makes violin and viola vibrations vibrant.*

Three-word tongue twisters are great for the youngest children. When the words are learned solidly, make the teaser more challenging by asking the children to repeat the phrase three times really fast.

- * *Sing sily sister*
- * *Cross crossings cautiously (or carefully)*

Adding one or two words, we get:

- * *Rubber baby buggy bumper*
- * *Sally sells sea shells by the seashore*
- * *Jill will jump for joy in the jungle*

Among the best-loved longer twisters are the following:

- Fuzzy Wuzzy has a bear.*
- Fuzzy Wuzzy had no hair.*
- Fuzzy Wuzzy wasn't fuzzy, wuz he?*

*A skunk sat on a stump.
The stump thunk the skunk stunk.
The skunk thunk the stump stunk.
Which really stunk...the skunk
or the stump?*

And remember, it's best not to tell the kids that tongue twisters help them learn to memorize, speak clearly, and master rhythmic reading. That might just spoil the fun. *

Henry Goodman believes that music, especially playing an instrument, gives life-long pleasure and draws us together. Dr. Goodman holds degrees in adult education and guidance and has taken long-term Suzuki training with Joanne Bab at East Carolina University. He teaches violin at Mount Olive College in North Carolina.

SAA's Parent Information Booklet now available!

POINTERS FOR PARENTS

Ideas and information that every Suzuki parent needs! The perfect collection to nurture and inspire new and continuing parents.

Contact the SAA office for further information.

Note Reading Ideas

by Ramona Stirling



Is your child frustrated when playing in an orchestra at a Suzuki Institute? The note reading skills of some Suzuki students do not match their wonderful playing skills. Since students have different ways of learning, some will learn to read music with very little effort, while for others it is a tremendous struggle.

A constructive parent suggested that I list reading goals for my students. It has been helpful, and I encourage you to sit down and make some for your child or your students. Below are some I have heard or used myself. Encourage your child to:

1. **Master scales.** By Book 4, students should be playing two-octave scales from music. Linda Case suggested *Progressive Scale Studies* by Linda Rose (Kjos), which I like a lot. Book 5 students should be able to play three-octave scales and arpeggios and should understand major and minor. I use *Scales for Advanced Violinists* by Barbara Barber.

2. **Use rhythmic notation books.** *I Can Read Music*, by Joanne Martin, is a good start and is published for violin, viola, and cello. I start these in Book 2 and work up to more advanced books. *Winning Rhythms*, published by Kjos, is great for clapping rhythms to get familiar with them.

3. **Read easy duet books.** This is especially helpful for poor sightreaders. Encourage them to read a duet with you at every practice session. The duet part can be played on the piano if another string player is not available.

4. **Learn an easy piece from music every month.** Choose a piece below the student's playing level.

5. **Join an orchestra.** If none is available, volunteer to make it happen. Even if you cannot teach it, perhaps someone to organize and run it is all that the teachers in your area need.

Parents need to help. Younger students need to read about 5 to 10 minutes a day, every day, or it never gets off the ground. The teacher cannot do this alone. Parents could hire an older student to come over and read duets once a week for a half hour.

I just hope that the parent who suggested that I list these goals doesn't come into my studio and give all my students a test. Most are great readers, but I still have some Book 6 and 7 students who—despite all my efforts and those of their parents—wouldn't know the difference if I turned the music upside down! And they play really well!

Let's all keep working to make orchestra and chamber music experiences better for our students. *

Ramona Stirling is the director of the Intermountain Suzuki String Institute. As a graduate of Brigham Young University with a degree in humanities, Ramona has used her background to develop a Suzuki Fine Arts Preschool. The preschool has been open for twelve years, and the children study art history, voice, literature, cultures, and violin. Ramona also operates a Suzuki violin studio with fifty students and is the mother of four children.



Etude Stinks!

A Story for Max and Cruz

by Eve Montgomery Riley

"But I hate Etude, Mom!" Max exclaimed as he put his ¼ size violin back in its case. Etude, by Dr. Shinichi Suzuki, was Max's least favorite piece of music in Book 1.

"Why can't I play Perpetual Motion or Long, Long Ago or May Song or even Minuet Two in the recital?" Max asked his Mom plaintively. Max was particularly fond of Long, Long Ago because he liked its melancholy tone. The upbeat May Song was one of his favorites too, because he enjoyed its "bunny hop" fingers. And Max had worked hard on his staccato bows for Perpetual Motion. He could now play Perpetual Motion with ease and keep his bow right on the highway. Minuet Two, by J.S. Bach, was the piece he was working on currently and he liked it especially. So Max was disappointed when he learned that his solo recital piece was to be Etude.

Etude was in the middle of Book 1 and was the most controversial piece in the book. Some Suzuki teachers choose to skip it because it is so difficult to teach with its strange melody, confusing string crossings and fast doubles in the second half. It had taken Max two months to master Etude and he had no desire to revisit the piece any more than necessary.

"Did you know that some teachers let their students skip Etude? Do you think Celina would let me skip it and play something else in the recital?" Max asked his Mom.

Max's Mom just smiled and thought that some Suzuki teachers might, but Max's teacher, Celina, would never skip it. Celina seemed to find beauty in the most unlikely places, so it was inconceivable that she could be convinced to skip Etude.

What Max's Mom actually said was, "If you feel so strongly about this issue I think you should discuss it with Celina." That was all the encouragement Max needed. He scampered off to his room to prepare what he would say to Celina.

While Max was in his room thinking, his little brother Cruz wandered in. "Want to play basketball?" Cruz asked.

"Not now, Cruz," Max answered impatiently. "I'm busy."

"No you're not, you're just sitting," Cruz persisted.

"I am busy," Max replied, irritated by the interruptions to his train of thought.

"No, you're *not* busy," Cruz answered in kind.

"Am too!"

"Are not!"

"Am too!"

"Are not!"

"MOM!"

"What's going on, guys?" Mom asked as she entered Max's room. "I'm busy and Cruz won't leave me alone," Max quickly interjected. "He's not busy, Mom, and I don't have anyone to play with," Cruz added.

Not wanting to take sides, Mom asked, "Max, what are you busy doing?" To which he replied, "I'm busy thinking of a way to get out of playing Etude in the recital."

Turning to Cruz, Mom said, "I think Brother needs his privacy right now. I'll shoot some hoops with you." Mom and Cruz left, bouncing the basketball, and Max resumed his planning.

When Cruz and Mom took a break, Cruz came back in to check on Max.

"How's it going, Max?" Cruz asked.

"I don't know," Max moaned. "I can't think of a way to convince Celina." Cruz was quiet for a second and then said, "I have an idea, Max." Max rolled his eyes. Cruz's ideas usually involved a four-year-old's interests such as bodily sounds, frogs, or aliens from another planet. But this time Cruz surprised Max with his idea. "Just tell her Etude stinks," Cruz said, and ran off to find spiders.

"That's it!" Max exclaimed. "I'll just tell her Etude stinks. After all, honesty is the best policy. I'm sure she won't make me play it if she knows what I really think. Thank you for the great plan, Cruz," Max called out, but Cruz was long gone.

When Max saw Celina for his lesson the next week he walked in confidently, took his violin out of its case and said: "Hi, Celina. Etude stinks."

"Pardon me?" Celina said, caught totally off guard.

"Etude stinks," Max repeated.

"Oh?" said Celina.

Max continued hurriedly. "Etude is ugly sounding. It has this weird melody."

"Hmmm," Celina replied.

"And it has all of those low twos."

"I see," Celina responded.

"And Etude has high twos, too."

"Ah," Celina chortled.

"And Etude has those confusing string crossings."

"Yes," agreed Celina.

"And Etude has those really fast doubles at the end."

"My," was Celina's reply.

"I think Etude stinks and I don't want to perform it!" Max folded his arms and jutted out his chin for emphasis.

"Well," Celina began slowly. "Let me see whether I understand the problem, Max. Etude is not your favorite piece and you would rather perform something else. Is that the gist of it?"

"That's it exactly!" Max exclaimed. He knew Celina would see reason.

"So, what would you rather perform?" Celina inquired. Max hesitated only a second before pipping up and answering, "Minuet Two."

"I see," Celina said, with a smile beginning to form at the corners of her eyes. "Tell me, Max, what do you like about Minuet Two?"

Max had to think about that one. He was just learning Minuet Two and had to replay it in his head before he could answer. "Well, I like the way it

sounds. It has this weird melody, kind of like elephants dancing."

"Hmm," Celina replied.

"And I really like the low twos," Max continued.

"I see," Celina responded.

"Come to think of it, I like the high twos, too."

"Ah," Celina chortled.

"And Minuet Two has really cool string crossings." "And I love the fast notes in the triplets," Max concluded.

Celina looked Max right in his eyes as she began to speak again with a very serious tone: "Let's see if I have this right, Max. You don't like Etude because it has a weird melody, low twos, high twos, string crossings and lots of fast notes?"

Max nodded in agreement. Celina's serious face gave way to a mischievous grin as she continued, "But you love Minuet Two because it has a weird melody, low twos, high twos, string crossings and fast notes!"

Max's eyes lit up in surprise. He started to laugh and said, "I guess I never thought of it that way."

Celina continued, "You know, Max, Dr. Suzuki had a plan in Book 1. He knew that in order to play Bach Minuets his students would have to learn some pretty hard concepts and techniques such as tricky melodies, high twos, low twos, string crossings and fast notes. So he put them all in Etude. By the time you master Etude, Book 1 Bach Minuets are a snap!"

Celina concluded by saying, "The reason you love Minuet Two so much is because you can play Etude. Do you understand?"

Max nodded his head and said, "I guess Etude doesn't really stink."

"Good," said Celina. "Let's hear it."

When he finished playing Etude his fingers were all warmed up and he went on to play Minuet Two. When his lesson was done Max put his violin and bow away. "You know, Celina, I think I will play Etude in the recital. It shows off my quick fingers and staccato bowing, plus I know I can perform it well."

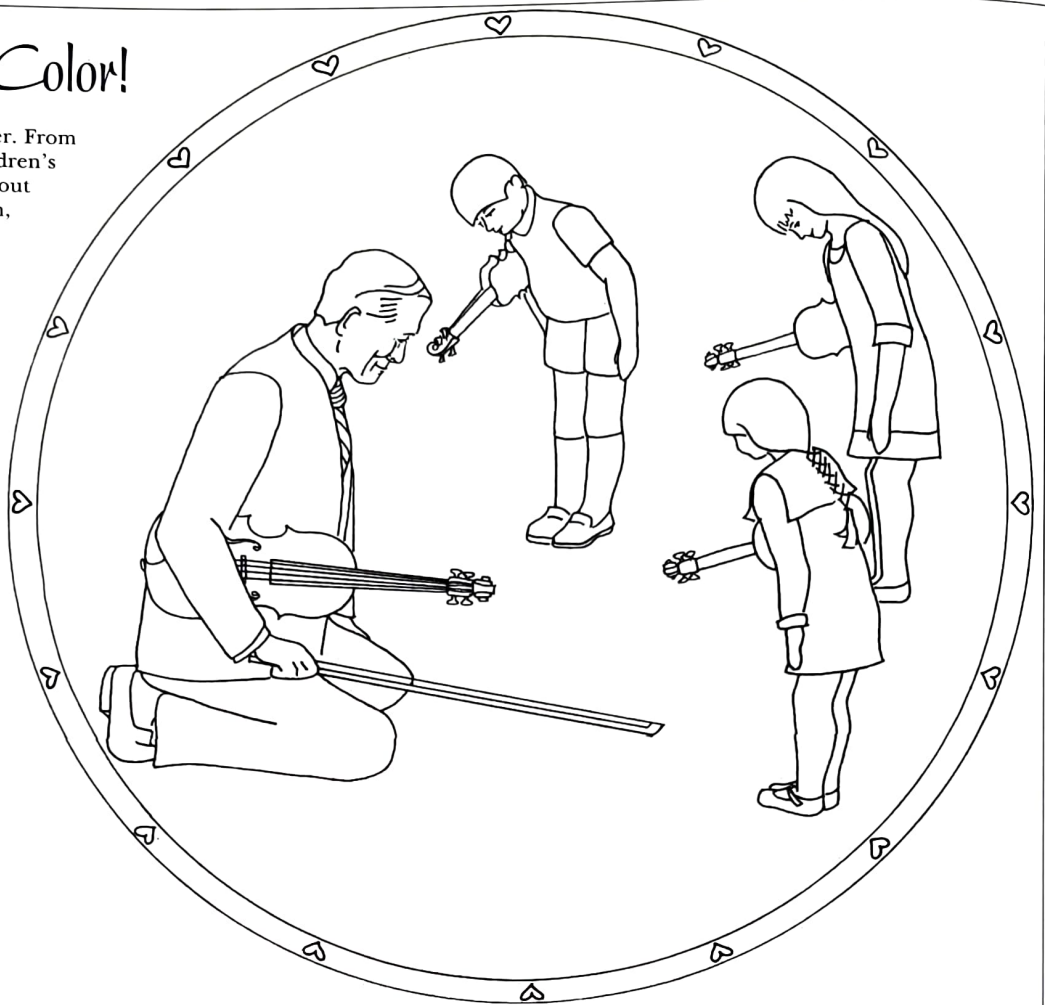
"Good choice," Celina said. ★

Eve Montgomery Riley is an Associate member of the SAA, a Book 2 violinist and the parent of a Book 1 violinist and a Pre-Thinker. She writes children's stories with violin themes and edits the Greater St. Louis Suzuki Association Newsletter. Eve currently serves as a U.S. Administrative Law Judge and is active in her church, her children's school, and other volunteer activities. She is married to Dr. Joel Riley, a busy gastroenterologist/hepatologist who has learned to love Twinkle. The Rileys live in St. Louis, Missouri.

A Picture to Color!

Picture courtesy of Vicki Vorreiter. From *From Matsumoto, With Love*, a children's information and activity book about Suzuki. For ordering information, contact:
 Serendipity Publications
 c/o Vicki Vorreiter
 ph: 773-274-3990
 fax: 773-325-4935

The Suzuki Method is surrounded by a ring of Respect and Love



◆ Attention ◆ Suzuki Kids Ages 4-14!

2001 Minijournal Cover Design Contest

Guidelines: Original cover design by a Suzuki student between the ages of 4 and 14. Suzuki or music-related subject matter preferred.

Please do not send computer-generated artwork.

One entry per child.

Deadline: January 1, 2001

Winning design will be shared with over 15,000 students on the cover of next summer's Minijournal.

Send to: SAA Cover Contest
 1900 Folsom, #101
 Boulder, CO 80302

Suzuki Association of the Americas Membership

Please print clearly in ink.

Mr. Miss Mrs. Ms. Dr. Other No Title

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone (Day) _____ (Eve) _____

Fax _____ email _____

Please check appropriate categories:

Teacher Parent/Family Student

Retired Teacher School Library

Public School Teacher Early Childhood

Instruments taught (or studying, if student)

Violin Viola Cello

Bass Piano Flute

Harp Guitar Recorder

Membership Category:

Active (effective 1/99) \$48 US/\$62 CAN

Patron \$100 US/\$130 CAN

Associate (effective 1/99) \$28 US/\$36 CAN

Lifetime \$825 US/\$1095 CAN

Payment:

Check or money order for _____ (amount) enclosed.

Credit card: Type _____ (Visa or Mastercard only)

Number _____

Expiration: _____

Name on card: _____

Send to: SAA, PO BOX 17310, BOULDER, CO 80308

Outside the US: Optional airmail for additional fee for all categories of members: South America, Central America, Caribbean Islands, Mexico, add \$20US; Europe, add \$24US; Asia, Africa, Australia & Pacific Rim, add \$28US. Canadians opting for airmail, add \$11 US or \$15 CAN.
 Airmail fee included