

## Discovering the Scientific Method through Sound Exploration

Excerpted from “Did You Hear That?” workshop  
By Wolf Trap Master Teaching Artist Mary Gresock

### **Sound Identification Games – Name That Sound!**

The following are various ways in which children can listen, identify, describe, and in some instances compare sounds without initially seeing the sources of the sounds.

Any of these sound identification experiences could be prefaced with a song such as:

(To the tune of “Mary Had a Little Lamb”)

*Open up your ears for me*

*Ears for me*

*Ears for me*

*Open up your ears for me*

*What do you hear?*

Or chant:

*Sounds, sounds, all around, who can tell me about this sound?*

1. Place a tray of sound-producing objects behind a barrier such as a large poster board. Make a sound with each one and invite children to listen and identify what they hear. Some suggestions for sounds: crumple and tear paper, pour water from one container to another, sneeze, clap hands, bounce a ball, cut with scissors, turn a cell phone on or off, brush teeth, snap fingers, shake a maraca, pat knees, shuffle a deck of cards, close a book, jingle coins, clink glasses, stomp on floor, tap a pencil on hard surface, jingle keys, ring a bell, etc.
2. Fill small opaque containers such as yogurt containers, plastic eggs, film canisters, plastic juice bottles, etc. with various objects that make noticeably different sounds. Use sand in one, marbles, coins, water, feathers, beans, pasta, cotton, rice, etc. in others. Choose one container and have children pass it around the circle, taking time to handle it, shake it, and guess what is inside. Before telling or showing children what is inside the containers, let them pass and shake a few containers. Besides guessing the contents of each container, encourage the children to compare the sounds they hear. You can make this a solo experience for children by putting a sticker with a picture of each container on the bottom so that the children can check to see whether they were correct in their identification.

**Mix and Match:** Start with the same activity as above, except make sure to use the same type of container for all the shakers. Fill pairs of containers with similar materials. For example, fill two with sand, two with a few pennies, etc. When you shake a container, there will always be another one that sounds the same. Mix up the containers and give each to a child. The children then shake their containers and hunt around the room trying to find their matching sound by listening to the other shakers.

**Look, Listen, and Match!** Have children listen to a recording of various sounds (you can use the website [www.freesound.org](http://www.freesound.org) to download and play examples of sounds). Either invite the children to verbally identify the sources of the sounds, or have them match the sounds to picture cards depicting the sources of the sounds.

**Extension:** Children can sort the pictures by loud and quiet dynamics, and arrange the pictures in the order in which they heard them.