“If I were not a physicist, I would probably be a musician. I often think in music. I live my daydreams in music. I see my life in terms of music.” Albert Einstein

~ ~ ~

Why in the world would Einstein, one of the most famous scientists of all time, make such a statement?

Perhaps you’ll find some clues in this month’s lessons.

After all, it’s back to school time, right?

Well, since I believe that we are always learning, for me it is always back to school time! I hope you feel the same way because the truth is this: an entire lifetime is not long enough to learn all there is to know about all there is.

However, we do tend to center our activities around seasons and traditions and Fall is usually associated with getting back into studying and school.

Thus, in response to a recent question I received at my Singing Mastermind website about the impact of music on the brain, I decided to focus on the subject “Music And Your Brain.”

The information you will listen to is so powerful that it might even change your entire life and how you want music to play a bigger part in it!

Why, you might wonder? Well, maybe you want to be a surgeon or a research scientist. So, let’s go to the Library of Congress to discover what scientists have to say about music and the brain.

Ready? Let’s go!
Goal

Our goal this month is to open our minds to the unlimited potential of what music does inside the brain and communicate what we have learned, so we are going to split this activity up a little differently this month.

Instead of everyone doing everything in the lessons, each person in the family is going to take a different week’s lesson and then present what they have learned to the rest of the family.

If you have only very young children in the family, this might not work as well because the podcasts that you will be listening to are geared for an older audience.

However, if you have children old enough to grasp what is being said, then they can convey what they have learned to the other members of the family.

Each month, the activity will utilize the same steps, but the podcast will be different each time.

Here’s how it works:

Put all the names of the family members who are old enough to lead in this activity into a hat or bowl. Have someone draw out the first name. That person will do the first week’s activity discarded. Draw out the next name. That person takes Week Two. Do the same thing again until all the names are drawn. If you only have three members in your family or only two who are old enough to lead, just have each person double up on the lesson activities. If all the children are too young to lead, Mom and Dad will do the honors. Also, if the children are younger and older, pair them up in teams.

The challenge is to take what you learn and translate it into words that anyone of any age in the family can understand.

~~~

Research shows that when a child listens to classical music the right hemisphere of the brain is activated, but when a child studies a musical instrument both left and right hemispheres of the brain light up. Significantly, the areas that become activated are the same areas that are involved in analytical and mathematical thinking.
ACTIVITIES FOR WEEKS ONE THROUGH FOUR

☐ Each week, the person whose name was drawn to be the leader that week (and their teammate) will listen to the podcast for their week. The other family members will not.

☐ So, if it is your turn, you will listen to the podcast as many times as needed in order to understand the material. The podcasts are all between 16-23 minutes long, so you can also start and stop the podcast if there is something you don't understand.

☐ As you listen, jot down notes about what you are learning.

☐ If there are hard words you don't understand, jot them down and look them up in a dictionary (online or offline). Write out the definitions so that you can explain what those words mean to the rest of your family members.

☐ Remember, you can listen to the podcast as many times as you need to in order to understand what is being said; or you can pause and play it while you figure things out. If anything particularly interests you about what you are learning, take it a step farther and Google search the topic to see what else you can find.

☐ When you are done listening, taking notes, finding definitions, etc., then create a way to communicate the material to your other family members. You can supplement your words by drawing something, creating a chart, making up a song, writing a poem or anything else that you think will help you get your point across.

☐ Also give your opinion about what you have learned. In other words, was it interesting, dumb, boring, exciting, etc.?

☐ Did anything you learned make you think differently about your own brain and music?

☐ Why? Why not?

☐ Are you comfortable telling your family members about it?

☐ They might ask you questions, so be ready to answer their questions!

☐ Be ready to tell why you think what you think about the subject.

☐ Did you find any clues about why Einstein might have said what he did?

☐ Click on the link below that is for your week.

☐ Week One podcast at the Library of Congress site.

☐ Week Two podcast at the Library of Congress site.

☐ Week Three podcast at the Library of Congress site.

☐ Week Four podcast at the Library of Congress site.

☐ Bonus video and article (from Stanford Univ. - be sure to watch the video).

☐ Another Bonus Article and cool picture (from Science Daily).

☐ Tell me what you learned by writing in the comments section on the “Whole Family As Student” page on my website.

© 2012 Joy Sikorski Singing Mastermind™ joy@singingmastermind.com