



JOYEUX NOEL

LINGUISTIC GOAL: Repetition is the key to language acquisition, but it can be tedious for the students and often even more so for the teachers. Any song or game that incorporates repetition renders the task of reinforcement more palatable. The traditional carol of the Twelve Days of Christmas dates back to the 16th century, although the music is supposedly French. Most students know the tune, but the carol you will invent for them will have little to do with the original except for the melody. It does give a cultural contribution to your class, as there are many festive traditions remaining for the celebration of *Épiphanie* (the twelfth day after Christmas) in France and right here in New Orleans. However, the goal of creating and performing the song in my classes was to reinforce adjective form and placement in addition to any vocabulary list of nouns and, of course, numbers.

CREATE LYRICS: Take any group of nouns you are working on in class. It could be classroom objects, clothing, food, or, as here, animals. Choose the most difficult ones to be the first numbers as they will be repeated the most. As in the traditional carol, after each new number is added, you work your way back through to number one. Don't worry about rhyme or rhythm. It will be fun and funny any way you put it together!

ADJECTIVES: Colors are the traditional place to introduce children to the concept of adjectives. The grammatical concept of «modifying» does not need to be explained to the young children, but if they use them in context, this becomes a useful reference point for analysis later. It will give them an auditory guide, too, for placing adjectives after the noun as they accumulate more adjectives in their vocabulary. For older students (and I have used this successfully in middle and high school classes), be sure to choose carefully to include feminine forms for *blanc/blanche*, *violet/violette*, and the invariable form *orange* with a plural noun. Younger students don't need to learn to spell the adjectives, but the sound differences will stay with them. Colors also make the project an active one where each student can draw and color the twelve items in the song on their own sheet, or with younger ones, use craft paper the size of the blackboard and work on the illustrations on the floor to display later in the room.

PERFORMANCE: If you have twelve students, this is easy. Assign one for each verse. If there are more, choose a conductor (*le chef d'orchestre*) to lead the singing (or reciting) and create partners for overflow. If you have fewer than twelve, it is actually comical to have a student be two numbers, racing between the two as the song proceeds. Another group can point out the animals (or items chosen) on the poster colored in class. Have the students wear the color they represent to be more visual reinforcement. If there is no all-school event where you can perform, at least take your students to another classroom to entertain. This is great publicity for your classes in your school community! *Joyeux Noël!*

ONE VERSION: Here's our version with animals. Create your own for your students.

Le premier jour de Noël mon ami m'a offert: un éléphant rose et bleu clair.

Le deuxième jour de Noël mon ami m'a offert: deux gorilles noirs et un éléphant rose et bleu clair.

Le troisième jour de Noël mon ami m'a offert: trois poules vertes, deux gorilles noirs, et un éléphant rose et bleu clair.

Le quatrième jour de Noël mon ami m'a offert: quatre chiens bleus, trois ... (etc.)

Le cinquième jour de Noël mon ami m'a offert: cinq cochons rouges, quatre ... (etc.)

Le sixième jour de Noël mon ami m'a offert: six lapins jaunes, cinq ... (etc.)

Le septième jour de Noël mon ami m'a offert: sept souris grises, six... (etc.)

Le huitième jour de Noël mon ami m'a offert: huit moutons orange, sept... (etc.)

Le neuvième jour de Noël mon ami m'a offert: neuf chats violets, huit... (etc.)

Le dixième jour de Noël mon ami m'a offert: dix vaches violettes, neuf... (etc.)

Le onzième jour de Noël mon ami m'a offert: onze chevaux blancs, dix... (etc.)

Le douzième jour de Noël mon ami m'a offert: douze serpents verts, onze...(etc.)

Do a BIG flourish with everyone together on the final *et un éléphant rose et bleu clair!*

We invite FLES* and middle school teachers to share ideas, classroom gimmicks, games for oral interaction, National French Week activities, and successful lessons with other AATF members. Join the teacher network! Send your ideas to Elizabeth Miller, 74 Tuscaloosa Avenue, Atherton, CA 94027; E-mail: [mmemiller@aol.com]; fax: 650-342-7623.

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