



# Recycling & Rhythm

MTC STUDY GUIDE

## About the Project

The **Miami-Dade Arts Education Collective** was formed during the pandemic as arts organizations united to support students, teachers, and families through shared creative experiences. Now in our sixth season of co-presenting and fully returned to in-person programming, we are proud to welcome a new partner, Miami Live Arts, to the Collective. This year's project includes performances by **Miamibloco** at the Moss Center and the Lehman Theatre, student workshops at the Adrienne Arsht Center, and professional development for teachers at Miami Theater Center.

## About the Companies

**Miamibloco** is a Miami-based percussion ensemble founded by SuOm Uheri Francis and Brian Potts, rooted in Brazilian samba and Afro-diasporic musical traditions. Known for high-energy performances and community-centered workshops, the group brings rhythm off the stage and into schools, neighborhoods, and classrooms. Their teaching approach is participatory, joyful, and accessible, emphasizing listening, movement, and collective music-making over formal music reading. Inspired by the founders' passion for cultural exchange and community engagement, every student has a role, and every classroom can become a *bateria*.



**Debris Free Oceans** is a Miami-based organization dedicated to eliminating marine debris by helping communities responsibly manage plastic and waste. The group promotes a shift toward a circular economy, encouraging people to rethink single-use consumption and adopt the "5Rs": **R**educe waste by refusing single-use plastics, **R**euse existing items, **R**ecycle materials, **R**ecapture debris to protect marine life and ecosystems, and **R**edesign waste into creative, functional products. Program Director Maddie Kaufman oversees key programs, including school education, community outreach, and sustainable business efforts, helping advance the organization's mission to stop plastic pollution.



## Keywords:

**Bateria** is a Portuguese word from Brazil that means a big group of drums playing together.

**Zero Waste** is the practice of reducing trash by reusing, recycling, and making mindful choices to protect the environment and conserve resources.



## Why Samba in the Classroom?

Samba is especially effective for elementary learners because it:

- Builds a strong sense of steady beat and rhythmic awareness
- Encourages collaboration, listening, and turn-taking
- Supports movement, coordination, and social-emotional learning
- Allows for differentiation so all students can succeed

No prior music experience is required for teachers or students.

## Activity 1: How to Teach Samba: Simple Classroom Steps

These steps can be taught in one class period or spread across multiple lessons.

### Step 1: Call-and-Response Rhythms

Teach rhythm through listening and echoing. *Teacher cues:* "My turn, your turn."

- Teacher claps a short rhythm
- Students repeat it back
- Always say the rhythm before playing it

### Step 2: Assign Rhythm Roles

Use classroom instruments, buckets, shakers, or body percussion. Give each group a role so everyone contributes. *Teacher cue:* "Everybody has a job."

- **Surdo (Heartbeat):** steady pulse that holds the group together
- **Caixa (Engine):** repeating rhythm that keeps the groove moving
- **Agogô (Guide):** higher sound that helps everyone stay together
- **Tamborim (Sparkle):** short accents and playful variations

## Key Takeaway

You don't need to read music to teach rhythm.

You need a pulse, repetition, and permission to play.

*Teacher cue to end the lesson:* "You just made samba!"



## Activity 2: Music, Samba, and the Environment

**Step 1:** Explain how Samba is traditionally played outdoors in community spaces, with instruments meant to be shared and reused. This lesson connects music-making to caring for our environment by showing students how creativity and sustainability go hand in hand. This activity teaches rhythm and environmental responsibility.

**Recycled Materials Needed:** plastic bottles, dried beans, rice, paper towel tubes, bottle caps, keys, rubber bands, small boxes

1. Talk about how music can be made from everyday redesigned objects.
2. Build a shaker or drum from recycled materials.
3. Explore sound: loud/soft, high/low, fast/slow.
4. Assign each instrument a samba role from **Activity 2**.
5. Layer the rhythms to create a classroom *bateria*!

### Step 2: What is the Zero Waste Hierarchy?

Introduce your students to the 5Rs in the Zero Waste Hierarchy, which is a simple guide to protecting the planet:

- **Rethink/Redesign** – Consider how products are made and used so they create less waste in the first place.
- **Reduce** – Use fewer materials and resources whenever possible.
- **Reuse** – Give items a second life instead of throwing them away.
- **Recycle/Compost** – Process materials so they can be made into new products or safely returned to the environment.
- **Recapture** – Recover materials or energy from waste that would otherwise be lost.

## Useful Resources:

**Drum City** by Thea Guidone

A playful picture book introducing percussion and rhythm in an accessible way for young learners.

**My Many Colored Days** by Dr. Seuss

A useful tool for connecting rhythm, tempo, and dynamics to emotions and self-expression.

**Miamibloco:** [www.miamibloco.org](http://www.miamibloco.org)

Find more information about events, performances, and education programs.

**Debris Free Oceans:**

[www.debrisfreeoceans.org](http://www.debrisfreeoceans.org)

Engage your students with interactive presentations on marine debris, covering its threats to South Florida's ecosystems, economy, and residents' health; the history of plastics; and actions each person can take to reduce the amount of waste they create.

### Other simple ways students can care for the environment:



- Turn off the faucet while brushing teeth
- Turn off the lights when leaving a room
- Recycle at home
- Raise the air conditioning by one degree to save energy

By combining music with small daily actions, students learn that caring for the environment can be fun, creative, and practical.

### Florida State Standards Alignment (Elementary Music)

This study guide supports Florida B.E.S.T. Standards for Fine Arts:

- **MU.K-5.Pr:** Students perform rhythmic patterns with appropriate tempo and ensemble awareness.
- **MU.K-5.Re:** Students listen and respond to musical cues and layered rhythms.
- **MU.K-5.Cn:** Students connect music to cultural traditions and community experiences.
- **SC.D.2.1.1:** Students understand that people influence the quality of life of those around them and know ways to care for the Earth at home and at school (for example, limiting use of paper towels, turning off water while brushing teeth, turning off lights).



# MTC Summer Camp Scholarship Program

## Teachers – Help Us Discover Miami’s Next Young Artist!

MTC invites teachers to nominate students who would benefit from a transformative summer in the arts!

### Who We’re Looking For:

Students **ages 7–14** who show creativity, enthusiasm, or potential, but may not otherwise have the opportunity to attend.

### Campers explore:

- Playwriting & storytelling
- Singing & choreography
- Dance & improvisation
- Set & prop design
- Teamwork, creativity, and confidence

## New! MTC Young Leaders Fellowship

### For teens ages 15–18

A hands-on paid mentorship program that builds leadership, creative, and professional skills in musical theater production. Fellows assist with camp operations, rehearsals, and performances, gaining real-world experience in the arts!

## Nominate a Student Today!

Your recommendation can open the door for a young person to shine this summer. Email [info@mtcmiami.org](mailto:info@mtcmiami.org) for more information.

### ABOUT THE CAMP:

- June 8 – August 7, 2026
- Hot lunch is provided daily
- Led by Camp Director Amy Siana and MTC’s professional teaching artists
- Each session ends with a live performance on MTC’s Main Stage!

### CAMP SESSIONS:

**Session One: June 8 – June 18**

**Session Two: June 22 – July 2**

**Session Three: July 13 – July 24**

**Session Four: July 27 – August 7**

*(scholarship recipients must attend at least three sessions of camp to qualify.)*



**MTC is committed to making arts education accessible to all students.** Please

share our Summer Camp Scholarships

with parents or guardians of creative, enthusiastic kids who would thrive in a safe, inspiring space. Scan the QR code to learn more.

