

Learn About the History of the Piano

The Music Box: The Story of Cristofori

By Suzanne Guy and Donna Lacy

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32 pages, ages 4 – 8

A. Read the story of Cristofori.

B. Discuss the story.

Discussion questions:

1. Where was Bartolomeo Cristofori born? *Padua, Italy*
2. What kinds of things did Bartolomeo use to make noise? *Wire, tools, door keys, pans, kitchen utensils, etc.*

3. Why did his parents think he needed music lessons?
Because he liked to make noise.

4. When Bartolomeo went to work, what did he do?
Make harpsichords.

5. What didn't he like about the harpsichords he made?
All the notes sounded the same.

6. How did Bartolomeo come up with the idea to make sounds by having hammers hit strings? *Little hammers from his tool bag fell on wire strings.*

7. How was Bartolomeo's new instrument different from a harpsichord? *It could make both loud and soft sounds.*

8. How many keys did Bartolomeo's new piano have? *54* How many keys does your piano have?
Usually 88

C. Try some of these activities.

1. Find Padua, Italy on a world map or globe. Find the names of famous composers and pianists who came from Italy. Listen to or play some of their music.

2. Some of Bartolomeo Cristofori's originals pianos are still in existence. Find out where they are located. If one is close, plan a field trip to see it. If it isn't, listen to a recording of music played on a Cristofori piano.

3. Create your own musical instrument using items around your house. Compose an original tune to play on your new instrument.

4. Look inside a grand piano and an upright piano. Identify the keys, hammers and strings that Cristofori used to make the new sounds on his piano. Compare the two types of pianos and name two ways they are alike and two ways they are different.

5. Interview a piano technician. If you have someone who cares for your piano, talk to them about what they do to make your piano sound its best. If you don't know a piano technician, contact the Piano Technicians Guild at (913) 432-9975 or www.ptg.org to find one in your area. Find out from the technician what you can do to help care for your piano. Make a list of questions ahead of time to prepare for your interview.

