

ADD A LITTLE TRADITION...

...to your clogging classes

Most clogging groups these days enjoy doing clogging line dances for many reasons: the variety of music, levels, and steps, no partner is needed, and no memorization is needed. Because the line dances are so prevalent, we sometimes forget how much fun we can have with traditional dancing, too. Often teachers don't include traditional dancing in their classes because they don't know how to. Here are some ideas for putting a little traditional dancing into your classes painlessly.

Many cloggers aren't accustomed to dancing with a partner. When dancing solo, people only have to think about the steps they're doing. When clogging with a partner, however, all of a sudden they also have to think about where the other person is, where their hands are, and how they're moving with the other person. That adds a lot of complexity and more chances of making a mistake, which feels worse if it involves a partner. For this reason, line dance cloggers may not be comfortable with a partner. Just like anything else, it takes practice to get to the point where people don't feel awkward.

You don't have to start off with

couples to do traditional dancing. I always do some circle dancing in my beginner classes. This introduces the dancers to the idea of dancing in a circle and holding hands with others. Keep it friendly, simple, and fun. Invite everyone to come and join the circle. Do simple steps (Basics or Two-steps) so the dancers can concentrate on the figures, not the steps. Start with the most simple directions such as:

- Circle left, then right (continue for several counts)
- Go into the center and back out (add a yell!)
- Circle right (or left), then drop hands and go single file.
- Everyone turn around and go the other way around.
- Face in, join hands, and circle left.

Depending on the amount of time you have available, you may want to just leave it at this for the first time. Continue with simple circle dancing at the next class, but add something new to it. One of my favorite figures is Wind Up a Ball of Yarn. You only need one dancer who knows how to do it (that can be you) and all the other dancers follow the leader. The one dancer (leader) drops hands with the person to their left only. Everyone else keeps hands joined and continues to circle left. The leader moves toward

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