



Helping teachers work with children when they first return to school following major traumatic or life-changing events

Hā Ora: Harakeke Pūnga Whānau  
Years 2 – 4 (Curriculum Levels 1 – 2)



Lino cut by Charlotte Prebble.

# HĀ ORA:

## Harakeke Pūnga Whānau

By Priya Gain

This unit provides a range of activities to respond creatively and playfully to metaphors and observations of the harakeke through music and movement. The material and processes are designed with the Orff process in mind, weaving together singing, movement, language work, musical play and improvisation. You can find more information on Orff pedagogy and curriculum design for New Zealand primary schools by visiting [www.ketearonuiorff.com](http://www.ketearonuiorff.com).

The activity ideas are presented in three sections as a possible sequence of learning episodes. This provides an overall sense of flow to a potential unit of work that could easily stretch over a couple of weeks or more. They are also presented in way that makes it easy for teachers to use the activities as stand-alone lessons.

Teachers, as artists, are encouraged to work with the material in a way that works best for them and their children. Teachers may find that their children enjoy repeating some episodes more than others, building confidence with their creative responses slowly over time. Other episodes might inspire teachers to work towards a bigger piece of work that could be used in an informal, or even formal, performance. The idea is that the material is simple, easy for children to get a hold of and with lots of possibilities for creative child-lead responses. It is hoped that the children will enjoy returning to some of the activities over time, such as the song, with their own created movements and the improvisation opportunities.

Hā ora means a breath of life. This offering is intended to support child wellbeing as they come back into their school communities after a time of challenge. Hā ora also describes having an essence full of vitality and creative energy that is central to this mahi.

Poutokomanawa is the central pole of a whareniui (meeting house). It is the heart of the whareniui, supporting the whole house and connecting earth and sky. It is a piece of art, representing ancestry and story. As a name for our collective it signifies the aim we have for our mahi: to create a space for creativity, growth and learning that supports the heart of the child.

## HĀ ORA

Makaira Waugh • Priya Gain • Rawiri Hindle • Bert van Dijk

This unit is part of the wider resource called 'Hā Ora', a Poutokomanawa project for Te Rito Toi. We encourage you to look through all the offerings presented in the wider 'Hā Ora' resource, and use the material in a way that suits your learning context. At this stage the material is presented in a mixture of te reo Māori and English, with a range of arts based activities to support learning in both mainstream and Māori immersion educational contexts.

## POUTOKOMANAWA

### for Te Rito Toi

**Poutokomanawa** is a bicultural collaboration that supports Māori voice, leadership and decision making in the growth and development of arts based pedagogy in New Zealand schools. The work aims to acknowledge and support those working in Māori immersion settings and to honour the expertise and pedagogical knowledge being developed in these contexts. Our collective advocates for learning that is grounded in: creativity, artistry, wellbeing, child-led exploration and play, the natural environment and local place-based curriculum.



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## SECTION A

# Children's observations, metaphor and artwork as a starting point

If you have harakeke on the school property take your children for a walk to show them. If not you can use a photo/image for this activity.



## Observational Drawing

As a class look closely at the plant.

- Discuss the shape of the leaves and brainstorm some words to describe them.
- Draw attention to the layers of the plant, the outer layers protecting the inner layers.
- Explain to the children that the outer layers are the older leaves, like parents and elders, protecting the new younger leaves, like children, in the centre of the plant.

**This is why in te ao Māori harakeke is a symbol for whānau (family).**

- Make a list of words to describe the shape of the leaves, paying attention to the detail of how the leaves point, bend and fold over one another eg. angular, curved, straight, pointy, folded...
- Pay attention to how the plant is made up of many growth segments that weavers call "fans". Even one fan with roots can be planted and new fans will grow, circling around it, spreading over time until it becomes a wide bush.
- Introduce some Māori words (kupu) for the different parts of the harakeke.

**For the bush to stay healthy, weavers never harvest leaves from the rito or mātua/awhi rito layers. The parents remain to protect the child/new growth.**

### Māori words (kupu)

Rau – leaves

Tūpuna – the outer leaves

Rito – child or mokopuna

Mātua/Awhi Rito – parents, protectors of the rito



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Close up detail of the outer Tūpuna leaves of the harakeke.



Drawing by Amelia Prebble.



Lino cuts by Charlotte Prebble.

Invite children to make an observational drawing of the plant, paying close attention to all the details. The aim is to make this drawing scientific with as much detail as possible.

- Draw attention to things like the layered fans, holes or spots on the leaves and things like frayed ends.
- Are there any spider webs tucked away in the plant?
- Do you notice any other bugs or creatures living in this plant?
- If you watch for a while do you see any birds visiting the plant?
- What birds do you think might visit this plant?

By drawing in the analogies of whakapapa and whānau, alongside their scientific observations, the children's drawings will be well informed and emotionally more meaningful. They will be able to explain how the whole whānau is embraced in the fan of the harakeke.

## Photography

If children have access to cameras they may also like to photograph the plant and play with light and framing, this will help draw their attention to different parts of the plant and the details. If they have access to a photo editing app they may like to play with some harakeke photo images in this way – in this kind of activity the focus becomes more artistic in terms of how they play/alter their image eg. playing with cropping, light, shading, hues...



A close up edited photo of a harakeke by an 8 year old.



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## SECTION B

# Singing, Movement and Musical Play Activities for Children



As children become more confident with the song they can have a go, one at a time, improvising their own responses in the echo space, rather than imitate the call exactly. If you are familiar with the Orff approach you might like to use the space in this song as an opportunity for some pentatonic improvisation on a xylophone or glockenspiel.

## Part A: Harakeke Pūnga Whānau Song

### Introducing as a Simple Call and Response Song

Introduce Part A of the song by singing one phrase at a time and getting the children to echo. This can be sung with just voice or if you play the ukulele or guitar it can be sung with two chords C and G7.

When children are confident ask them to join you keeping a slow steady beat on their knees (every 2 beats) – marked on the score as the “Passing Beat”.

### Exploration with feeling the beat

When the children are confident with keeping the “passing beat” on their knees invite them to come up with other ways they could keep the beat eg. clapping, patting the floor, tapping toes, tapping shoulders, finger clicks....let children be creative here.

Sing the song through several times (just Part A). With each repetition explore singing it in different ways eg. quietly, slowly, quick and lively, strongly etc. As the song-leader you can set the expressive quality at the beginning of each repetition and the children will imitate your style – you can try a range of things here. With each repetition the children will become more confident with the song.

Invite children to think about the harakeke as a symbol for whānau and to come up with some actions that could go with each phrase of the song.

Harakeke  
*the Harakeke flax plant*

pūnga whānau  
*the family bundled closely together*

i te aroha  
*from love*

pūtaka kaha e  
*the basis of our strength*

### Creating a Class Action Song

Try out some different actions and decide on a sequence you can do together to turn this into your own class action song.



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## Harakeke Pūnga Whānau

Priya Gain

**A PART** C

Songleader Call Echo Response or Improvisation G7 Songleader Call

Ha-ra-ke - ke Ha-ra-ke - ke pū-nga whā - nau

Passing Beat X X X X X X

4 Echo Response or Improvisation Songleader Call Echo Response or Improvisation All together from star \*

pū-nga whā - nau i te a - ro-ha i te a - ro-ha pū - ta - ke

X X X X X X

7 C **B PART**

Additional part for movement activities

ka - ha e

X X X

*Children grow up from the ground along with the scale*

10 **C PART**

Additional Part for Improvisation Possibilities

*Children can use this space for improvised whistling to create a soundscape of birdcalls and dance their hands as if they are birds on top of the harakeke plant singing.*

**Translation:** Harakeke, bundling closely together as a family, from love, the basis of our strength

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7GqD71X9MOM&feature=youtu.be>



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### Part A: Harakeke Pūnga Whānau Song

#### Song as a Passing Song/Game:

##### Passing Stone

Have children sit in a circle with their hands set up for passing easily (see photo). Using a passing stone (eg. a river stone, children might like to make a basket of painted stones for this activity) children sing the song and the stone is passed to the right on the passing beat, sending the stone around the circle. It helps if the teacher has a hand drum or something to keep the beat on to help the children know when to pass ie. "pass with each beat of the drum". This can take some practice for new classes to get into a steady passing rhythm.

##### Game: Becoming an Ensemble Musician

When the song gets to the three claps (at the end of Part A) the child who has the stone in their left hand takes it in their right hand and taps it three times on the floor in front of them. They then give the stone to the person on their right and come and sit in the middle of the circle and take an instrument from a small selection of un-tuned percussion instruments eg. shakers, claves, hand drums/or some more river stones/ kōrari tī rākau sticks (harakeke stalks). This child is now an ensemble musician for the rest of the game. The ensemble musicians can play their instruments on the passing beat while everyone else continues to sing and pass the stone. They can also play on the last three clapping/tapping notes for emphasis at the end of each round of the song.

Keep singing and passing the stone around until you have a good number of ensemble musicians in the centre eg 8-10 musicians in the centre of the circle.



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## SECTION B

# Singing, Movement and Musical Play Activities for Children

This is a nice activity that can be taken outside on a sunny day once the kids are confident singing along with the scale.



## Part B: Harakeke Pūnga Whānau Song

### Introducing the Scale Part of the Song

Introduce the scale part of the song. You can do this with voice or an instrument eg. piano or xylophone or recorder.

- Using hand gestures (or a pitch ladder/solfege) show how each note is going one step higher.
- See if children can copy your gestures ie. “When the note goes up one step move your hand one step higher too.”
- Ask them to listen to when they think they are at the top of the scale. Ask them to clap on the top note – some children may work this out by counting (the 8th note marks the octave), others will anticipate it by ear.

Once children have the idea get them to crouch on their feet and grow one step higher with each note they hear. They are aiming to be fully grown, reaching up high, by the time you get to the top note. They can clap or jump on the top note. This is a nice activity that can be taken outside on a sunny day once the kids are confident singing along with the scale.



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In a subsequent session, once children have done plenty of exploration on their own, get them to work in groups of three to explore how they could grow as a group and combine their 6 harakeke leaves (arms) into an interesting plant shape.

## Part B: Harakeke Pūnga Whānau Song

### Movement Activities: To Accompany the Scale Part of the Song

Using the children's observations (drawings/photography) of the harakeke the children can use their arms to make shapes of the leaves – drawing on the words that were brainstormed eg. angular, curved, fanning, straight, pointy, folded...

Invite children to grow with the scale but to end up with their arms representing two harakeke leaves. At the end of the scale you can call out a prompt for the children eg. "this time make your leaves folded/ curved/angular..." You can also call out prompts for different levels eg "this time make your leaves low and curved/high and straight". Once children are confident working with different types of shapes and levels invite them to end the scale in their own choice of shape. Encourage them to think about detail like frayed ends of the leaves that could be shown with splayed fingers.

Continue to draw in the elements of dance such as levels and use of space. Have half the class perform growing into their harakeke shapes at a time so the other half can see the effect and discuss, with an artistic eye, what looks effective and why. Give children the opportunity to reflect and adapt their shapes based on feedback. If you can, take photos of the shapes so that children can see what they looked like.





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You could also play some recorded music (eg. Hirini Melbourne) for children to explore their bird shapes and movements along with, and perhaps create a free improvised dance-scape.



### Part C: Harakeke Pūnga Whānau Song

## Introducing Whistling Improvisation for a Bird Call Soundscape and Tūi Hand Dancing

When children have got to the top of the scale invite them to hold their stretched arms, pausing in stillness for a few moments. Invite the children to listen to the silence and then quietly and slowly invite them to bring their hands down and to start to whistle, if they can, to create a birdcall soundscape. Invite them to explore different whistled birdcall patterns and to listen to the calls coming from the different 'plants' in the space. You could also invite pairs of children to experiment having a birdcall conversation between them. Invite some pairs of children to share with the group so that they can notice the improvised musical conversation.

### Tūi – Sitting on the Harakeke:

When children have got to the top of the scale ask the children to hold their stretched arms, pausing in stillness for a few moments. Invite the children to listen to the silence and then quietly and slowly invite them to sit down and as they do so to bring their hands down to form an artistic impression of a tūi in front of them. Ask them to think about their hands as wings or beaks. Let the children explore different shapes and movements with their hands to evoke a tūi that has landed on the harakeke.

I would do this as a sitting activity the first time I did it with children. This allows children to focus on the details of their hand shapes and movements. But in a second session I would encourage children to also explore levels and shapes and movements in their own spaces. I would keep it as a non-locomotive movement activity, ie. the children are not travelling away from their spot. Like a plant the children are rooted in their space but they can begin to explore moving their whole bodies any way they like within their own space. If children want to stand and move with their birds they should be encouraged to do so. Draw the children's attention to how effective the different levels look by taking a photo and showing them or having half the class experiment at a time, while the other half observes.

Children can add their whistling improvised soundscape while they explore and play with their shapes.



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## SECTION B

# Singing, Movement and Musical Play Activities for Children



## A Haiku Example

Flax leaves, green and straight

Folding, waving, stretching, strong

Weaving whānau love

## Incorporating Language and Metaphor

Share some whakataukī/phrases to do with harakeke and its symbolism of whānau relationships and connections. There is potential here for children to create their own poems, eg haiku, about the harakeke or use one of the phrases/whakataukī below.

Kia kaha, kia māia, kia manawanui  
*Be strong, be bold, persevere*

Waiho i te toipoto, kaua i te toiroa  
*Let use keep close, not far apart*

Aroha mai, Aroha atu  
*Love towards us, love going out from us*

Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi engari he toa takitini  
*My strength is not mine alone (individual) but comes from many (the collective)*

Ahakoā te iti te kākano, he pounamu kātahi ka tipu ake  
*Although the seed is small it is treasure and will grow*

Each movement group can choose a phrase/poem to go with their shape. Have these written down as “plaques” in front of their sculptures. These could be read aloud by another child/teacher walking past the frozen shapes as if walking through a gallery and reading the plaques as they stop to observe each sculpture.



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If you had them, you could use props such as dancing scarves or ribbons here, but they are not necessary.

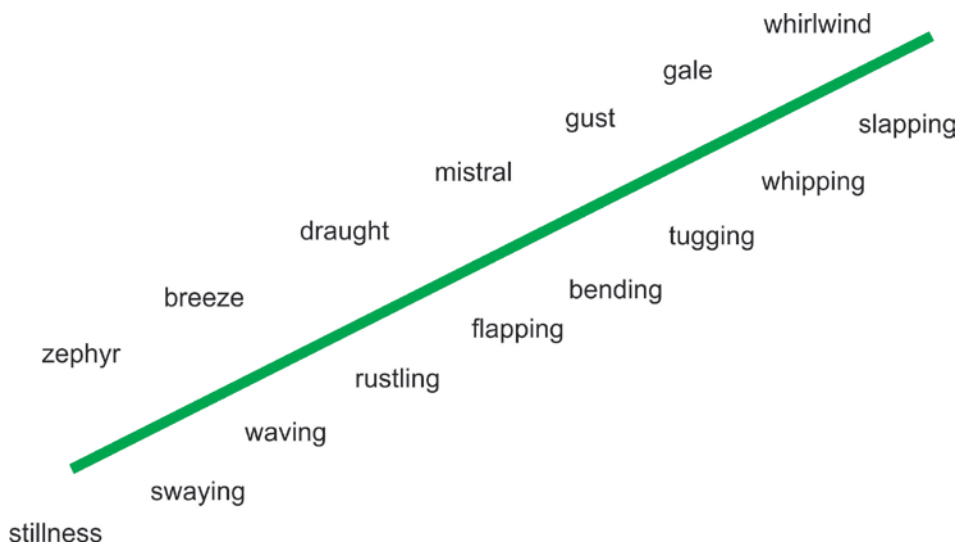
## A Conversation between the Harakake (of Tāne) and the Wind (Tāwhirimātea)

What might a conversation between the leaves of harakeke and the wind look like?

### Explore language first

Create a continuum line for the wind as a class, like the example below. Place a word at each end of the line and encourage the children to find words that could go between them. The children discuss the different words and move them around so they create a continuum. On one side of the line you can have different words for wind strengths and on the other side you can have verbs that match the different types of wind and represent how the harakeke leaves might respond. This can be described as a conversation between Tāwhirimātea and the harakeke of Tāne.

### An example of the continuum line:



Using some recorded music to represent different moods/conversations the children can explore different movements from gentle to energetic. I would set the children up in their own spaces for movement, their feet rooted to the ground and responding with their upper bodies and arms. As in previous movement activities encourage the children to think about shapes and levels.



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## SECTION C

# Putting the elements together for an informal (or formal) performance

There is potential, with the activities outlined above, to work with the children to create a performance piece.



## For example:

A possible sequence could be half the class singing the song, while the other half of the class are in their small groups growing with the scale into their shapes. The singers could do some whistling improvisation while the dancers make small soft hand wind leaf movements while a child/teacher walks past and reads aloud the plaques. The children may also have ideas around how they could bring in the dancing hand tūi shapes, perhaps using some recorded music or an additional created soundscape. The children may also want to incorporate some of the artwork and poetry into their presentation; perhaps these could be laid out under the plaques or on a wall behind the performance.

I encourage you to let the children discuss the different elements that could be included in a performance, based on the range of activities they have done from Section B. Give children the opportunity to explore a range of possible forms before deciding on a sequence they are happy with. When I do this with children they take this work very seriously and sometimes they like to create posters advertising the final performance, there are so many possibilities. This is a great time to let the children's imaginations and artistic judgements lead the way.



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## About Priya

Priya is a fully qualified Orff New Zealand Aotearoa (ONZA) levels educator and has been leading and facilitating Orff based workshops in the Wellington region since 2012. She has been the music specialist at Eastern Hutt School for the past 6 years where she developed an Orff inspired music curriculum for New Zealand primary aged children, years 0 – 6, [www.ketearonuiorff.com](http://www.ketearonuiorff.com). Priya also has experience in early childhood and home-based music groups, through her involvement with Playcentre and as a mum of three. She is currently a board member of Music Education NZ Aotearoa.

Priya has recently been working as a teacher fellow at Victoria University in the School of Education, working with pre-service teachers, and she is currently teaching pedagogy at the NZ School of Music. This year Priya is embarking on doctoral study at Te Puna Wānanga, School of Māori and indigenous education at Auckland University.