This preparatory guide accompanies a virtual program inspired by *May There Always Be Sunshine*, an award-winning children’s book by Chicago musician and author Jim Gill, and a gorgeous celebration of children’s thoughts and ideas. In this playful virtual program, Gill joins five CSO brass musicians and vocalist Melinda Alberty to give voice to the words and wishes of children across the nation. Watch this inspiring book come to life through animated illustrations and music, including an excerpt from Mussorgsky’s ever-popular *Pictures at an Exhibition*.

The video can be found on the CSO’s [website](#).

**HOW TO ENGAGE WITH THE VIRTUAL PROGRAM**

Have your children create their own page like the ones found in Jim Gill’s *May There Always Be Sunshine*. Each child thinks of a “may there always be” wish. A family member helps the child write down the idea. Then the child creates an illustration for the page.

Here are the steps for making this page with your children:

1. Ask your child to think of the ONE THING — the child’s favorite thing — that he or she would like there to always be. It is a wish: something, or some person, or something to do that is the child’s favorite. “May there always be __________.” This is a great discussion to have. Please make sure that there is only ONE WISH. If a child were to say “cake and ice cream,” please ask the child to choose one of those wishes — cake OR ice cream.

2. Write the child’s wish on a piece of paper with a marker. Write all of the words: “May there always be __________.” Leave room for a picture!

3. To make a page in Spanish, write these words: “Que siempre haya ______________.” Leave room for a picture!

4. Have your child create an illustration for the page. Let your child take the time to create a picture that he or she will be proud to share.

5. Have your child write his or her first name in a corner on the page. If it is hard to read, then you, the family member, could reprint it.
6. Share your child’s picture with the CSO. Email it to Katy Clusen at clusenk@cso.org.

Sing the song along with Jim and Melinda. The lyrics are found below. Add your own wish to the song and sing it, too!

May there always be sunshine.
May there always be blue skies.
May there always be family.
May there always be me.

May there always be colors.
May there always be grapes.
May there always be teeth.
May there always be fish.

May there always be pancakes.
May there always be books.
May there always be farmers.
May there always be hats.

May there always be music.
May there always be instruments.
May there always be concerts.
May there always be listeners.

May there always be wonder.
May there always be good friends.
May there always be kindness.
May there always be us.

Explore the brass family with your children:

1. Listen to the song again, and then ask your children to identify the instruments they hear in the video.

2. Introduce your children to the names and instruments of the following CSO musicians:

   Esteban Batallán *trumpet*
   Tage Larsen *trumpet*
   David Cooper *horn*
   Michael Mulcahy *trombone*
   Gene Pokorny *tuba*
3. Watch this video of the CSO musicians as they explain their instruments. Ask your children what their favorite brass instrument is and why.

4. Watch the video of the CSO musicians playing the Great Gate of Kiev. Have your children pretend to play one of the brass instruments along with the musicians in the video.

5. Listen to the Great Gate of Kiev again and ask your children to draw pictures of themselves, or one of the CSO musicians, playing their favorite brass instrument.

Special thanks to Jim Gill for sharing his music with us.

Jim has created “May There Always Be” projects all around the county. To learn more, visit Jim’s website at https://www.jimgill.com/ or his Facebook page to see a recent project from Somerset County, Maryland.