

# Folk Song: Frère Jacques

"Frère Jacques" is a timeless folk song that has been sung by people of all ages around the world. With its origins traced back to France, the song's catchy melody and simple lyrics have made it a favorite among children and adults alike. It is often associated with a "round," a musical composition where different voices sing the same melody but start at different times. Its French title translates to "Brother James" in English. The lyrics tell the story of a friar or monk who oversleeps and is reminded by the bells to wake up and fulfill his duties.

While the exact origins of the song remain a bit mysterious, it is believed to have ancient roots. The melody has similarities to other European folk songs, suggesting that "Frère Jacques" may have evolved from a shared musical tradition, allowing people from different cultures to enjoy its simple yet charming tune. Whether it's "Brother John" in English, "Bruder Jakob" in German, or "Frare Jaume" in Catalan, the essence of the song remains intact.

One of the reasons for the song's longevity is its simplicity. The uncomplicated melody and easy-to-remember lyrics make it accessible to people of all ages. Children often learn to sing "Frère Jacques" as one of their first songs, creating a connection to the song that can last a lifetime.

# Frère Jacques

## Are You Sleeping

This song is about a friar who has overslept. He must wake up and sound the bell for matins, the early morning prayers.

French round

1

Are you sleep - ing, are you sleep - ing,  
Frè - re Jac - ques, Frè - re Jac - ques,

1

Detailed description: This system contains the first two measures of the song. The vocal line (treble clef) has a melody starting on G4. The first measure is marked with a '1' above it, and the second with a '2'. The lyrics are 'Are you sleep - ing, are you sleep - ing, Frè - re Jac - ques, Frè - re Jac - ques,'. The piano accompaniment (bass clef) consists of a single G4 note in the first measure, which is marked with a '1' below it, and rests in the second measure.

2

Bro - ther John, Bro - ther John?  
Dor - mez - vous? Dor - mez - vous?

Detailed description: This system contains the next two measures. The vocal line continues with the melody. The lyrics are 'Bro - ther John, Bro - ther John? Dor - mez - vous? Dor - mez - vous?'. The piano accompaniment has rests in both measures.

3

Morn-ing bells are ring - ing, morn- ing bells are ring - ing,  
Son - nez les ma - ti - nes, son - nez les ma - ti - nes,

4 5

Detailed description: This system contains the next two measures. The vocal line has a melody starting on G4. The first measure is marked with a '4' above it, and the second with a '5'. The lyrics are 'Morn-ing bells are ring - ing, morn- ing bells are ring - ing, Son - nez les ma - ti - nes, son - nez les ma - ti - nes,'. The piano accompaniment has a single G4 note in the first measure, marked with a '4' below it, and a single G4 note in the second measure, marked with a '5' below it.

4

Ding dong ding, ding dong ding.

Detailed description: This system contains the final two measures. The vocal line has a melody starting on G4. The lyrics are 'Ding dong ding, ding dong ding.'. The piano accompaniment has a single G4 note in the first measure, marked with a '4' below it, and a single G4 note in the second measure, marked with a '5' below it.