

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

There are several forms of music that are usually associated with black musician and they include spiritual, gospels, singing games, blues, jazz, rhythm and blues, rock and roll and soul music. Most music lovers know that each one of these forms has its own history and a style all of its own.

Music is integral to all aspects of black community life. It serves many functions and is performed by individuals and groups in both formal and informal settings. Music making is a participatory group activity that often serves to unite black people for a common purpose. This use of music in African-American communities continues a tradition found in African society.

The conceptualization of music making as a participatory group activity is evident in the process by which black Americans prepare for a performance.

When the singing actually begins, the style of the performance compliments the "we are here to jam" or "we are here to be moved" attitude of the audience/congregation. They are encouraged to participate in any way, sometimes to even join the performers on stage.

Music making in Africa requires the active involvement of all present at the musical event.

In African-American culture dress in a musical performance is as important as the music itself. The array of colors and fashions seen in concert halls and black churches is an important visual experience.

The call-response structure is common with jazz musicians, work songs, gospel, rap and all musical forms from slavery to the present.

When introducing music to students remember to have a wide variety of music forms available for their listening pleasure. Rap can be included, but remind them that Rap originated in the bible. Also remember to preview all music before playing. Utilize our own Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Museum as a valuable source of material and field trips.

## **B. OBJECTIVES**

Students will accomplish the following objectives:

- Explain the role of the church in black music
- Name 3 forms of black music and tell at least one thing about each form
- Explain the need for protest songs and how the songs conveyed the same message of freedom in 2003 as they did in the early 1900's
- Listen to, analyze, and describe music
- Gain an understanding of music in relation to history and culture
- Will use the internet to do research
- Investigate a variety of sites to gather relevant information for a presentation
- Share research with classmates
- Explain how music can evoke powerful feelings and emotions

## **C. ACTIVITIES**

These music activities will be taught over a period of two to three weeks, depending upon the enthusiasm of the students and the availability of materials, special guests and field trip arrangements. A teacher could use an entire semester with these activities, if this program will only be used once a week. There is a great deal of flexibility and creativity that can be taken into consideration in order to present a top notch program and to give the students a real taste of African American history.

1. The students enter the classroom to a variety of music forms everyday for a week or two. Music will include an example of each of the musical forms discussed in this unit. Students will have the opportunity to vote on their favorite form of music and they must write why they voted as they did.

2. Teachers and students will discuss different forms of black music. Teacher should invite a musician to perform examples of music with the class.

3. Teacher will discuss spirituals as the form of music most important to the black community. Students will ask their parents, grandparents or someone from the church leadership team to assist them in selecting a spiritual. After making this selection, they should translate what the spiritual means to them.

4. Class will discuss protest music and why it was such an important part of the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. We will listen to recordings of protest songs and discuss their meanings. Students will once again be encouraged to ask for assistance from the people listed above in locating civil rights songs.

Each student will receive a copy of "WE SHALL OVERCOME". This song became the theme song of the 50s and 60s movement and we will discuss many reasons why this would be selected.

5. Students will choose a song to learn. The selection can be a chant, recite words to a traditional black song, protest song, spiritual, etc. Students can sing in a group or just chant the words, rap style.

6. Students will present a musical performance that will include different forms of black music.

Distribute art materials and have students create musical instruments. (Plastic bottles, small boxes, plastic eggs, beans, beads, marbles, etc.)

Computer(s) with Internet access will be used for online activity and research

Presentations could be video taped and show, as part of the school news and/or in other classrooms.

Explain to the class that they are going to be creating a talk show. The focus of this show is music and they will be interviewing famous historical and contemporary personalities. Students will choose several musicians to research. These will be some of the guests into groups to begin researching them. (The number of personalities and students assigned to each will depend on class size and available computer access and resources.)

12. As we discuss music, we will refer to many biblical texts. We will use a variety of religious resources.

## **STANDARDS**

- **Demonstrates competence in the grammatical and mechanical conventions in written compositions**
- **Gathers and uses information for research purposes**
- **Demonstrates competence in speaking and listening as tools for learning**
- **Demonstrates competence in the general skills and strategies for reading a variety of informational text**

## **D. FORMS OF BLACK MUSIC**

### **SPIRITUALS:**

Slaves created hundreds of religious song in the United States. Converted to Christianity by missionaries slaves often took the lyrics of white religious songs and set them to their own style or music.

The lyrics of religious songs, or spirituals, include references to a better life beyond. The music varied from slow mournful hymns to quick-paced joyous spiritual.

The role of the black congregation in inspiring and preserving the spiritual is vital. Handed down by many generations of singing blacks, slave spiritual have evolved into today's familiar spirituals.

### **WORK SONGS AND SINGING GAMES:**

Slaves also created hundreds of work songs. Work songs set a rhythm for tasks and were used to relieve boredom while working. Blacks in the United States continued this tradition when working on boats and docks, on railroads and road crews, in the fields and in the home.

Slave sang songs that did not interfere with their work. Many work songs were call-and-response patterns, where one slave sang while others worked and called out short responses.

Young children and adults used songs to accompany their games and dancing.

### **RAGTIME AND BLUES**

Ragtime is written syncopated, instrumental march music, most often played on the piano. The left hand plays several rhythms in a pattern. The right hand plays the melody.

Blues notes are off-pitch notes, neither major nor minor key notes. Blue notes fall between the two keys and can be played on a guitar or saxophone, but not on the piano. Blues singers also "slide" notes. They start with a flat or minor key note and slide up into the blue note.

### **JAZZ**

Jazz is a style of music that is a fusion of blues and ragtime with brass-band and syncopated dance music. Jazz is vocally oriented music; its players replace the voice with their instruments, they improvise from a base melody and individualize as they play.

## **RHYTHM AND BLUES AND ROCK AND ROLL**

During the 1950's there was a growing interest in the rhythm and blues music of the black community by young white singers. Many popular white singers used adapted versions of black -derived music in their rise to fame. The music of black singers became popular in white communities and these musicians also became famous. Today's music is a mixture of all the musical heritage that preceded it. So-called "black music" has had a profound effect on the taste and interest of today's musical audience.

### **E. RESOURCES**

Holloway, Joseph E. **Africanisms in American Culture.** Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991

Raim, Ethel **Ain't you got, a right "The People of Johns Island, South Carolina-Their Faces, Their Words, and Their Songs**

Thomas, Velma Maia **Freedom's Children, The Passage to the Great Emancipation to the Great Migration.** Crown Publishers, 2000

Thomas, Velma Maia **No Man Can Hinder Me,** A Journey from Slavery to Emancipation through Song. Crown Publishers.

### **Websites:**

[www.canteach.ca/elementary/africasong.htm](http://www.canteach.ca/elementary/africasong.htm)  
[www.rememberingslaveryorg/chap4.html](http://www.rememberingslaveryorg/chap4.html)  
[www.pbs.org/jazz/kids/lessonchops\\_and\\_ares.html](http://www.pbs.org/jazz/kids/lessonchops_and_ares.html)  
[www.africana.com.html](http://www.africana.com.html)  
[www.africana.com/blackboard/bb\\_mus\\_000050.htm](http://www.africana.com/blackboard/bb_mus_000050.htm)  
[www.teachervision.com/lesson-plans/lesson-8289.html](http://www.teachervision.com/lesson-plans/lesson-8289.html)

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Holloway, Joseph E. **Africanisms in American Culture.** Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991

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Thomas, Velma Maia **No Man Can Hinder Me, A Journey from Slavery to Emancipation through Song.** Crown Publishers.

Walden, Margaret B. **Black Communities in South Carolina: 1955 to Present**

### MODULE II: MODERN BLACK CULTURE

#### AUDIO RECORDINGS:

**Deep River of Song (South Carolina Got the Keys to the Kingdom)**  
Rounder 82161-1831-2

**African Tribal Music and Dances** Laseright 12179

***This Far by Faith Stories from the African American Religious Experiences by Juan Williams and Quinton Dixie***

#### Websites:

[www.canteach.ca/elementary/africasong.htm](http://www.canteach.ca/elementary/africasong.htm)

[www.rememberingslaveryorg/chap4.html](http://www.rememberingslaveryorg/chap4.html)

[www.pbs.org/jazz/kids/lessonchops\\_and\\_ares.html](http://www.pbs.org/jazz/kids/lessonchops_and_ares.html)

[www.africana.com.html](http://www.africana.com.html)

[www.africana.com/blackboard/bb\\_mus\\_000050.htm](http://www.africana.com/blackboard/bb_mus_000050.htm)

[www.teachervision.com/lesson-plans/lesson-8289.html](http://www.teachervision.com/lesson-plans/lesson-8289.html)