

Part I.

Curriculum Unit Introduction:

Title of unit: Music Matters

Vital theme of the unit: To recognize the contribution music has played in the civil rights movement

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Grade level: Fourth & fifth

Number of lessons in the unit: five

Time needed to complete unit: ten days

Curriculum standards addressed—list

4.4 spi.2- identify the rights outlined by the Bill of Rights.

4.5. spi.8. interpret a timeline that depicts slave and indentured servants coming from Europe to life in North America.

5.4.spi.3 recognize the rights established by the 15th , 19th 24th , & 26th amendments.

5.1.spi.3 recognize personal, religious, and national celebrations of various American cultures. (i.e., Martin Luther King Jr. Day

5.6. spi.3. recognize situations requiring conflict resolution.

5.6.spi.1. recognize people who contributed to reform in Tennessee and American Society (i.e. Martin Luther King Jr.).

5.5.spi.8. recognize examples of how the United States confronted Civil Rights issues, (i.e. Montgomery Bus Boycott, Birmingham Civil Rights march, Civil Rights Act of 1964

Unit introduction and overview of instructional plan: The unit will start with a lesson explaining how music contributed to the plight of the African American. Then the following lessons will lead into the issues that Dr. Martin Luther Jr. faced, as well as his contribution to the Civil Rights Movement, and the importance of the song “We Shall

Overcome” and the song, “If you miss me from the back of the bus”. Students will also learn about the following: Voting Rights Timeline, the Montgomery Bus Boycott, Birmingham Civil Rights march, Civil Rights Act of 1964.

How did “Freedom Songs” play a part in how African Americans fought against oppression? Music was a medium for African American’s to fight back against the cruelty and tyranny of a racist white society. Why did music play such an important role in the civil rights movement? Where did African Americans draw their strength, passion and drive to withstand the subjugation of a racist white society? How strong were the lyrics that were chosen for their protest songs? Were the lyrics created to ease the pain of racism and inequality? Or were these songs written from sheer desire to speak to the masses, a way to mass communicate?

One could ponder various analogies about the importance of music and the movement. But if you spoke to an African American or white civil rights advocate from that time period, they would tell you that music was used to fight off the oppression that had been forced upon them. Many questions could be formed as to the power that music had in the civil rights movement. One could also come up with various scenarios as to why music made such an impact on the plight of African American during the civil rights movement. Music was soothing, transfixing, as well as motivating to the African Americans who fought for their civil rights.

Obviously music was an outlet for African Americans. Music was emotionally and psychologically an audible therapy for African American men and women. It was used to educate and heal broken spirits. Day in and day out African Americans struggled against atrocious conditions in their workplaces as well as the public. For example, they were forced to drink at different water fountains, utilized separate restrooms than the whites. They were even forced to sit on the back of the bus. They were paid poor and inadequate wages. It was demeaning and demoralizing to be treated in this manner.

These were just a few of the reasons why African Americans turned to music to give their people hope. Because of this type of wicked and vicious treatment African Americans retaliated thru strong and powerful lyrics of song. These songs became known as “Freedom Songs”.

Music is melodic, it is soothing and in the case of the civil rights movement it was educating, therapeutic and empowering. Many protest songs helped to keep the people focused and in good spirits during hard times. Music gave African American’s and their supporters hope. Many songs were derived from gospel and old time spirituals. But others came from old football and sport chants and rhythm and blues. These soulful ballads made it impossible for a person to hear such poignant and moving lyrics and not be influenced or affected in some manner. Every single song that was sung or chanted had a purpose. Sometimes the purpose was nothing more than to keep their spirits lifted with hope.

Hope was something that African Americans had to believe in. Hope is what motivated the renovation of a gospel song, into what became the unofficial civil rights anthem. This “Freedom Song” was called “We Shall Overcome”, a very powerful song. It was written by civil rights activists Zilphia Horton, Frank Hamilton, Guy Carawan and Pete Seeger. It started out as a song of praise and was modified for the movement. After singing the song one time, Bernice Reagon, an Albany student activist stated, “When I opened my mouth and began to sing, there was a force and power within myself I had never heard before. Somehow this music...released a kind of power and required a level of concentrated energy I did not know I had”. The lyrics below are from the CD, *Voices of the Civil Rights Movement: Black American Freedom Songs 1960-1966*.

We Shall Overcome

We shall overcome, we shall overcome
We shall overcome some day
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe
We shall overcome some day

We'll walk hand in hand, we'll walk hand in hand
We'll walk hand in hand some day
Oh, deep in my heart, I do believe
That we shall overcome some day

We are not afraid, we are not afraid
We are not afraid to day
Oh, deep in my heart I, do believe
That we shall overcome some day

***We shall live in peace, we shall live in peace
We shall live in peace some day
Oh, deep in my heart I, do believe
That we shall overcome some day***

As one reads the lyrics above of this famous anthem from the civil rights movement, one can clearly see the positive impression the song made. It sends a message of hope. It spoke to the African American people and their supporters, telling them that one day they would prevail. For them to not lose hope because one day, “We’ll walk hand in hand” meaning all races, will walk hand in hand. It told African Americans to not be afraid, that peace was coming one day. Once again reiterating hope for the future. This song is a tribute to the compassionate manner in which the non-violent civil rights advocates felt. It also sent a strong message to the racist white man. It was an example of a calm demeanor that was needed for the many protestors against racism in the south. Music allowed African Americans an outlet to fight back in a non-violent manner.

Non-violence was not a goal chosen by all civil right leaders against racism. As for the legendary civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., non-violence was the

only way. Dr. King, was known world wide for his calm demeanor and compassionate if not eloquent speeches. He was the son of a southern Baptist minister. He was raised in a Christian household with great morals and ethics. He was taught by his parents to show love and this upbringing was evident in how he spread love, rather than violence. Dr. King made many statements about protesting in a non-violent manner. Below is a quote by Dr. King on non-violence:

“I am convinced that if we succumb to the temptation to use violence in our struggle for freedom, unborn generations will be recipients of a long and desolate night of bitterness, and our chief legacy to them will be a never ending reign of chaos”.

In his statement one can grasp how steadfast Dr. King was in his beliefs against nonviolence. His legacy lives on today, because of his non-violent approach to protesting as well as his heartfelt speeches that were so motivating and moving. Dr. King projected himself to anyone that came into his path, as a gentleman with great character. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a peaceful man that had a gentle yet powerful approach that commanded respect. He led and sang many “Freedom Songs”, like “We Shall Overcome”.

Not all civil rights protest songs or “Protest Songs” were calm, soothing and passive melodies like the emotionally moving song “We Shall Overcome”. There were many passionate and enthusiastic songs, that sent a message to the white oppressors how African Americans felt. For Example, the song “If you miss me from the back of the bus” is a prime example of a protest song that speaks loud and clear in its purpose. That African Americans are tired of sitting on the back of the bus. This song was written to send a message to the unreasonable white man. Rosa Parks was a prime example of an

African American that was tired of being told where she could or could not sit on a public bus. Because of her defiance, the “Montgomery Bus Boycott” was started.

The lyrics also changed with each neighboring clash and civil rights struggle. Many of these protests songs stemmed from personal experiences of the song writer. For instance, the song writer of “If you miss me from the back of the bus’, Betty Mae Fikes changed some of the lyrics to show her dislike of a situation going on at the all white high school in her hometown, Parrish High. Parrish high was involved in a dispute with integration. Fikes also used this song to stab humor at the non supportive Governor of Alabama, Governor Wallace. The lyrics were changed to:

“If you miss Governor Wallace, You can't find him nowhere, Just come on over to the crazy house/ He'll be restin' over there”.

This new version probably angered Governor Wallace as well as his many white supporters. This is exactly what Fikes almost certainly wanted to accomplish. This song is another example of how African Americans fought back in a non-violent way, but got their message across loud and clear thru music.

These "Freedom Songs" sent strong political messages out to their people and their oppressors. The function of these “Freedom Songs” never changed. They were written and sung as a sounding board for African Americans. Some songs were written to soothe and calm the nerves of the African Americans. Some “Freedom Songs” were written to speak out against the controlling white man. Other “Freedom Songs” were written and sung to give purpose and reason to the movement.

“Freedom Songs” gave courage and strength to African Americans. They influenced every black community that was living under the hostile separation from the

white man. Through these “Freedom Songs”, African Americans were clever enough to sing about their pain and dissatisfaction as well as their hopes and demands.

Annotated Bibliography

Adelman, Bob, Charles Johnson. *King: the photobiography of martin Luther King, Jr.* New York: Abrams, 2000.

Johnson was poetically about Dr. King. Adelman's photographs are poignant and moving.

Carson, Clayborne. *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960's.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995.

Carson gives the reader fantastic insight into the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, (SNCC) organization.

Farris, Christine, King. Illustrated by Chris Soentpiet. *My Brother Martin.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 2003.

Farris, provides a vivid account of her brother Martin Luther King. She takes the reader back in time. Readers of all ages would enjoy this book. Soentpiet's illustrations are bright and engaging.

Jones, Phillip. *Our Friend Martin: An Adventure Inspired by Martin Luther King, Jr.* Beverly Hills: Twentieth Century Fox, 2003.

Jones produces a fantastic visual for young learners of the strife and struggle of the great civil rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Various famous movie stars contribute their voices to the characters in the movie. This CD is a great way for young people to be exposed to the struggle of the African American fight for equality.

King, Coretta Scott. *The words of Martin Luther King, Jr.* New York: Newmarket Press, 1996.

Mrs. King, has put together a book of Dr. King's quotes that are moving and and education. One cannot walk away from reading this book without a feeling hope.

Levine, Ellen. Illustrated by Anna Rich. *If you lived at the time of Martin Luther King.* New York: Scholastic, 1990.

Levine gives the reader a creative and vivid account of Martin Luther King's life. She introduces every aspect of the civil rights struggle of the mid 1900's. The Book is a great reader for young children.

Miller, William, illustrated by John Ward. *The Bus Ride*. New York: Lee & Low, 1998.

Rosa Parks sums this book up with the following quote, "I encourage all young people to believe in themselves and take a stand for what is right. It is my hope that reading this story will inspire you to learn about the past so you can help make the future better for all people." After a child reads this book they must walk away changed. It is eye opening and dramatic.

Moore, Johnny Ray. Illustrated by Amy Wummer. *Meet Martin Luther King Jr.* Nashville: Ideal Children's Books, 2002.

Moore challenges the reader with emotional examples of racism that Martin Luther King Jr. endured. It shows Dr. King's life from beginning to his sad death in Memphis. It is a fantastic tool for teaching young children about Martin Luther King and the non-violent civil rights movement.

Rappaport, Doreen. Illustrated by Bryan Collier. *Martin's Big Words: The Life Of Dr. Martin Luther King*. New York: Hyperion, 2001.

Rappaport shows teachers how to take their students back in time to read fantastic quotes from the legendary civil rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King. This book is a wonderful teaching tool. An educator could use it to introduce a student to quotations while integrating history.

Smithsonian Brochure, "From Selma to Montgomery", Smithsonian, Washington, DC: Behring Center, 2005.

This brochure shows the timeline of the voting rights. Starting in 1870 and going to 1971. It is an excellent teaching aid for students to learn about voting rights and the 14th, 19th, 24th & 26th amendments.

Various artists. *Voices of the Civil Rights Movement: Black American Freedom Songs 1960-1966*. Washington DC: Smithsonian Institute Press, 1997.

This CD is an exciting way to take young students back in time. It is exciting as well as emotionally moving. You can hear the pain in the songs, as well as the moving message of hope.

Lesson Plan: one

Unit: Music Matters

Lesson Title: “If you miss me from the back of the bus”

Grade Level: fourth & fifth

Essential Question related to Vital Theme: How does this music play a role in the Civil Rights Movement?

Lesson Time: ninety minutes

Curriculum Standards—list:

5.4.spi.3 recognize the rights established by the 13th, 14th, 15th and 19th amendments.

5.6. spi.3. recognize situations requiring conflict resolution.

5.6.spi.2. use tools of social science inquiry such as surveys, statistics, maps, and documents.

5.6.spi.1. recognize people who contributed to reform in Tennessee and American Society (i.e. Martin Luther King Jr.).

5.5.spi.8. recognize examples of how the United States confronted Civil Rights issues, (i.e. Montgomery Bus Boycott, Birmingham Civil Rights march, Civil Rights Act of 1964

Objective: The students will listen to the song, “If You Miss Me from the Back of the Bus”, from the CD, “Voices of Civil Rights Movement”, Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, 1997. We will then have a group discussion of why Betty Mae Fikes may have written this song. Then the students will answer a questionnaire about the song. After answering the questionnaire we will go over it and have a discussion about how important music was to African Americans and their plight for equality. We will look at a transparency of the song. The students will analyze each verse of the song. We will then read the book *The Bus Ride*, written by William Miller, illustrated by John Ward, with an introduction from the legendary Rosa Parks. Then students will write a one page essay from the perspective of Sara, the main character who relives a situation from a true story about the legendary Rosa Parks. The students will be told about Rosa Parks and her contribution to the Civil Rights Movement. We will end with a review of the song and check for retention.

Materials: Transparency of the questionnaire about the song, “If You Miss Me from the Back of the Bus”. The CD, “Voices of Civil Rights Movement”, Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, 1997. Paper, pencil, projector, questionnaire about the song. Students will read the book, *The Bus Ride*, written by William Miller, illustrated by John Ward, with an introduction from the legendary, Rosa Parks.

Sing About CIVIL RIGHTS

Link Music to History

DIRECTIONS: Read the words to the following civil rights song “If You Miss Me from the Back of the Bus.” Then answer the questions and complete the activities that follow.

If you miss me from the back of the bus,
 And you can't find me nowhere,
 Come on up to the front of the bus,
 I'll be ridin' up there,
 I'll be ridin' up there,
 I'll be ridin' up there.
 Come on up to the front of the bus,
 I'll be ridin' up there.



If you miss me from the front of the bus,
 And you can't find me nowhere,
 Come on up to the driver's seat,
 I'll be drivin' up there,
 I'll be drivin' up there,
 I'll be drivin' up there,
 Come on up to the driver's seat,
 I'll be drivin' up there.



1. Who does “me” represent in the song? _____
2. Circle the words that describe the part of the bus where members of this group were first required to sit. Why did they sit there? _____

3. In the second verse of the song, who is in the driver's seat?

4. What is the purpose of this protest song? _____

5. Describe in your own words what civil rights mean to you. _____

Lesson Plan: two

Unit: Music Matters

Lesson Title: Who was Martin Luther King?

Grade Level: fourth & fifth

Essential Question related to Vital Theme: Who was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and what was his role in the Civil Rights Movement?

Lesson Time: sixty minutes

Curriculum Standards—list:

5.6. spi.3. recognize situations requiring conflict resolution.

5.6.spi.1. recognize people who contributed to reform in Tennessee and American Society (i.e. Martin Luther King Jr.).

5.5.spi.8. recognize examples of how the United States confronted Civil Rights issues, (i.e. Montgomery Bus Boycott, Birmingham Civil Rights march, Civil Rights Act of 1964

Objective: At the beginning of the lesson on Martin Luther King, Jr. students will do an individual K-W-L, Venn diagram on a piece of paper, about Martin Luther King. Then the students will read the book *Meet Martin Luther King Jr.*, by Johnny Ray Moore, illustrated by Amy Wummer. After reading the book students will have a large group discussion about what they have learned. Then on another piece of paper they will list new facts that they have learned about Martin Luther King. This lesson will lead into tomorrow's lesson called, "If you lived at the time of Martin Luther King".

Materials: The book called, *Meet Martin Luther King Jr.*, by Johnny Ray Moore, illustrated by Amy Wummer. Paper, pencil, blackboard, dry erase marker.

Lesson Plan: three

Unit: Music Matters

Lesson Title: “If you lived at the time of Martin Luther King”

Grade Level: fourth & fifth

Essential Question related to Vital Theme: How was the song “We Shall Overcome” important to the Civil Rights Non-Violent Movement?

Lesson Time: ninety minutes

Curriculum Standards—list:

5.6. spi.3. recognize situations requiring conflict resolution.

5.6.spi.1. recognize people who contributed to reform in Tennessee and American Society (i.e. Martin Luther King Jr.).

5.5.spi.8. recognize examples of how the United States confronted Civil Rights issues, (i.e. Montgomery Bus Boycott, Birmingham Civil Rights march, Civil Rights Act of 1964).

Objective: The students will listen to the following stories, *If you lived at the time of Martin Luther King*, by Ellen Levine, illustrated by Anna Rich and the book *My brother Martin*. By his sister, Christine King Farris, illustrated by Chris Soentpiet. After each story the children will be asked to write down facts that they have learned about Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Then the students will listen to the song, “We Shall Overcome, from the CD, “Voices of Civil Rights Movement”, Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, 1997. Students will then take 15 minutes to search the web about the song “We Shall Overcome” a song written by Zilphia Horton, Frank Hamilton, Guy Carawan and Pete Seeger on www.ask.com writing down new facts. The class will break into small groups to discuss their findings. Then the class will analyze a transparency of the song, “We Shall Overcome”, looking verse to verse with a new understanding of the relevance of music for the Civil Rights Non-violent movement.

Materials: Internet links to www.ask.com, the book by Coretta Scott King’s, Martin Luther King’s Wife, the book called, *The Words of Martin Luther King, Jr.* A book called, *If you lived at the time of Martin Luther King*, by Ellen Levine, illustrated by Anna Rich. *My brother Martin*. By his sister, Christine King Farris, illustrated by Chris Soentpiet. Paper and pencil. Transparency of the song, “We Shall Overcome”. The CD, “Voices of Civil Rights Movement”, Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, 1997.

Lesson Plan: four

Unit: Music Matters

Lesson Title: A Timeline of Histories Voting Milestones

Grade Level: fourth & fifth

Essential Question related to Vital Theme: What can timelines teach us?

Lesson Time: forty five minutes

Curriculum Standards—list:

4.4 spi.2- identify the rights outlined by the Bill of Rights.

4.5. spi.8. interpret a timeline.

5.4.spi.3 recognize the rights established by the 15th,19th,24th,26th amendments.

Objectives: The students will create a timeline on the board showing the major milestones in voting rights. The teacher will discuss the following time frames, 1870, 1920, 1964, 1965, and 1971, and their relevance to voting rights, and the Civil Rights Movement. Then the students will look at a transparency of the Voting Timeline from the Smithsonian. Then they will get a copy of an altered Smithsonian Timeline, and see how many times they can fill into the blanks to complete the timeline.

Materials: Transparency of the Voting Timeline from the Smithsonian. A fill in handout of the Smithsonian Timeline. Paper and pencil, dry erase markers and board.

Expanding the Right to Vote

Amendment XV to the Constitution

Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

Section 2. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Ratified February 3, 1870

Amendment XXIV to the Constitution

Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote in any primary or other election for President or Vice President, for electors for President or Vice President, or for Senator or Representative in Congress, shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or any State by reason of failure to pay any poll tax or other tax.

Section 2. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Ratified January 23, 1964

1870

1920

1964

1965

1971

Amendment XIX to the Constitution

The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Ratified August 18, 1920

Voting Rights Act

No voting qualification or prerequisite to voting, or standard, practice, or procedure shall be imposed or applied by State or political subdivision to deny or abridge the right of any citizen of the United States to vote on account of race or color.

Enacted August 6, 1965

Amendment XXVI to the Constitution

Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States, who are eighteen years of age or older, to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of age.

Section 2. The Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate legislation.

Ratified July 1, 1971

5.6.spi.1. recognize people who contributed to reform in Tennessee and American Society (i.e. Martin Luther King Jr.).

5.5.spi.8. recognize examples of how the United States confronted Civil Rights issues, (i.e. Montgomery Bus Boycott, Birmingham Civil Rights march, Civil Rights Act of 1964).

Objective: At the beginning of the lesson, there will be quotes written on the board by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. For example, “You are as good as anyone” & “Everyone can be great”. Then we will read the book by Rappaport. After reading Rappaport’s book students will be asked to partner up with a classmate and come up with a quote, about a modern civil rights problem. After 10 minutes they will be asked to share their quotes with the class. We will then discuss the weeks’ lessons on “Music matters” and the contributions of Dr. King and the purpose of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Lastly we will review the weeks lessons and check for retention.

Materials needed: The book by Coretta Scott King’s, called, *The Words of Martin Luther King, Jr.* The book by Doreen Rappaport and illustrated by Bryan Collier, called, *Martin’s Big Words, The life of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.* The photobiography called, *King*, by Charles Johnson and Bob Adelman. Paper and pencil. Dry erase marker and board.

