



Say It Loud! A Celebration Of Black Music In America

VH1 Music Studio
Cable in the Classroom

Lessons for High School Music and Social Studies Classes

Episode 3: Can I Get A Witness

Lesson 1 of 3
Spirituality In Music

Objective

- Students will identify many genres of music that influenced gospel
- Students will identify Black music as a reflection of the culture
- Students will identify various musical characteristics of gospel
- Students will identify many examples of Black music
- Students will identify many historically influential Black music artists

National Standards for Music Education

1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music
2. Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments
3. Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines
6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture

Required Materials

- VHS VCR player
- Television
- CD player

- Paper and pencil
- Videotape of Say It Loud! A Celebration Of Black Music In America, Episode 3: Can I Get A Witness

Recommended Materials

- Recording of Smithsonian/Folkways examples from Rhythms of Life, Songs of Wisdom, Akan music from Ghana, West Africa
- Recordings of C.L. Franklin sermon, “Prodigal Son”, UNI/CHESS RECORDS

Reverend C.L. Franklin : Prodigal Son

- CD recording of The Freedom Singers’ “This Little Light of Mine”, from Gospel At Newport-Newport Folk Festival, VANGUARD
- CD recording of Ray Charles’ “This Little Girl of Mine” from Ray Charles: Best Of The Atlantic Years, WEA/RHINO
- CD recording of Curtis Mayfield and the Impressions “Amen” from The Impressions: Keep On Pushing/People Get Ready, KENT (UK)
- CD recordings of Aretha Franklin’s “Amazing Grace,” from Aretha Franklin: Amazing Grace, WEA/ATLANTIC
- CD recording of Al Green’s “Take Me To The River” from Al Green : Anthology
- CD recording of Marvin Gaye’s “Can I Get A Witness” from Marvin Gaye : Early Classics, GERg
- CD recording of Lauryn Hill’s “Forgive Them Father” from The Miseducation of Lauryn Hill, Sony/Columbia
- CD recording of Curtis Mayfield and the Impressions “Amen” from The Impressions: Keep On Pushing/People Get Ready, KENT (UK)
- Sheet music for “Amazing Grace,” “Precious Lord, Take My Hand,” “This Little Light of Mine,” “This Little Girl of Mine,” “You Send Me”

Procedures

1. Play a selection of traditional music from Rhythms of Life, Songs of Wisdom, Akan music from Ghana, West Africa as students enter the classroom and get settled. Tell students that the music is from Ghana, West Africa. You may refer to the following information about the music:
According to Roger Vetter of the University of Cape Coast, Ghana, the sound of this music is associated with political, social and religious institutions. These ensembles communicate ritual and ceremonial messages via “call and response” format: a single person initiates a phrase and a group answers.
2. Ask students to name different places they hear music. Accept reasonable answers but focus on responses such as “temple,” “church,” “wedding,” and “funeral.”
3. Explain that music is often used to convey “spiritual” messages for purposes of meditation, prayer and worship.
4. Write the word “spiritual” on the chalkboard. Ask the students to give words that they associate with “spirituality.” (Accept words like “religious,” “church,” “prayer,” “God,” “holy,” “heaven,” “hell,” etc.)

5. Tell students to take notes about the way that spirituality is expressed in music as well as noting the artists and music styles mentioned in the videotape. Students should also describe the various kinds of music performed in the video. Explain that an interactive discussion will occur following the presentation.
6. Announce to students that they are going to view the videotape *Say It Loud! A Celebration Of Black Music In America, Episode 3: Can I Get A Witness*.
7. Play program.
8. Ask students to name artists who were featured in the program. (Accept Prince, Whitney Houston, Toni Braxton, Janet Jackson, B.B. King, R. Kelly, Lou Rawls, Gladys Knight, Sam Cooke, Bobby Womack, D'Angelo, Lauryn Hill, Jerry Butler, Ray Charles, Curtis Mayfield, Aretha Franklin, Marvin Gaye, Al Green, Barry White, Stevie Wonder, Kirk Franklin, M.C. Hammer, Quincy Jones, Snoop Doggy Dog, Dr. Dre, and others.)
9. Discuss the styles of music heard in the program. Introduce the word "genre" to the students. Explain that a "genre" a category of artistic, musical, or literary composition characterized by a particular style, form, or content. Ask students to name specific genres mentioned in the video. (Accept gospel, blues, rhythm & blues, soul, pop, hip-hop, Motown and others.) During the discussion, play CD excerpts from selected examples, if possible.
10. Discuss the titles of some of the music heard in the program. (Accept "You Send Me," "This Little Light of Mine," "Amazing Grace," etc.) Encourage additional examples, as appropriate. Explain that many of these songs are recognized and sung worldwide.
11. Explain that gospel music is sacred and is usually performed with sincerity, dignity, and passion with vocal improvisation. (Play CD excerpt of gospel performance if possible).

EXTENSION

Encourage a volunteer impromptu acapella performance by a soloist or small group. Initiate handclap accompaniment on beats two and four. If possible, encourage an improvised call and response on the spiritual "Amen" version by The Impressions featuring Curtis Mayfield. (Play CD excerpt, if available.) For additional instruction, refer to http://www.vh1musicstudio.com/supplies/specials/special_jazz-1.html: The White House Millennium Evening: Jazz, An Expression of Democracy, Lessons for Music and Social Studies Classes, Middle School and High School, Lesson 1 of 4.

This lesson was developed and written by Dee Spencer, professor of music at San Francisco State University and Willie Hill, president-elect of MENC: The National Association for Music Education and director of the University Fine Arts Center at University of Massachusetts-Amherst.



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