

WS12 MIDDLE SCHOOL Lesson Plan

April Ballard, M.Ed, BS



Title: Songs of Freedom

SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK

Subject: Music, Language Arts, Art, History

Length of Lesson: Three Class Periods (May vary depending on class times)

Grade Level: 7th & 8th Grade

This episode of WoodSongs Old-Time Radio Hour features **Sweet Honey In the Rock**.

Sweet Honey in the Rock used to be called The Freedom Singers. Sweet Honey in the Rock were a very active part of the civil rights movement with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. They continue to be an active voice for equal rights. Over the years, 24 different women have graced the Sweet Honey in the Rock stage. Each member has brought a different story; their own story. Each member has looked to the future with hopes and goals for equality and freedom. Within this lesson plan design, we will explore the civil rights movement. We will also explore the power of the music and words of Sweet Honey In the Rock. Sweet Honey in the Rock write and sing about subjects that truly matter for the greater good of humanity. Their music seeks social justice. It was and is a movement. Their music moved people into embracing equality. This lesson has a particular emphasis on the ways in which music brings us together. The issues of segregation during the 1960's are discussed and the ways in it influenced the music.

A founding member of Sweet Honey In the Rock is Louise Robinson. The name of the band, "Sweet Honey in the Rock" is inspired by strength in spirit. Meaning, they ladies in this band are strong women. They are rocks. If you break open that rock, there is sweet honey inside. The message and goal of their music is to inspire people to embrace justice and equality. One of the goals of this lesson is for students to realize that the music of Sweet Honey in the Rock, just as the music of many other artists such as Bob Dylan, U2, and Joan Baez, gets people to listen. With this recognition, students will also be encouraged to realize that they may also do the same. Students are encouraged through the discussion and activities within this lesson, to create their own music/art to inspire change and encourage a sense of community. This episode begins with the artists expressing that they believe that as artists, they have a responsibility to the world and to themselves to share the message and help promote change and inspire people to embrace justice and equality.

Introduction: The words to one of the songs performed, "We who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes" will be reflected upon as an opening journal prompt. It is suggested that the words are written on the board after students complete this episode of WoodSongs Old Time Radio Hour. In addition, as an opening activity, students are encouraged to reflect upon and write about the performance in which students from SCAPA perform with the artists. The words to this song include, "We shall overcome; we'll walk hand in hand; we'll walk hand in hand someday. Deep in my heart, I do believe we shall overcome someday."

Students are encouraged to think about their role in encouraging change and relaying important messages through their own music. Questions to prompt discussion may include: "What do you want to work toward in your life?", "What inspires you?", "Who inspires you?", "What does freedom mean to you?", "What do you do and what can you do in the future to reach this?"
Youth keep the legacy of music and art going and strong.

Description of Lesson/Activities: .

Activity 1: Sweet Honey in the Rock perform the Marvin Gaye song, “Mercy, Mercy Me” within this episode of WoodSongs. Students will brainstorm creating their own version of a freedom song. Meaning, have students first reflect on a song that they consider to inspire freedom. The students will select a song and then brainstorm creating different versions of the song. Students are encouraged to think of many genres of music and music from various cultures. How will they make it their own? Encourage students to include various instruments and also explore increasing and decreasing the tempo of the song and how this may relay the message in a different way. Students will also explore various ways to perform. Within this episode, Shirley Childress performs using sign language. She is singing with her hands and her heart. This will encourage students to think about the various ways to communicate and deliver messages.

Activity 2: Students will begin to design their song more in detail including instrument sounds. Students are encouraged to think of many genres of music and music from other cultures. Students will then write a reflective piece on why they feel their chosen song would be considered a freedom song.

Activity 3: Students will research segregation during the 1960’s. Students will be asked to write a two page informational paper with at least two reliable sources. Students will learn about Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and all that he did to pave the way for equality.

Activity 4: Students will research musical artists and the ways that their music inspires freedom and equality; how is their music a social justice movement? Students will research the following artists to learn more about their music and message: Sweet Honey in the Rock (featured artist on this episode of WoodSongs), Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, and U2. Students will also select an artist in which they research and find to be an artist of freedom. Students will be asked to also think about how music from artists such as Sweet Honey, Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, and U2 move beyond this noise and really reach people. Who are freedom singers in today’s music? Students will listen to the songs as well. Some song suggestions may include the following: “Blowing in the Wind” by Joan Baez, Bob Dylan’s, “The Times They Are- a-Changin”, “Maggie’s Farm”, (and many other Bob Dylan songs). Students are encouraged to take up to a week on this lesson, as there is a very important message and much to listen to and learn that will encourage them to create change and social justice movements of their own. Students will write their reflections as journal entries and also cite any sources in which they find information as well.

Connection to English/Language Arts Standards:

- > Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes (informational text and creative writing)
- > Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information)
- > Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text (music in this lesson)
- > Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text (when researching information text)
- > Formulate inferences from textual material
- > Cite resources that support analysis of a text
- > Identify accurate, credible sources
- > Write an informative/explanatory text to: examine a topic, convey ideas, concepts and information through: text selection, organization and analysis of relevant content (when researching segregation, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, equality movements, and music genres)

Connection to Arts & Humanities Standards:

- > Communicate a unifying theme or point of view through the production of works in the arts
- > Analyze musical forms
- > Describe how the elements of music and expressive qualities relate to the structure of the pieces

- > Compare and explain purposes for which music is created to fulfill (ceremonial, recreational, artistic expression)
- > Students make sense of ideas and communicate ideas with music

Connection to Language Arts Standards:

- Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text (music in this lesson)
- Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in a different context, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening

Connections to Music Standards:

- > Analyze musical forms
- > Identify and compare various styles of music
- > Describe and compare the characteristics and purposes of works of art representing various cultures, historical periods, artists, and/or style
- > The arts fulfill a variety of purposes in society (e.g., to present issues and ideas, to entertain, to teach or persuade, to design, plan and beautify)
- > The arts have value and significance for daily life. They provide personal fulfillment, whether in career settings, avocational pursuits, or leisure
- > Students make sense of ideas and communicate ideas with music
- > Compare and explain purposes for which music is created to fulfill (ceremonial, recreational, artistic expression)
- > the arts are powerful tools for understanding human experiences both past and present
- > the arts help us understand others' (often very different) ways of thinking, working, and expressing ourselves
- > the arts play a major role in the creation and defining of cultures and building civilizations

Vocabulary/Terms Within Lesson: Segregation, Equality, Community, Freedom

Students are encouraged to research these words and also include their own meaning for each of the terms. This could be used as a journal activity to introduce the lesson as well.

Materials/Media Needed:

- > Access to computer/IPad to explore informational resources

Rubric and Guidelines:

- Demonstrates an understanding of artistic and musical expression as it relates to encouraging community and togetherness
- Demonstrates an understanding of the information presented within the episode, and understands how music relays this message.
- Demonstrates an understanding of how their projects will express important points through art and musical expression
- Understanding is clear of how music expresses important points, as demonstrated by the WoodSongs Old-Time Radio Hour
- Students understand difference in informational text versus their project design
- Stays on Task and works collaboratively while designing