

CMP Analysis/Planning Form

Titles: "Get on Board," "Wade in the Water," "Swing Low"

Composer: African American Spirituals

Publisher: Maxwell Macmillan International Publishing Group, Oxford University Press

Copyright Year: 1991, 2002

Voicing: Unison, 2 part with accompaniment

I. Analysis

Broad Description/Type: African American Spirituals

Background Information: History of Spirituals, also known as slave songs

Slavery-when a person (called a master) has complete control over another person (called a slave)

Spiritual-religious folk songs of African American origin

American Civil War-War between the Northern and Southern States in America. Northern states wanted to free slaves; Southern states wanted to keep slaves.

Abolition-movement to free slaves

Underground Railroad-network of people and places that helped runaway slaves escape to freedom

In Africa, many people did not have a written language and they used songs as a way to talk about things that were currently happening. These songs also preserved the stories of the past, promote religion, and comment on things happening in everyday life. The same is true about the role of these songs for the slaves who reached America. The music is a record of their thoughts and actions in the world of slavery. These songs are a hidden record of their thoughts, emotions, and desires.

During the time of the American Civil War there were approximately 4 million enslaved Africans who lived in the southern region of the United States of America. The vast majority worked as plantation slaves in the production of cotton, sugar, tobacco, and rice. Many of these slaves lived a terrible life, where they suffered severe punishment if they did not obey their masters, so they tried to run away. Beginning in the 1850s, southern slaveholders referred to the escape routes used by runaways as part of a system of well-traveled trails and safe houses along the way to freedom. Because the railroad captured the imagination of Americans as the technological wonder of the age, these loosely organized and haphazard escape routes and the support system runaways used became known as the Underground Railroad.

The Underground Railroad operated principally in the Upper South and the North, and most of the fugitives who made it to the North escaped on their own. Once outside of the South, however, hundreds--perhaps even thousands--of individuals assisted the runaways to avoid capture and to make it to Canada. African Americans mostly managed, operated, and principally funded this network, although whites did participate in small numbers. Once the escaped blacks reached the North, they found safe houses and assistance in evading any pursuing slave catchers.

Perhaps, the most famous underground agent was Harriet Ross Tubman. She escaped slavery in 1849 from Maryland, running away upon learning that her master planned to sell her out of State. For the next decade, Tubman returned 19 times to the South, rescuing nearly 300

enslaved men, women, and children. She often dressed as a feeble old woman or as an impoverished and mentally demented man. A fearless fighter, Tubman helped the white abolitionist John Brown plan his raid on Harpers Ferry, Virginia. However, a last minute illness prevented her from actually participating in the raid. Faced with a \$40,000 bounty for her capture, Tubman defied all odds repeatedly, making her last trip south in 1860.

Most slaves could not read or write; in fact, it was against the law to teach slaves to read or write. The spirituals provided a means of verbal, coded communication understood only by those in the Underground Railroad. Outsiders generally interpreted the spirituals on a literal level, while slaves knew the meaning of the messages hidden within the words and phrases. Through the words, the refrains, the “call and response” method of singing, and the rhythmic sounds produced by dancing feet, slaves could decipher these hidden meanings.

The coming of the railroad train opened up a faster means of transportation for fleeing slaves, and created a completely new spiritual vocabulary. The word “train” replaced the word “chariot” and other phrases relevant to rail transportation.

3 quality internet resources for composer information:

1. <http://www.slaveryinamerica.org/home.htm>
2. <http://www.osblackhistory.com/index.php>
3. (book) Negro Slave Songs in the United States, Miles Mark Fisher, Cornell University Press, 1953
<http://ctl.du.edu/spirituals/Freedom/civil.cfm> (Civil Rights Movement Songs)

Information on Composition:

1. Get On Board—Slaves sang the spiritual, Get on Board, to alert other slaves that a group was preparing to escape and travel north to freedom.

2. Wade in the Water— Harriet Tubman sang this spiritual as a warning to runaway slaves. To escaping slaves, the song told them to abandon the path and move into the water.

3. Swing Low— This hymn is a favorite of Harriet Tubman, the “Moses of her people”. Tubman loved spirituals, and even wrote her own. As part of the Underground Railroad, she was a Conductor, nurse, spy and scout. When guiding slaves, Tubman used spirituals as signals to hiding slaves to indicate whether it was safe to come out of hiding and continue on the journey.

Recordings available:

- **Spirituals [sound recording]**, Elmer Iseler Singers.
- **Deep river [sound recording]: songs and spirituals**, Burleigh, H. T. (Harry Thacker), 1866-1949.
- **Shall we gather [sound recording]: American hymns and spirituals**, William Appling Singers & Orchestra.

Elements of Music:

Form: Verse + Refrain + Chorus, Call + Response

Rhythm and Meter: Use of sixteenth + dotted eighth, dotted quarter note. 2/4 and 4/4 with a fast, energetic feel and one slow with a steady swing.

Melody: G Major, Ab Major, D minor. Melodies consist of many repeated phrases, on different sets of pitches. Because they are mostly repetitive they are easy to learn.

Harmony: Will not be singing harmony, although it is available in some songs. In all songs harmony can revolve around I IV V making it ideal to use Orff instruments and writing simple ostinato patterns.

Texture: Melody with accompaniment.

Expression: “Gospel Train”- fast, light, energetic feel; “Wade in the Water”-little slower with feeling; “Swing Low”-slow with a steady swing.

Additional Considerations:

These songs create a lot of room for dynamic contrast, utilizing the push and pull of phrases.

Heart:

Understanding the history of Spirituals brings more depth to the performance of them. I hope that students will be excited to uncover the hidden messages embedded in the lyrics. Through this, students will have a better understanding of the roles that spiritual songs played.

Introducing the Lesson:

As students are walking in play slideshow with lights dim. Have students quietly sit in their places as they listen to “Swing Low” and watch pictures. When over ask students about what they saw and heard.

What did you notice in the pictures?

What did you notice in the music?

What was the music about? What kind of song was that?

**It is an option to ask questions before showing slide show. Also an option to have students put together their own slide show and present it at the concert while they sing.”

II. Primary Skill Outcomes:

- a. Students will develop the ability to perform dotted quarter notes with rhythmic accuracy and identify them in other songs.
- b. Students will become familiar with the concept of the musical “tie” and be able to identify it in other songs.
- c. Students will sing expressively with appropriate interpretation.

III. Knowledge Outcomes:

- a. Students will recognize the shape of melodic phrases and be able to compare and contrast phrases.
- b. Students will recognize the form of music, differentiating between refrain, solo, verse, chorus.
- c. Students will discover how music was used in the Underground Railroad by learning about the possible hidden and literal meanings in different spirituals.

IV. Affective Outcomes:

- a. Students will relate Slave Spirituals to “modern day.” What would someone write a spiritual about today? Explore possibilities and have students write a verse for a modern day spiritual.
- b. Students will learn how Slave Spirituals relate to the Civil Rights Movement (songs were changed/adapted to fit a new need).

V. Selection:

I chose these songs to demonstrate many of the qualities and characteristics of African American spirituals. These songs were about more than singing while working—they were about preserving history and telling a story. These songs let students see the importance of music in different cultures. The relatively easy melodies make these songs accessible to all children. Within each song is a plethora of musical concepts to teach.

Teaching Plan 1 (Get on Board)

Primary Skill Outcome: 1) Students will develop the ability to perform dotted quarter notes with rhythmic accuracy and identify them in other songs. 2) Students will sing expressively with appropriate interpretation. 3) Students will become familiar with the concept of the musical “tie” and be able to identify it in other songs.

Strategies:

- During warm-ups, have students repeat (clap) rhythms that include dotted quarter notes (use sections from song)
- During warm-ups, have students repeat (sing) patterns that include dotted quarter notes.
- Write several rhythmic patterns on board that include dotted quarter notes. Discuss counting and write correct counting under notes. Give students 2-3 minutes to figure out the other rhythms. Call on several students to perform rhythms for class. Then, perform all rhythms together. It may be necessary to count aloud while clapping.
- Divide class into partners. Each pair gets an Orff instrument. Distribute ostinato patterns on note cards, give students time to practice, and then perform. The partner who is not playing is singing. Then students can switch parts and exchange for a new note card (color-coded).

Knowledge Outcome: 1) Students will discover how music was used in the Underground Railroad by learning about the possible hidden and literal meanings in different spirituals.

Strategies:

- Get on Board, to alert other slaves that a group was preparing to escape and travel north to freedom. “Gospel Train” was code for the Underground Railroad. When slaves heard this song they knew either that a conductor was among them, or that fleeing slaves were close by, along with an opportunity to escape. Plantation owners would be unaware their slaves were planning to escape; slave songs were part of the day’s routine. A plantation owner would simply hear the religious and Biblical references and assume the slaves were singing for spiritual reasons. What else is this song saying?

Affective Outcomes: 1) Students will relate Slave Spirituals to “modern day.” What would someone write a spiritual about today? Explore possibilities and have students write a verse for a modern day spiritual. 2) Students will learn how Slave Spirituals relate to the Civil Rights Movement (songs were changed/adapted to fit a new need).

Assessment:

- Have students circle instances of dotted quarter notes in their music.
- Have students write new verses for a modern day spiritual.
- Listen to examples of how spirituals changed during the Civil Rights Movement.

Get on Board, Little Children

Traditional

A musical score for four voices (Soprano 1, Soprano 2, Alto, Bass) in common time, key of C major. The vocal parts are arranged in two staves each. The lyrics "Get on board little children, get on board little" are repeated. The piano accompaniment consists of chords in the right hand and bass notes in the left hand.

1
Get on board little children, get on board little

2

1
Soprano 1: $\text{F} \cdot \text{G} \cdot \text{A} \cdot \text{B} \cdot \text{C} \cdot \text{D}$
Soprano 2: $\text{E} \cdot \text{F} \cdot \text{G} \cdot \text{A} \cdot \text{B} \cdot \text{C}$
Alto: $\text{D} \cdot \text{E} \cdot \text{F} \cdot \text{G} \cdot \text{A} \cdot \text{B}$
Bass: $\text{C} \cdot \text{D} \cdot \text{E} \cdot \text{F} \cdot \text{G} \cdot \text{A}$

2
Soprano 1: $\text{F} \cdot \text{G} \cdot \text{A} \cdot \text{B} \cdot \text{C} \cdot \text{D}$
Soprano 2: $\text{E} \cdot \text{F} \cdot \text{G} \cdot \text{A} \cdot \text{B} \cdot \text{C}$
Alto: $\text{D} \cdot \text{E} \cdot \text{F} \cdot \text{G} \cdot \text{A} \cdot \text{B}$
Bass: $\text{C} \cdot \text{D} \cdot \text{E} \cdot \text{F} \cdot \text{G} \cdot \text{A}$

4

1. to verse 2. Fine

1. to verse 2. Fine

1. to verse 2. Fine

Get on Board, Little Children

2
10

hear the train a - com - ing, - -she's - com - ing - round - the

10

13

D.S. al Fine

curve. She's loos-en ed all her steam and brakes and strain-ing ev'-ry nerve. Get on

D.S. al Fine

D.S. al Fine

Teaching Plan 2 (Wade in the Water)

Primary Skill Outcomes: 1) Students will develop the ability to perform dotted quarter notes with rhythmic accuracy and identify them in other songs. 2) Students will sing expressively with appropriate interpretation.

Strategies:

- During warm-ups, have students repeat (clap) rhythms that include dotted quarter notes (use sections from song)
- During warm-ups, have students repeat (sing) patterns that include dotted quarter notes.
- Write several rhythmic patterns on board that include dotted quarter notes. Discuss counting and write correct counting under notes. Give students 2-3 minutes to figure out the other rhythms. Call on several students to perform rhythms for class. Then, perform all rhythms together. It may be necessary to count aloud while clapping.
- Perform “Wade in the Water” with half the class singing a vocal ostinato (wa-ter on I-V low pattern using dotted quarter—eighth (tied to half))
- Introduce concept of musical tie—when 2 identical notes are ‘strung together’ by a curvy line in the music. This means that we do not repeat the note, but sing it as one note for the combined musical value of the individual notes. Draw several examples on the board. Where there is a ‘tied’ note, draw a bow over it.
- Pass out music for “Wade in the Water.” Have students draw bows over all the ‘tied’ notes (second note that is not repeated). Make sure students can differentiate between a tie and a slur. Have students compare their answers with a neighbor.

Knowledge Outcomes: 1) Students will recognize the form of music, differentiating between refrain, solo, verse. 2) Students will discover how music was used in the Underground Railroad by learning about the possible hidden and literal meanings in different spirituals.

Strategies:

- Discuss how the form of this song is different than “Get on Board.” Identify section for solo singer and section for chorus. I sing solo, students sing chorus. Everyone sing refrain.
- Display words for each verse where students can see. After students have learned the notes, perform song in following way: Students move around room on beat during refrain and freeze during verse.
- How might this song be a warning to runaway slaves? What is this song telling slaves to do? Why would they wade in the water? Harriet Tubman sang this spiritual as a warning to runaway slaves. To escaping slaves, the song told them to abandon the path and move into the water. By travelling along the water’s edge or across a body of water, the slaves would throw chasing dogs and their keepers off the scent.

Affective Outcomes: 1) Students will relate Slave Spirituals to “modern day.” What would someone write a spiritual about today? Explore possibilities and have students write a verse for a modern day spiritual. 2) Students will learn how Slave Spirituals relate to the Civil Rights Movement (songs were changed/adapted to fit a new need).

Assessment:

- Ask students to compose their own 4 bar rhythm (in 4/4) using quarter, dotted quarter, and eighth notes. Have them get with a partner, perform their composition, and teach it to their partner. Collect compositions.
 - Pass out excerpts from several other songs of music and ask students to identify and write in counting for passages with dotted quarter notes.
 - Pass out excerpts from several other songs of music and ask students to identify ties. For ‘easier’ passages, they may be able to write in counting.
 - Play “Wade in the Water” recording. Ask students to name differences (especially in pronunciation) in that performance.
 - Have students write new verses for a modern day spiritual.
 - Listen to examples of how spirituals changed during the Civil Rights Movement.

Teaching Plan 3 (Swing Low Sweet Chariot)

Primary Skill Outcomes: 1) Students will develop the ability to perform dotted quarter notes with rhythmic accuracy and identify them in other songs. 2) Students will sing expressively with appropriate interpretation. 3) Students will recognize the shape of melodic phrases and be able to compare and contrast phrases.

Strategies:

- During warm-ups, have students repeat (clap) rhythms that include dotted quarter notes (use sections from song)
- During warm-ups, have students repeat (sing) patterns that include dotted quarter notes.
- Write several rhythmic patterns on board that include dotted quarter notes. Discuss counting and write correct counting under notes. Give students 2-3 minutes to figure out the other rhythms. Call on several students to perform rhythms for class. Then, perform all rhythms together. It may be necessary to count aloud while clapping.
- Draw hairpin dynamic markings in “Get on board”. Students should recognize that these are a decrescendo and a crescendo. Have students practice demonstrating this dynamic over the first bar of music. How does this marking imitate what they are singing? Does it mirror the direction of the notes?
- Draw 4 shapes on board (U, horseshoe, up curve, down curve). Play first phrase of melody and ask students which shape describes what they are hearing. Play second phrase of melody and ask students which shape describes what they are hearing. Compare and contrast the 2 shapes.

Knowledge Outcomes: 1) Students will recognize the form of music, differentiating between refrain, solo, verse. 2) Students will discover how music was used in the Underground Railroad by learning about the possible hidden and literal meanings in different spirituals.

Strategies:

- Ask students to identify the form of the song. What comes after each verse? Refrain. This particular song is sung in a call-and-response format. What does that mean? Leader sings first phrase, everyone else sings second phrase (usually repeated words). Have students look at their music and ask them to identify what would be the leader’s part. What would everyone else sing?
- This may be a familiar song, but it is still necessary to learn notes and words. Have students practice in call-and-response format, girls and boys taking turns being the leader.
- Do you think this song was used as a warning to stay hidden or come out of hiding? What from the song makes you say that? The chariot referred to in “Swing Low Sweet Chariot” and other spirituals referred to the carriages and wagons used to transport fleeing slaves in the early 19th century.

Affective Outcomes: 1) Students will relate Slave Spirituals to “modern day.” What would someone write a spiritual about today? Explore possibilities and have students write a verse for a modern day spiritual. 2) Students will learn how Slave Spirituals relate to the Civil Rights Movement (songs were changed/adapted to fit a new need).

Assessment:

- Have students circle instances of dotted quarter notes in their music.
- Give students a listening test where they have to draw the shape of the phrases they hear and write a 1-2 sentences explanation of what they drew.
- Play recording of “Swing Low” and ask students to compare/contrast our version to what they are hearing.
- Have students write new verses for a modern day spiritual.
- Listen to examples of how spirituals changed during the Civil Rights Movement.

PDF SHEET MUSIC AVAILABLE AT:

<http://www.free-scores.com/download-sheet-music.php?pdf=8144>

Swing Low, Sweet Chariot

Spiritual
Arranged William Wallace
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Musical score for the first system of "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot". The score consists of two staves: Treble and Bass. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The time signature is common time (4/4). The music begins with a dotted half note followed by a quarter note, then a dotted half note followed by a eighth note, a sixteenth note, and a eighth note. The bass staff follows a similar pattern with quarter notes and eighth notes.

Musical score for the second system of "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot". The score consists of two staves: Treble and Bass. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The time signature changes to common time (4/4). The music features eighth-note patterns in both staves, with the bass staff showing a sequence of eighth-note chords.

Musical score for the third system of "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot". The score consists of two staves: Treble and Bass. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The time signature changes to common time (4/4). The music continues with eighth-note patterns, with the bass staff showing a sequence of eighth-note chords.

Musical score for the fourth system of "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot". The score consists of two staves: Treble and Bass. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The time signature changes to common time (4/4). The music concludes with eighth-note patterns, with the bass staff showing a sequence of eighth-note chords.



