

Belief in Music
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Grade Level: 5/6 (adjustable for 7/8)

Essential Question: How are belief systems represented and reproduced through music?

Description of Unit: This unit guides students through an exploration of how belief and value systems are represented and reproduced through music. Students will reflect on the following:

- Beliefs can motivate music making
- Beliefs are an important aspect of our identity
- Music can be used to make our own beliefs known and to come to understand another person's beliefs

Each lesson can be divided as needed, spanning across multiple classes.

LESSON 1	
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students will reflect on the purpose of belief in music ▪ Students will identify beliefs
Assessment Strategies	Students will evaluate music and identify beliefs within the music.
Procedures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask question: What is belief? As a class design a mind-map as an exploration of this question. 2. Listen to pieces of music that reflect belief. (See additional resources for song list) 3. For each piece, discuss the following: What beliefs are evident in the music? How is it made evident? 4. Individual assignment: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Make a list of music (5 pieces) that you enjoy b. For each piece, identify the beliefs that are reflected by the music. Students will likely need to research lyrics for this step. c. This assignment can be completed as a written journal or a Flipgrid video reflection.

LESSON 2	
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students will practice dialogue about the role of belief in music ▪ Students will interview someone about the significance of music in their life
Assessment Strategies	Students will develop a report that synthesizes the information they gathered about the role of music in people's lives.

Procedures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ask Question: If you wanted to find out what someone thinks about the relationship between belief and music, what kinds of questions would you ask? Together devise 4-5 interview questions. 2. In pairs, students interview one another as a practice. 3. Assignment: Using the question list devised, students interview 1 person that is not in their household via phone or video call (or in person). Write down notes as you interview or, if permission is granted from the person that is interviewed, record the interview. 4. Students report on the interview that presents this person's perspective on the relationship between belief and music (or the role that beliefs play in music). Students may submit videos or written documents. 5. Community project: Students will interview members of the community. They will follow the same assignment procedures as listed above. Information will be gathered and presented in a medium (e.g video, report, poster, etc.) chosen by the student.
Extension	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Connect with mathematics to collect data and research findings. 2. Present community project at a school event.

LESSON 3	
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students will evaluate how musical meaning changes based on context ▪ Students will practice critical listening skills
Assessment Strategies	Students demonstrate critical listening skills by reflecting on three contrasting performances of the same piece.
Procedures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduce "Go Down Moses." 2. Listen to various recordings of this piece. After each listening, discuss the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. How do you understand the music? b. How does the performance convey meaning? c. How do you describe the mood in the music? Why? <p>Possible listening selections:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> d. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ohpEFrchsN0 (The Christian Children's Choir) e. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8JNCS27rtQ8 (Louis Armstrong) f. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ZRtvKPB_r8 (CBS – Gospel for Teens) g. (opt.) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=70WEjshrrDg (The Moses Hogan Singers) 3. As a class, read the text of the song. (Text: https://herb.ashp.cuny.edu/exhibits/show/slavecommunities/item/852)

	<p>)</p> <p>4. Discuss:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What is the original context of this text? (Exodus) How does this text relate to the origin of the song? (Resource: https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-go-down-moses) How does this song portray belief? How did the different performances give meaning to the text? What makes them different?
Extensions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> An artist/composer study on Louis Armstrong, including listening to his performances and studying his musical style. An artist/composer study on Clarence Cameron White, including a discussion of his piece “Levee Dance” which incorporates a quotation of “Go Down Moses.” Connect to social studies on Western imperialism and colonialization. Connect to religious studies on the Biblical account of the exodus and its significance in the Christian and Jewish faith.

LESSON 4

Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students will learn to sing “Go Down Moses.” ▪ Students will collaborate to create their own arrangement of this song.
Assessment Strategies	Students will perform their own arrangement of “Go Down Moses.”
Procedures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Teach “Go Down Moses” by rote. Students are put into groups. Each group develops their own arrangement of the song. Suggestions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Use BandLab, Garageband, or other technology Use classroom instruments Develop choreography Consider a dramatic reading of the text This is an informal learning task. Provide guidance as needed for each group. Recordings should be available for students to listen to. Students perform their arrangements either by presenting them live for the class or creating a video or audio recording for the class to enjoy.
Extensions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Present these arrangements in a school performance.

LESSON 5

Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Students will create a poem that reflects their belief. ▪ Students will create a musical composition for their poem.
Assessment Strategies	Students will create a song that is reflective of their own beliefs.
Procedures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Students write a text that reflects their own thinking about beliefs and meaning. 6. Students create music for their text, using technology or instruments. 7. Students collaborate to perform their music.
Extensions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. This can be incorporated into ukulele or guitar playing units. 3. BandLab or Garage band are options for fun collaboration platforms.

Beliefs in Music – Additional Resources

Song List:

1. John Lennon – Imagine
2. Leonard Cohen – You Want it Darker
3. U2 – Grace
4. John Cage – 4’33”
5. Carrie Underwood – Temporary Home
6. Nataanii Means – Warrior*
7. J.S. Bach – Excerpts from St. Matthew Passion
8. Kanye West – Water
9. Matisyahu – I Will Be Light
10. Alicia Keys – Holy War
11. Chance the Rapper – How Great
12. Lifehouse – Disarray
13. Elton John – Believe
14. Lupe Fiasco – Mohammed Walks
15. Lecrae – Deep End
16. DJ Shub – Indomitable (ft. Northern Cree Singers)

*language consideration