

The African American Spiritual

Grade Level: Music (Fifth Grade)
Presented by: Pamela Griffith
Serna Elementary School, San Antonio, TX
Length of Unit: 6 music lessons

I. ABSTRACT

This six- lesson unit is designed to expose the learner to spirituals and to encourage their understanding of the importance of spirituals to the African American community during slave times and the Civil Rights Movement. Students will exhibit prior knowledge through the use of graffiti boards, then will sing, sign, and accompany on instruments many different spirituals. Students will share their interpretations of various spirituals by drawing in Spirituals Art Journals. Students will also improvise a drum accompaniment to a story. Assessment will consist of student participation and an acrostic puzzle based on the concepts contained in this unit.

II. OVERVIEW

- A. Concept Objectives
 - 1. Students will understand that spirituals are a genre of music originated by African Americans, many dating back to the days of slavery.
 - 2. Students will understand that spirituals enjoyed resurgence in popularity during the time of the American Civil Rights Movement.
- B. Content from the *Core Knowledge Sequence*
 - 1. Spirituals (American Musical Traditions)
 - 2. Slave life and rebellions (American History: The Civil War)
 - 3. "Follow the Drinking Gourd" (Songs)
 - 4. "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child" (Songs)
 - 5. "We Shall Overcome" (Songs)
 - 6. "Down By the Riverside" (Songs)
- C. Skills Objectives
 - 1. Play simple rhythm patterns
 - 2. Sing in unison
 - 3. Play simultaneous rhythm patterns
 - 4. Sing accompanied
 - 5. Interpret music through artwork
 - 6. Interpret lyrics of a song through sign language
 - 7. Improvisation

III. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

- A. Teachers:
 - 1. Hirsch, Jr. E. D. (1991). *What Your Fifth Grader Needs to Know*. New York: Dell Publishing. ISBN 0-385-41118-9
 - 2. "What Are Spirituals?" article from Spirituals Project on World Wide Web.
<http://www.spiritualsproject.org/about/whatare.html>
- B. Students:
 - 1. Recognize a steady beat
 - 2. Understand simple rhythmic notation
 - 3. Sing accompanied and in unison
 - 4. Exposure to music from various cultures
 - 5. Word meaning

6. Basic understanding of Slavery and Civil Rights (from 2nd grade American History sequence)

IV. RESOURCES

A. Audio

1. "This Little Light of Mine," Silver Burdett Ginn: *The Music Connection*, 1997, CD 5:6-23
2. "Follow the Drinking Gourd," Silver Burdett Ginn: *The Music Connection*, 1997, CD 3:6-26
3. "Great Day," Silver Burdett Ginn: *The Music Connection*, 1997, CD 4:3-18.
4. "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child," Horne, Marilyn: *Beautiful Dreamer*, Decca Records, 1986, MCPS 417 242-2.
5. "Martin Luther King Chant," Silver Burdett Ginn: *The Music Connection*, 1997, CD 4:8-11
6. "We Shall Overcome," Silver Burdett Ginn: *The Music Connection*, 1997, CD 4:8-9
7. "Free at Last," *Music K-8 Magazine*, Plank Road Publishing, Volume 9, Number 3
8. "Woke Up This Morning," Silver Burdett Ginn: *The Music Connection*, 1997, CD 5:10-4
9. "Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen," Silver Burdett Ginn: *The Music Connection*, 1997, CD 5:7-3
10. "Peace Like a River," Silver Burdett Ginn: *The Music Connection*, 1997, CD 3:2-30
11. "All Night, All Day," Silver Burdett Ginn: *The Music Connection*, 1997, CD 3:3-21
12. "One More River," *Music K-8 Magazine*, Plank Road Publishing, Volume 10, Number 3
13. "Down By the Riverside," Silver Burdett Ginn: *The Music Connection*, 1997, CD 5:6-22

B. Books

1. Coleman, Evelyn. *To Be a Drum*. Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman and Co., 1998, ISBN 0-8075-8006-6
2. Livingston, Myra Cohn. *Let Freedom Ring: a ballad of Martin Luther King, Jr.* NY: Holiday House, 1992, ISBN 0-8234-0957-0
3. 5th grade Textbook, Silver Burdett Ginn: *The Music Connection*, 1997, ISBN 0-382-26185-2
4. 4th grade Textbook, Silver Burdett Ginn, *The Music Connection*, 1997, ISBN 0-382-26184-4
5. 5th grade Resource Book, Silver Burdett Ginn: *The Music Connection*, 1997, ISBN 0-382-26525-4

C. Video

1. *Follow the Drinking Gourd*, American School Publishers, 1988, ISBN 0-07-540376-5

D. Magazines

1. *Music K-8 Magazine*, Plank Road Publishing, January/February 1999, Volume 9, Number 3
2. *Music K-8 Magazine*, Plank Road Publishing, January/February 2000, Volume 10, Number 3

V. LESSONS

Lesson One: What are Spirituals?

A. Daily Objectives

1. Concept Objectives
 - a. Students will understand that spirituals enjoyed a resurgence in popularity during the time of the American Civil Rights Movement

- b. Students will show prior knowledge of the terms *spirituals*, *Civil Rights movement*, and *slavery*, then will begin to understand how these terms interconnect.
 - 2. Content Objectives
 - a. spirituals
 - b. Civil Rights movement
 - c. slavery
 - 3. Skill Objectives
 - a. Sing accompanied
 - b. Interpret music through artwork
 - c. Interpret lyrics of a song through sign language
- B. *Materials*
 - 1. 3 Large pieces of butcher paper, each labeled with one of these terms: *slavery*, *Civil Rights movement*, *spirituals*
 - 2. Markers
 - 3. Sign language illustrations from 5th grade SBG Resource book, page 266
 - 4. *Follow the Drinking Gourd* video
 - 5. Spirituals Art Journals (Appendix A and B) 1 per student (need 5 internal pages)
 - 6. Recording of “This Little Light of Mine” (SBG CD 5:6-23)
 - 7. Recording of “Great Day” (SBG CD 4:3-18)
 - 14. “What Are Spirituals?” article from Spirituals Project
<http://www.spiritualsproject.org/about/whatare.html>
 - 8. Pencils/crayons
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
 - 1. spirituals – religious folk songs of black American origin
 - 2. slavery – bondage to a master or household
 - 3. Civil Rights movement – the fight for equal rights for black Americans in the 1960s, mostly through passive resistance, led by Martin Luther King, Jr.
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
 - 1. Divide students into 3 groups.
 - 2. Explain graffiti boards to students. Each group will visit each board and SILENTLY write down whatever they know about the term on the board. If they know nothing about the term they may write a question on the board instead. At a pre-determined signal, each group will move to another board and follow the same procedure until all groups have been to all boards. Stress the importance of SILENCE in this activity.
 - 3. Place boards where they are visible to all students. Discuss the ideas the students have shared, adding in information from the teacher to tie the three terms together and introduce the materials to be covered in the unit, using the “What Are the Spirituals?” article as a guide.
 - 4. Introduce “This Little Light of Mine” and model the sign language movements for the students, encouraging them to join in when comfortable.
 - 5. Sing and sign “This Little Light of Mine”
 - 6. Complete the discussion from the article until completed. (Only mention, “Follow the Drinking Gourd” at this point.)
 - 7. Show video of “Follow the Drinking Gourd”
 - 8. Pass out Spirituals Art Journals (Appendix A and B) and explain that they will listen to several spirituals where they will draw their impressions in their journals. Stress silence here as well, so everyone can hear.
 - 9. Play recording of “Great Day” (SBG CD 4:3-18) several times until students have finished their drawings (as time permits) then collect journals for next time.

E. *Evaluation/Assessment*

1. Teacher evaluation of student participation

Lesson Two: Spirituals during Slave Times

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objectives
 - a. Students will understand that spirituals are a genre of music originated by African Americans, many dating back to the days of slavery.
2. Lesson Content
 - a. Spirituals
 - b. Slave life and rebellion
 - c. "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child"
 - d. "Follow the Drinking Gourd"
3. Skill Objectives
 - a. Play simple rhythm patterns
 - b. Play simultaneous rhythm patterns
 - c. Sing accompanied
 - d. Interpret lyrics of a song through sign language
 - e. Interpret music through artwork

B. *Materials*

1. Spirituals Art Journals
2. Pencils/crayons
3. Recording of "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child"
4. "This Little Light of Mine" sign language illustrations (Resource Book p. 266) and recording SBG CD5: 6-23 (if desired)
5. Barred instruments (Orff) – Bases, Altos, Sopranos, Glockenspiels (Xylophones and Metallophones)
6. Visual of instrument parts and rhythm patterns for "Follow the Drinking Gourd" – my arrangement adapted from Steve Kriske in *As American As Apple Pie* (Appendix C)

C. *Key Vocabulary*

No new vocabulary needed for this lesson

D. *Procedures/Activities*

1. Pass out Art Journals and writing instruments
2. Students draw to show their interpretation of "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child". If using the Marilyn Horne recording, I prepare the children for her operatic sound and let them know that they may have a little trouble understanding the words. We discuss what the mood of this piece would be. How would you feel if you could never see your mother or were a long way from here for a long time? Encourage them to listen for ways that the music conveys those feelings.
3. After the drawing is completed, we discuss again the mood of the piece and the students offer their ideas of how the music showed sadness. We also discuss how slave families were often separated and being without loved ones was a very real event in many slaves' lives.
4. Sing and sign "This Little Light of Mine" and discuss how singing that song lightens our mood after that sad song, and probably also helped the slaves to feel better as well.
5. Introduce the rhythm patterns for "Follow the Drinking Gourd" (Appendix C) and have all of the students practice each one. Practice reading note values, counting on numbers, and playing with body percussion. (EX: Bass line patted on knees two handed, Soprano/Alto line patted on knees with alternating hands, Glockenspiel line snapped. I try to get as close an approximation as possible to the movement they will use on the instrument for easier transition.

6. Once all patterns are relatively successful, move students to instruments and practice each part separately, then put the parts together and add the singing. I usually sing the verse for the children while they continue to play, they sing and play on the chorus.
 7. As time permits, rotate the students around so they can play all of the parts on the instruments. Perform for their teacher!
- E. *Evaluation/Assessment*
1. Teacher observation of student participation

Lesson Three: Spirituals during the Civil Rights Movement

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objectives
 - a. Students will understand that spirituals enjoyed resurgence in popularity during the time of the American Civil Rights Movement.
2. Lesson Content
 - a. Martin Luther King, Jr.
 - b. Civil Right Movement
 - c. "We Shall Overcome"
3. Skill Objectives
 - a. Play simple rhythm patterns
 - b. Sing in unison
 - c. Sing accompanied
 - d. Play simultaneous rhythm patterns
 - e. Interpret music through artwork

B. *Materials*

1. Recording of Martin Luther King chant (SBG CD4: 8-11, textbook page 198)
2. *Let Freedom Ring*
3. Recording of "Free at Last" (Music K-8 magazine, Jan/Feb '99)
4. Song sheets (class set) of "Free at Last"
5. Unpitched percussion instruments: tambourines, cowbells, claves, wood blocks
6. Recording of "Woke Up This Morning" (SBG CD5: 10-4, textbook page 231)
7. Art journals
8. Pencils/crayons
9. Recording of "Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen" (SBG CD5: 7-3)

C. *Key Vocabulary*

1. Ostinato – a rhythm or melody pattern that repeats

D. *Procedures/Activities*

1. Introduce Martin Luther King chant (4th grade text, page 198) by rote
2. Read book *Let Freedom Ring*, about Martin Luther King, plugging in "We Shall Overcome" where it occurs in story (SBG CD4: 8-9)
3. Have students sing "Free at Last" (Music K-8), passing out song sheets for them to read lyrics
4. Perform Martin Luther King chant, accompanying with unpitched percussion instruments on *Brotherhood* ostinato using tambourines, cowbells, claves, and woodblocks
5. Sing another song from freedom march, "Woke Up This Morning" (SBG CD5: 10-4, page 231 in 5th grade text)
6. Journal entry: "Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen" (SBG CD5: 7-3)

E. *Evaluation/Assessment*

1. Teacher observation of student participation

Lesson Four: “All Night, All Day”

A. Daily Objectives

1. Concept Objectives
 - a. Students will understand that spirituals are a genre of music originated by African Americans, many dating back to the days of slavery.
 - b. Students will understand that spirituals enjoyed resurgence in popularity during the time of the American Civil Rights Movement.
2. Lesson Content
 - a. Spiritual
 - b. Martin Luther King
3. Skill Objectives
 - a. Play simple rhythm patterns
 - b. Sing in unison
 - c. Play simultaneous rhythm patterns
 - d. Sing accompanied
 - e. Interpret music through artwork

B. Materials

1. Art Journals
2. Pencils/crayons
3. Recording of “Peace Like a River” (SBG CD3: 2-30)
4. Recording of Martin Luther King chant (SBG CD4: 8-11)
5. Recording of “All Night, All Day” (SBG CD3: 3-21)
6. Barred instruments (Orff): Glockenspiels, Sopranos, Altos, Basses (Xylophones and Metallophones)
7. Cymbals
8. Visual of instrument parts and rhythm patterns for “All Night, All Day” – my arrangement adapted from 3rd grade SBG Teacher Resource book (Appendix D)

C. Key Vocabulary

1. Lullaby – a song sung to lull a person to sleep

D. Procedures/Activities

1. Pass out Art Journals and writing instruments
2. Students draw to show their interpretation of “Peace Like a River”
3. Sing Martin Luther King chant as a warm up for the new song in the next step
4. Sing “All Night, All Day” with recording (SBG CD3: 3-21) and discuss term *lullaby*. Also discuss how this song is a prayer.
5. Introduce the rhythm patterns for “All Night, All Day” (Appendix D) and have all of the students practice each one. Practice reading note values, counting on numbers, and playing with body percussion. (EX: Bass/Alto line patted on alternating knees, Soprano/Glockenspiel line patted on both knees together, Cymbal line snapped. I try to get as close an approximation as possible to the movement they will use on the instrument for easier transition.
6. Once all patterns are relatively successful, move students to instruments and practice each part separately, then put the parts together and add the singing.
7. As time permits, rotate the students around so they can play all of the parts on the instruments. Perform for their teacher!

E. Evaluation/Assessment

1. Teacher observation of student participation

Lesson Five: The Spirituals Art Journal

A. Daily Objectives

1. Concept Objectives

- a. Students will understand that spirituals are a genre of music originated by African Americans, many dating back to the days of slavery.
 - b. Students will understand that spirituals enjoyed resurgence in popularity during the time of the American Civil Rights Movement.
2. Lesson Content
 - a. Spirituals
 - b. "Down By the Riverside"
 - c. "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child"
 3. Skill Objectives
 - a. Sing in unison
 - b. Sing accompanied
 - c. Interpret music through artwork
- B. Materials**
1. Recording of "One More River" (Music K-8 Jan. 2000)
 2. Song sheets (class set) of "One More River" (Appendix E)
 3. Recording of "Down By the Riverside" (SBG CD5: 6-22)
 4. Art Journals
 5. Pencils/crayons
 6. Recording of "Peace Like a River" (SBG CD3: 2-30) [Journal]
 7. Recording of "Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen" (SBG CD5: 7-3) [Journal]
 8. Recording of "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child" [Journal]
 9. Recording of "Great Day" (SBG CD 4:3-18) [Journal]
 10. *To Be a Drum*
- C. Key Vocabulary**
- No new vocabulary needed for this lesson
- D. Procedures/Activities**
1. Pass out song sheets (Appendix E) and introduce new song: "One More River". Sing through several times
 2. Pass out journals and writing instruments, making one final entry to the recording of "Down By the Riverside" (SBG CD5: 6-22)
 3. Wrap-up Art Journals. Play through all journal recordings (see list in materials section of this lesson, giving students time to complete any unfinished entries.
 4. Collect journals to grade
 5. Read book *To Be a Drum* to students
- E. Evaluation/Assessment**
1. Grade Spirituals Art Journals

Lesson Six: To Be a Drum

- A. Daily Objectives**
1. Concept Objectives
 - a. Students will understand that spirituals are a genre of music originated by African Americans, many dating back to the days of slavery.
 - b. Students will understand that spirituals enjoyed resurgence in popularity during the time of the American Civil Rights Movement.
 2. Lesson Content
 - a. Students will improvise a drum accompaniment to a story and show what they have learned in this unit by completing an acrostic puzzle.
 3. Skill Objectives
 - a. Play simple rhythm patterns
 - b. Improvisation

- B. *Materials*
 - 1. *To Be a Drum*
 - 2. Hand drums (class set)
 - 3. Acrostic puzzle (Appendix F)
 - 4. Visual of word bank for Acrostic puzzle (Appendix G)
 - 5. Answer key to puzzle (Appendix H)
 - 6. Pencils
 - 7. Recordings of various spirituals as needed
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
No new vocabulary needed for this lesson
- D. *Procedures/Activities*
 - 1. Review story of book *To Be a Drum*
 - 2. Pass our hand drums, giving students a chance to experiment with the sounds they can create on the drums
 - 3. Teacher re-read *To Be a Drum*, while students improvise drum accompaniments
 - 4. Pass out Acrostic puzzle (Appendix F) and pencils
 - 5. Place word bank (Appendix G) in a visible spot and have students complete puzzles, turning them in when they have completed them.
 - 6. As time permits, sing favorite spirituals from the unit.
- E. *Evaluation/Assessment*
 - 1. Grade acrostic puzzles (using Appendix H—answer key)
 - 2. Student Participation

VI. HANDOUTS/WORKSHEETS

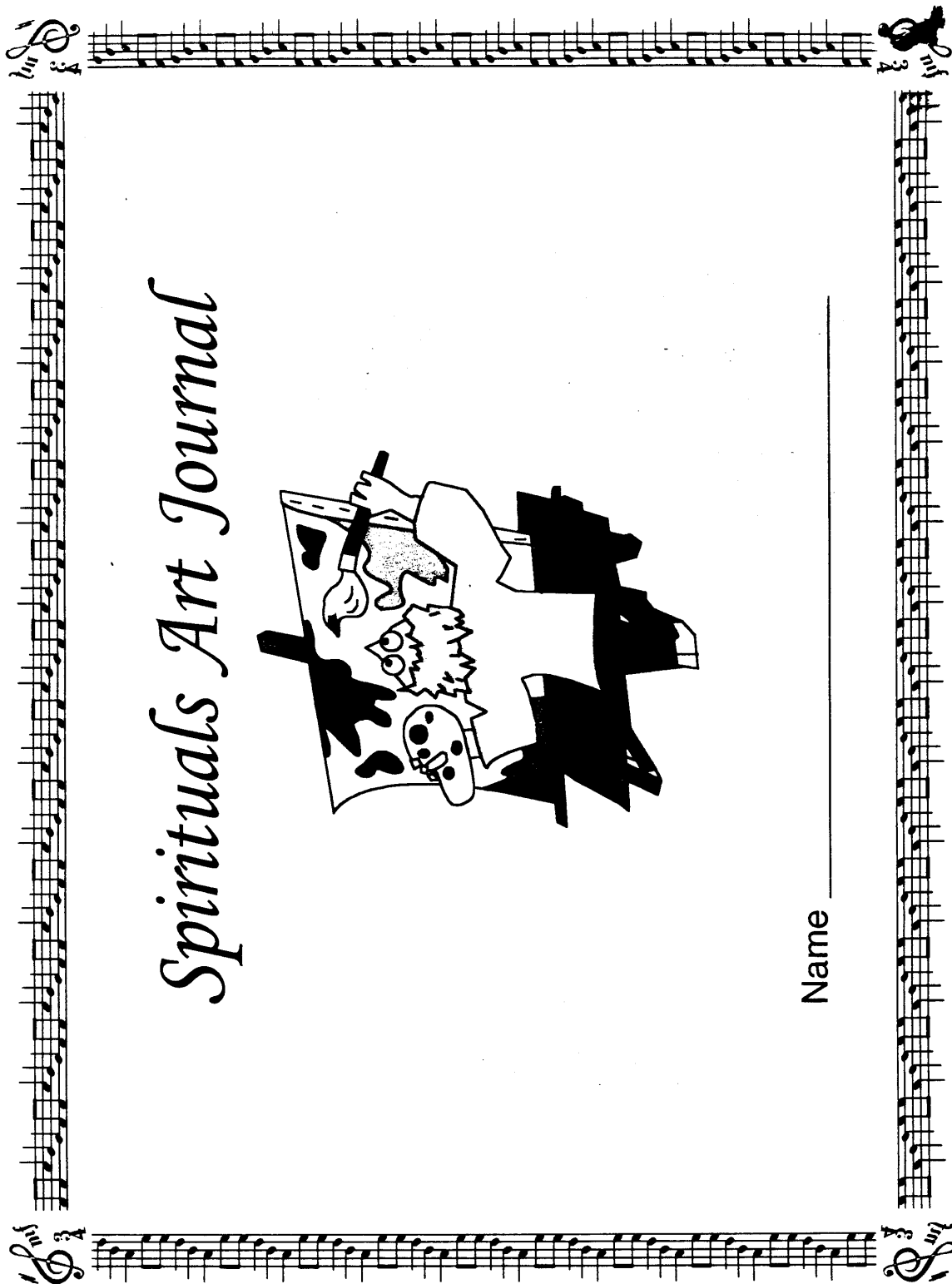
- A. Spirituals Art Journal cover
- B. Spirituals Art Journal page (use 5 copies to make journal)
- C. Instrument visual for “Follow the Drinking Gourd”
- D. Instrument visual for “All Night, All Day”
- E. Song sheet for “One More River”
- F. Acrostic Puzzle
- G. Word Bank for Acrostic Puzzle
- H. Answers for Acrostic Puzzle

VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

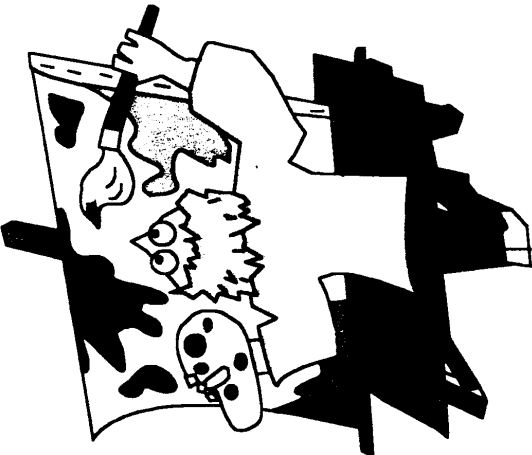
- A. *American Heritage Dictionary*, Second College, Edition, Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1985, ISBN 0-395-32944-2
- B. *Encarta '98 Encyclopedia* (CD Rom), Microsoft Corporation
- C. DeLelles/Kriske. *As American As Apple Pie*, Las Vegas: Kid Sounds, 1993, no ISBN on book
- D. Hirsch, Jr. E. D. (1991). *What Your Fifth Grader Needs to Know*. New York: Dell Publishing. ISBN 0-385-41118-9
- E. “What Are Spirituals?” article from Spirituals Project [Online] available URL: <http://www.spiritualsproject.org/about/whatare.html>, 1998
- F. “American Negro Spirituals” from online encyclopedia Information Please
- G. Livingston, Myra Cohn. *Let Freedom Ring: a ballad of Martin Luther King, Jr.* NY: Holiday House, 1992, ISBN 0-8234-0957-0
- H. Coleman, Evelyn. *To Be a Drum*. Morton Grove, IL: Albert Whitman and Co., 1998, ISBN 0-8075-8006-6
- I. 5th grade Textbook, Silver Burdett Ginn: *The Music Connection*, 1997, ISBN 0-382-26185-2
- J. 4th grade Textbook, Silver Burdett Ginn, *The Music Connection*, 1997, ISBN 0-382-26184-4

- K. 5th grade Resource Book, Silver Burdett Ginn: *The Music Connection*, 1997, ISBN 0-382-26525-4

Appendix A - The African American Spiritual
Spirituals Art Journal Cover

A decorative border consisting of four musical staves, one on each side of the central content. Each staff contains a sequence of musical notes and rests. The top staff starts with a treble clef and ends with a double bar line. The bottom staff starts with a treble clef and ends with a double bar line. The left and right staves also feature musical notation.

Spirituals Art Journal

A stylized, high-contrast black and white illustration of a man with a beard and glasses, wearing a white shirt and dark pants. He is standing and writing on a whiteboard with a marker. The whiteboard has some abstract shapes on it. The man's shadow is cast to his right.

Name _____

Appendix B - The African American Spiritual
Spirituals Art Journal Page

Song Title _____

Appendix C - The African American Spiritual
 "Follow the Drinking Gourd" Instrumentation

Follow the Drinking Gourd

Basses:
 (on D) ♯ ♯ ♯ | ♯ ♯ ♯ ♯
 ① 2 ③ 4 ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ 8

Sopranos/
 Altos: ♯ ♯ ♯ ♯ ♯ | ♯ ♯ ♯ ♯
 A B^b A G | A B^b A

Glocks: ♯ ♯ ♯ ♯ | ♯
 1 ② ③ 4 5 6 7 8

Appendix D - The African American Spiritual
All Night, All Day Instrumentation

<u>All</u>	night,	*	<u>All</u>	day,	*
D	D		D	D	

Angels	watchin' over	me,	My Lord.
G	G	G	D

<u>All</u>	night,	*	<u>All</u>	day,	*
D	D		D	D	

Angels	watchin' over	me.	*
G	D	G	

Key:

Underlined words~ Soprano and Alto Glockenspiels
Soprano Metallophone and Xylophone
On octave Ds

* ~ Cymbals, Triangles (or boomwhackers on D)

D and G letters ~Bass and Alto Xylophones and Metallophones on
marked notes

One More River

Noah built himself an ark. There's one more river to cross.
He built it all of hickory bark. There's one more river to cross.

Chorus: One more river, and that's the river Jordan.
One more river, there's one more river to cross.

The animals came two by two. There's one more river to cross.
The elephant and the kangaroo. There's one more river to cross.
Chorus

The animals came three by three. There's one more river to cross.
The baboon and the chimpanzee. There's one more river to cross.
Chorus

The animals came four by four. There's one more river to cross.
Old Noah got mad and hollered for more. There's one more river to cross.
Chorus

The animals came five by five. There's one more river to cross.
The bees came swarming from the hive. There's one more river to cross.
Chorus

The animals came six by six. There's one more river to cross.
The lion laughed at the monkey's tricks. There's one more river to cross.
Chorus

When Noah found he had no sail. There's one more river to cross.
He just ran up his old coat tail. There's one more river to cross.
Chorus

Before the voyage did begin. There's one more river to cross.
Old Noah pulled the gangplank in. There's one more river to cross.
Chorus

They never knew where they were at. There's one more river to cross.
"Til the old ark bumped on Ararat. There's one more river to cross.
Chorus

Appendix F - The African American Spiritual
Acrostic

1.	---	□	-----	-----
2.		□	-----	
3.	-----	□	-----	-----
4.		□	-----	
5.	-----	□	-----	-----
6.	-----	□	-----	-----
7.		□	-----	
8.	-----	□	-----	
9.	-----	□	-----	-----
10.		□	-----	-----

1. The hymn of the Civil Rights Movement
2. Song title: "_____ Like a River"
3. The song we learned to perform in sign language
4. A concern of African Americans during slavery and the 1960s
5. One of the songs we played on instruments
6. The song that gave runaway slaves instructions on how to get to freedom
7. The place where we recorded our pictures of the listening selections
8. The book we used to create a drum composition
9. A leader of the Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s
10. Song title: " _____ _ _ _ _ Like a Motherless Child"

Word bank for Acrostic Puzzle

All Night, All Day

Follow the Drinkin' Gourd

Freedom

Journal

Martin Luther King

Peace

Sometimes I Feel

This Little Light of Mine

To Be a Drum

We Shall Overcome

Appendix H – The African American Spiritual
Answers for Spirituals Acrostic

1. We **S**hall Overcome
2. **P**eace
3. This **L**ittle Light of Mine
4. **F**reedom
5. All **N**ight, All Day
6. Follow **t**he Drinkin' Gourd
7. **J**ournal
8. To Be **a** Drum
9. Martin **L**uther King
10. **S**ometimes I Feel