

## H. Lesson Plan 5: for Gifted/Talented

**Lesson plan by:** Lauren McCoy

**Title:** Exploring Negro Spirituals

**Grade:** 7<sup>th</sup>

**Length:** 55 minutes

### **Academic Standard(s):**

C.C.7.SL.1- Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (1-on-1, groups, teacher-led, etc.) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

C.C.7.RL.2- Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

### **Objectives:**

Students will write a one statement summary of what they have learned on African American Spirituals, concisely stating the main theme with 100% accuracy.

Students will actively engage in class discussion, clearly stating their ideas at least once during the class period.

### **Advanced Prep By Teacher:**

Make a participation check list of all the students in the class

Find article/supplemental short informational article on Negro spirituals complete with examples of slave spirituals lyrics

Find the Bob Marley song- "Redemption Song"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VNkr86zZaP4>

Find a YouTube video/song(s) of common or well-known African-American songs that the students can compare/contrast with "Redemption Song."

Negro Spiritual Song(s)- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dIBDjPiPFhA&feature=related>

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FNOhWV\\_DiR4&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FNOhWV_DiR4&feature=related)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DMaV6GTTmRQ&feature=related>

**Assessment:** The participation points and discussion will be the main informal assessment for this class period, but the students will also write a short (2-3 sentence) summary of the article that was handed out in class in groups. They will write their own summary and then come together as a group and form a summary they think is best.

**Intro/Motivation:** Have the students respond in their daily journals /writing log/opener to these questions written on the board: How does music affect your life? Does it cheer you up when you are feeling down? Is singing sometimes therapeutic and relaxing? Pick one of your favorite songs and describe how it makes you feel. When do you usually listen to it? Why do you like this particular song? (MI: Intrapersonal). Tell them that many slave spirituals were sung about freedom and wanting to be free. Ask how does this connect with what they learned yesterday about the UGRR?

**Procedure:**

1. Ask for students to share their journal entries and explain their ideas and thoughts.
2. Team/pair students up with a partner and have them do a “Think-Pair-Share” on the question the teacher will propose, “How do you think what you just wrote about and discussed will tie into what we are going to learn today? (MI: Verbal, Interpersonal).
3. Give the students the handout and article on slave songs and Negro spirituals.
4. Give a brief overview on what they will be learning and discussing (-but don’t go into too much information-let the students deduct their own ideas first to develop critical thinking skills).
5. Put students into groups (3-4) and assign 1 paragraph of the article/handout to each group and have them read it.
6. Each student in the group will write their *own* summary of the paragraph on a separate piece of paper.
7. The group will then come together again and discuss their summaries and state what one explains their paragraph the best, or they may think of a better summary together as a group and write it on a piece of paper.
8. On the same paper they just wrote on, each group will write a 2-3 sentence summary of ONE of the song lyrics as well. Students will need to work together and come to an agreement on this summary, but only one piece of paper will be turned in per group (MI: Interpersonal, Linguistic).
9. Go around the class to monitor their work and collect papers as students are finishing up.
10. Pull the class together and have a class discussion.

- 11.** Go around the room in order the paragraphs appear on the handouts and have students share their summaries so the whole class knows what the entire article is about. (Piecemeal technique).
- 12.** Ask questions like: (MI: Verbal).
  - a. Who created and sang these Negro songs? Why were they sung? (Bloom's Knowledge).
  - b. Apply this article's information to the slave narrative we read/listened to the first day. How are the two similar? Different? (Bloom's Application).
  - c. What song is your favorite listed on the paper? What one you would like to hear being sung? Why? How do you imagine this song being sung? (Bloom's Synthesis).
- 13.** Pull up a couple examples of Negro spirituals from YouTube. (If there is time at the end of class, they can listen to the other songs). Allow students to take a class vote on which video/song they want to listen to.
- 14.** Have the students carefully listen to it and also watch it (if it has video) (MI: Visual, Musical).
- 15.** Ask questions like: (MI: Verbal).
  - a. What was this song about? What was the main idea? (Summarizing comes into play here). (Bloom's Comprehension).
  - b. Was it hard to understand? Why?
  - c. Compare/contrast this/these slave spirituals to the examples given on the handout.
  - d. During what kind of work or what time of day do you think slaves would sing this song? What evidence in the lyrics is there to support your idea? (Bloom's Evaluation).
  - e. Why do you think slaves wrote Negro Spirituals? What purpose did Negro spirituals serve to slaves? What is their importance?
  - f. Do these lyrics/ songs remind you of any recent songs you might have heard? If so, what songs, and how? (This question should lead right into the next activity). (Bloom's Analysis).
- 16.** Pull up the audio/Bob Marley song, "Redemption Song" and have students listen to it carefully (MI: Musical).
- 17.** Ask wrap-up questions like: (MI: Verbal).
  - a. Who knows who wrote/sang this song? (Bloom's Knowledge).
  - b. Even though this song was written many years after the Civil War, how does it relate to our unit theme and what we have learned so far?(Bloom's Application).
  - c. What do you think Bob Marley's motive was for writing this song? How is it similar to Negro Spirituals? How is it different?
  - d. Elaborate on the reasoning behind the reasons slaves and Bob Marley wrote/sang songs. (Bloom's Evaluation).

**Wrap-Up/Conclusion:** Concluding thoughts: Are there other present-day song writers/artists you know of that write about slavery and yearning for freedom? If so, what does this say about slavery? About music? Tell them for homework they will write their own “Negro Spiritual” and use the handout and lyrics to help guide them. They will turn it in for credit the next day. Right before they leave, I will ask students whether or not they liked this lesson by asking them to simply give me thumbs up, thumbs down, or an in-between (What I call a Thumb Rating).

**Enrichment:** I tend to think my lessons are fairly easy- and I have not written a discussion-based lesson plan before, but I think discussion classes are the more advanced English courses, since students are forced to apply their knowledge and form their own ideas and articulate those ideas well through higher-level Bloom’s. This lesson, I think, is already a little tougher caliber, and I think it suites high-ability better than most other lesson plans I have written. I use mostly all upper-level Bloom’s and I make the students think and formulate their own thoughts- I hardly do any “true teaching” other than asking guiding questions. However, there are some things I could do to make this more challenging for students with high abilities. I could ask the upper level students harder questions and direct those questions mainly towards them in a manner that would not really draw attention to them. The other students in class could of course, answer the questions as well, but they might not know how to respond. Furthermore, for homework, I could ask upper level students to find a Negro spiritual and analyze the meaning and why it was important to slaves. As for working in pairs for the “Think-Pair-Share,” I could group or pair together the upper level students in the class, so they will have a deeper conversation between themselves. If this is not possible, I could prompt them more when walking around the class both for this activity and for the group summarizing. For the summarizing, I would ask higher performing students to give examples from the handout that support their summary, instead of simply just asking for a summary.

On a day-to-day basis, I will need to challenge my gifted students. I will do this by asking and gearing more specific, higher order Bloom’s questions and making my lessons tiered. I may give out tougher worksheets/assessments, and ask them what I can do to make lessons geared towards them, and give them options as to what they would like to do in class, so long as it pertains to the lesson and standard I am teaching that day. I will allow a lot of independent study and have them maybe even lead a class discussion or lesson of particular interest for them and have them write a reflection paper about it.

**Self-Assessment:** I will assess students’ learning mostly by the discussion we had in class. Those who I see are not participating as much may need some extra prompting or a more direct teaching method/style in order for them to learn. I will also test their comprehension by looking at their group’s summary of the article/handout. I will know when to move on to more material by seeing who participated, who seemed interested and focused on the discussion,

and who gave well-thought-out responses. I will know if students were interested by paying attention to their focus, fidgetiness, or concentration. Also, the “thumb rating” will help me plan future lesson and instruction to keep student interest.

**Participation Check List on Slavery Discussion**

<b>Student Names</b>	<b># of Times they Talked/Participated (Tally Marks) Put a * next to students who responded especially well, or asked insightful questions.</b>
Student A	
Student B	
Student C	
Student D	
Student E	
Etc...	

# Slave Spiritual Lyrics

## LORD, REMEMBER ME !

"O do Lord, remember me !  
O do, Lord, remember me !  
O, do remember me, until de year roll round !  
Do, Lord, remember me !

"If you want to die like Jesus died,  
Lay in de grave,  
You would fold your arms and close your eyes  
And die wid a free good will.

"For Death is a simple ting,  
And he go from door to door  
And he knock down some, and he cripple up some,  
And he leave some here to pray.

"O do, Lord, remember me !  
O do, Lord, remember me !  
My old fader 's gone till de year roll round ;  
Do, Lord, remember me !"

## JESUS WITH US.

"He have been wid us, Jesus,  
He still wid us, Jesus,  
He will be wid us, Jesus,  
Be wid us to the end."

## THE BABY GONE HOME.

"De little baby gone home,  
De little baby gone home,  
De little baby gone along,

For to climb up Jacob's ladder.  
And I wish I 'd been dar,  
I wish I 'd been dar,  
I wish I 'd been dar, my Lord,  
For to climb up Jacob's ladder "

### **DOWN IN THE VALLEY.**

"We 'll run and never tire,  
We 'll run and never tire,  
We 'll run and never tire,  
Jesus set poor sinners free.  
Way down in de valley,  
Who will rise and go with me ?  
You 've heern talk of Jesus,  
Who set poor sinners free.

"De lightnin' and de flashin',  
De lightnin' and de flashin'  
De lightnin' and de flashin'  
Jesus set poor sinners free.  
I can't stand de fire. (*Thrice.*)  
Jesus set poor sinners free,  
De green trees a-flamin'. (*Thrice.*)  
Jesus set poor sinners free,  
Way down in de valley,  
Who will rise and go with me ?  
You 've heern talk of Jesus  
Who set poor sinners free."

## Historical Background Handout on Slave Songs

**Group 1** Over 300 years ago, people were taken from their homes in Africa to the United States against their will. These enslaved people sang songs that expressed their longing for freedom, their homeland, and a better life. Such songs are called “Spirituals”. Emphasis on rhythm is an important element of most African American Spirituals, and the singers clap on the second and fourth beats of a bar. Because slaves were not allowed to use musical instruments, they used their hands and bodies as instruments.

**Group 2** The form of many African American Spirituals and work songs is call and response. Enslaved people brought this form of music to the United States from Africa. Usually, a leader sings a phrase (the call) and the whole group answers with another phrase (the response). Singers might form two groups, with the first group singing the call and the second group singing the response.

**Group 3** A Spiritual is a song with a religious message on the surface. The words might also have a hidden meaning. Certain words were “code” words for enslaved African Americans trying to reach freedom. Charles Joyner states in his book, *Down by the Riverside*, “they (Spirituals) reflected awareness that God can work miracles to bring about immediate change” as well as “the belief that persistence would be rewarded.” (p.165) One such song, *In That Great Get’n Up Mornin’*, expresses the wish to get along well on the “great getting up morning” which was Judgment Day, and get to heaven. *Judgment Day* was a code word for time of escape, and *Heaven* was a code word for a better life in the North.

**Group 4** Slaves led very difficult lives. They were forbidden many things, but they were allowed to play music and go to church. Therefore, they put a great deal of energy into their music. Combining their African rhythms and harmonies with messages of hope and freedom, they created the first American style of music called Spirituals.

Because slaves were forbidden to play musical instruments, they created complex vocal harmonies. The words of the songs were often taken from the Bible (which surely pleased the Masters) that told of hope for a better future.

**Group 5** One of the best known Spirituals, *Let My People Go*, describes the Biblical Moses leading the Jewish people out of slavery in Israel. Harriet Tubman, a famous “conductor” on the Underground Railroad was nicknamed “Moses” because she, too, led her people to freedom. The words often had a double meaning- religious and freedom.

The African American spirituals affected the overall development of American music. Although they changed over time, they served as the basis for gospel music, the blues, and jazz. The basics of these styles of music are all taken



from Spirituals, and these forms of music in turn influenced rock n'roll, soul, reggae, as well as hip-hop.

### **Group 6    NEGRO SPIRITUALS AND WORK SONGS**

*During slavery and afterwards, workers were allowed to sing songs during their working time. This was the case when they had to coordinate their efforts for hauling a fallen tree or any heavy load. For example, prisoners used to sing "chain gang" songs, when they worked on the road or some construction. But some "drivers" also allowed slaves to sing "quiet" songs, if they were not apparently against slaveholders. Such songs could be sung either by only one or by several slaves. They were used for expressing personal feeling, and for cheering one another.*

Sources: [http://www.teachingushistory.org/lessons/pdfs\\_and\\_docs/FollowtheDrinkinGourd.html](http://www.teachingushistory.org/lessons/pdfs_and_docs/FollowtheDrinkinGourd.html)

<http://www.negrospirituals.com/history.htm>

