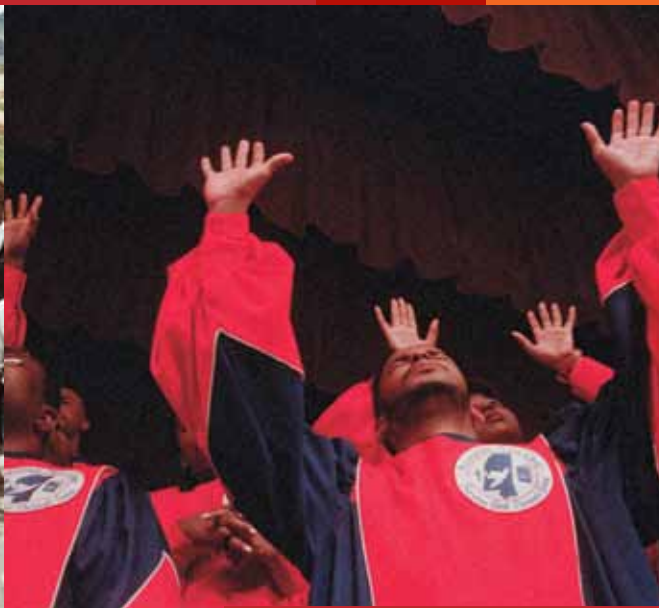


An Educational Program in Support of  
*HONOR! A Celebration of the African American  
Cultural Legacy* Curated by Jessye Norman



CARNEGIE HALL presents  
Perelman American Roots

A Program of The Weill Music Institute at Carnegie Hall

# AFRICAN AMERICAN SONG

Uniting Voices

Teacher Guide

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## USING YOUR TEACHER GUIDE

The teacher guide for *African American Song: Uniting Voices* includes questions for class discussion. These are indicated throughout the teacher guide in light yellow shading. Please note that these questions do not appear in the student guide.

Information sheets, worksheets, and choral arrangements appear in both the teacher and student versions of *Uniting Voices*. These materials have been indicated with a red square, providing the instructor with the corresponding page number in the student guide (SG).

In this year’s curriculum, we have identified two types of supplements to selected lessons, as detailed below.

### MUSICAL EXTENSIONS

These activity ideas are designed for music teachers who are implementing the full curriculum in their own music classrooms or who are helping to bring more music specialty approaches into an arts-integrated learning environment. These ideas emphasize skills-based learning approaches, and provide opportunities for collaboration between classroom teachers and music teachers.

### CREATIVE EXPLORATIONS

These activity ideas are designed for Teaching Artists or music specialists whose work supplements that of either social studies or choral classroom teachers. These ideas emphasize hands-on work that gives students a chance to creatively respond to relevant artistic and historical contexts.

**Page 22 (Left):**

- In groups, students should use Part 2 of their Personal Beliefs worksheet to rewrite the lyrics of "I Want to Be a Christian" to represent the belief system they have been assigned.
- Lead the class through an example together before asking them to make their own.

**PART 4: Respecting and Understanding Religious Traditions**

- Have the groups share their new lyrics. Discuss these questions as a class:
  - Who are some of the important individuals in the belief systems we researched?
  - What are some of the ideals and goals of the belief systems discussed?
  - What do these belief systems have in common? What sets them apart?
  - What is important to keep in mind when people express beliefs that are different from your own?
  - How can you best express your own beliefs and opinions when people disagree with you?

**MUSICAL EXTENSION**

- Select some of the students' new renditions. Have the entire class or selected volunteers sing them together, using the melody of "I Want to Be a Christian."

**CREATIVE EXPLORATION**

- Sing the melody of "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" from the included sheet music.
- Listen to the Fisk Jubilee Singers' arrangement (Track 10), and ask the students to notice at least three different ways the singers use their voices to create a unified performance. (Examples could include singing in unison, singing in harmony, and call-and-response.)
- Affirm the students' observations and provide additional insight. Some key singing techniques to underscore include call-and-response, use of solo voices, harmony and unison, and background hums. Discuss this question as a class:
  - What other techniques could be added?
- Work as a team to incorporate some of these techniques in creating a new rendition of "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot."

**Page 8 (Right):**

**PRE-CURRICULUM SURVEY**

- How is music a part of your everyday life? \_\_\_\_\_
- What kinds of ideas are expressed in the music you listen to now? \_\_\_\_\_
- What are some occasions or events during which people sing? \_\_\_\_\_
- What does the word *united* mean to you? \_\_\_\_\_
- Can music unite a group of people or a society? If so, how? If not, why? Give at least one example to support your opinion. \_\_\_\_\_
- Who or what comes to mind when you think of African American song? \_\_\_\_\_

**Annotations:**

- Red arrow from "Corresponding page number in the student guide (SG), where applicable" points to a red box labeled "SG 1" on page 8.
- Red arrow from "Questions to be discussed as a class" points to the yellow-shaded questions on page 22.
- Red arrow from "Musical Extension" points to the red-bordered "MUSICAL EXTENSION" box on page 22.
- Red arrow from "Creative Exploration" points to the red-bordered "CREATIVE EXPLORATION" box on page 22.

## LESSON 4: Religion and the African American Experience

**AIM:** How can we respect and understand different belief systems and faiths?

**OBJECTIVE:** Students examine their own beliefs, learn about African Americans' religious experiences and struggles, examine issues of religious freedom and tolerance, and examine how another belief system might express itself through the words of a Spiritual.

**STANDARDS:** NYS Social Studies—1.3; Blueprint—Music Making and Making Connections

**MATERIALS:** Perelman American Roots, Perelman American Roots CD

### PART 1: Religion and the African American Experience

- Have your students read aloud from the Religion and the African American Experience sheet. Discuss these questions as a class:

- What are some of the obstacles and issues African Americans have faced throughout history in practicing religion? How did they adapt?
- How do different belief systems bring people together?

### PART 2: Establishing Personal Beliefs and Perspectives, and Listening to a Personal Expression of Belief

- Have your students complete Part 1 of the Personal Beliefs worksheet.
- Play the Fisk Jubilee Singers' recording of "I Want to Be a Christian" [Track 9], a Spiritual expressing heartfelt religious desires. Discuss these questions as a class:

- Why would an African American in the 1800s sing "I Want to Be a Christian"?
- Why might an African American in the 1800s refuse to sing "I Want to Be a Christian"?

### PART 3: Expressing Other Belief Systems Through the Spiritual

- Divide the class into small groups, assigning each group a different religious tradition or belief system. You may either take suggestions from the students or assign traditions based on your curriculum. Use supplemental materials as necessary, or visit [nypl.org](http://nypl.org) for additional resources.

**NOTE:** It is possible to complete this exercise using any belief system, or any philosophical or political ideology.

- In groups, students should use Part 2 of their Personal Beliefs worksheet to rewrite the lyrics of “I Want to Be a Christian” to represent the belief system they have been assigned.
- Lead the class through an example together before asking them to make their own.

#### **PART 4: Respecting and Understanding Religious Traditions**

- Have the groups share their new lyrics. Discuss these questions as a class:

- Who are some of the important individuals in the belief systems we researched?
- What are some of the ideals and goals of the belief systems discussed?
- What do these belief systems have in common? What sets them apart?
- What is important to keep in mind when people express beliefs that are different from your own?
- How can you best express your own beliefs and opinions when people disagree with you?

#### **MUSICAL EXTENSION**

- Select some of the students’ new renditions. Have the entire class or selected volunteers sing them together, using the melody of “I Want to Be a Christian.”

#### **CREATIVE EXPLORATION**

- Sing the melody of “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” from the included sheet music.
- Listen to the Fisk Jubilee Singers’ arrangement [Track 10], and ask the students to notice at least three different ways the singers use their voices to create a unified performance. (Examples could include singing in unison, singing in harmony, and call-and-response.)
- Affirm the students’ observations and provide additional insight. Some key singing techniques to underscore include call-and-response, use of solo voices, harmony and unison, and background hums. Discuss this question as a class:
  - What other techniques could be added?
- Work as a team to incorporate some of these techniques in creating a new rendition of “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot.”

## RELIGION AND THE AFRICAN AMERICAN EXPERIENCE

Before Africans were brought to the Americas, most of them practiced the religion of their individual societies. Traditional African worship often involved drumming, chanting, prolonged dancing and music making, and altered states such as trances and spirit possession. Most Americans, who were predominantly Christian or secular, did not approve of African religious practices, so slaves were forbidden to practice their African faiths. Drums and other items associated with traditional religious practice were confiscated because loud instruments were associated with the organization of slave revolts.

Introducing Christianity to slaves was a controversial issue. Some slave owners feared that the Christian ideals of universal brotherhood would cause slaves to resent their masters and revolt. Other slave owners believed that Christianity would have moral and spiritual benefits for slaves, so they encouraged religious education, and invited preachers to hold meetings for the slaves to pray and worship.

Despite their eventual acceptance into Christianity, slaves and freed African Americans were constantly pressured about how they should or should not express their religious beliefs. Some ministers, both Anglo American and African American, actively discouraged such vestiges of African-style worship as dancing, clapping, shouting, and the singing of Spirituals.

To escape religious oppression, many slaves would hold independent prayer meetings and church services late at night in secret locations deep in the woods. In this way, African Americans were able to practice religion freely as they saw fit. Spirituals played a central role at these meetings, and new ones would be regularly improvised and composed to address the needs and prayers of the day.

Material excerpted from Dena Epstein's *Sinful Tunes and Spirituals: Black Folk Music to the Civil War*, presented in edited form.

SG 7

## WORKSHEET: Personal Beliefs

### PART 1

1. Name two people whom you admire. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. What kind of person do you want to be known as? What do you hope other people will say about you? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What is something you strongly believe in? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. What would you do if other people told you that you were not allowed to believe this or talk about it? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. What is something you don't believe in doing? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

SG 8

### PART 2: Adapting "I Want to Be a Christian" to the \_\_\_\_\_ Belief System (assigned belief system)

\_\_\_\_\_, I want to be  
(name of a leader, founder, or god for this belief system)

a \_\_\_\_\_ in my heart.  
(what people practicing this belief system are called)

I want to \_\_\_\_\_ in my heart.  
(a personal goal of someone practicing this belief system)

I want to be like \_\_\_\_\_ in my heart.  
(name of an important individual to this belief system)

Melody**Swing Low, Sweet Chariot**SPIRITUAL  
Arr. M. Roger Holland II

Moderate ♩ = 72

1 

Swing low, sweet char - i - ot, \_\_\_ Com-ing for to car-ry me home.

5 

Swing low, sweet char - i - ot, \_\_\_ Com-ing for to car-ry me home. home. 1. I

10 

looked o - ver Jor-dan and what did I see, \_\_\_ Com-ing for to car-ry me home. A

14 

band of an-gels com-ing af-ter me. \_\_\_ Com-ing for to car-ry me home. Swing low, sweet

19 

char - i - ot, \_\_\_ Com-ing for to car-ry me home. Swing low, sweet char - i - ot, \_\_\_

24 

Com-ing for to car - ry me home. 2. If you get there be - fore I do, \_\_\_  
3. I'm some-times up and some - times down, \_\_\_

28 

Com-ing for to car-ry me home. Tell all \_\_\_ my friends I'm com-ing \_\_\_ too, \_\_\_  
Com-ing for to car-ry me home. But still my soul feels heav-en - ly bound, \_\_\_

32 

Com-ing for to car-ry me home. Swing low, sweet char - i - ot, \_\_\_ Com-ing for to car-ry me  
Com-ing for to car-ry me home.

37 

home. Swing low, sweet char - i - ot, \_\_\_ Com-ing for to car-ry me home.

SG 9



19

char - i - ot, \_\_\_ Com-ing for to car-ry me home. Swing low, sweet char - i - ot, \_\_\_

char - i - ot, \_\_\_ Com-ing to car-ry me home. \_\_\_ Swing low, char - i - ot, \_\_\_

24

③

Com-ing for to car - ry me home. 2. If you get there be - fore I do, \_\_\_  
3. I'm some-times up and some - times down, \_\_\_

Com-ing for to car - ry me home. 2. If you get there be - fore I do, \_\_\_  
3. I'm some-times up and some - times down, \_\_\_

28

Com-ing for to car-ry me home. Tell all \_\_\_ my friends I'm com-ing \_\_\_ too, \_\_\_  
Com-ing for to car-ry me home. But still \_\_\_ my soul feels heav-en - ly bound, \_\_\_

Com-ing for to car-ry me home. \_\_\_ Hm, \_\_\_  
Com-ing for to car-ry me home. \_\_\_ Hm, \_\_\_

32

④

Com-ing for to car-ry me home. Swing low, sweet char - i - ot, \_\_\_ Com-ing for to car-ry me  
Com-ing for to car-ry me home.

Com-ing for to car-ry me home. Swing low, char - i - ot, \_\_\_ Com-ing to car-ry me  
Com-ing for to car-ry me home.

SG 11

37

home. Swing low, sweet char - i - ot, Com - ing for to car - ry me home.

home. Swing low, char - i - ot, Com - ing for to car - ry me, car - ry me home.

**"Swing Low, Sweet Chariot"**  
Wallace Willis, 1862

*Chorus*

Swing low, sweet chariot  
Coming for to carry me home  
Swing low, sweet chariot  
Coming for to carry me home

I looked over Jordan and what did I see  
Coming for to carry me home  
A band of angels coming after me  
Coming for to carry me home

*Chorus*

If you get to Heaven before I do  
Coming for to carry me home  
Tell all my friends I'll be coming there, too  
Coming for to carry me home

*Chorus*

I'm sometimes up and sometimes down  
Coming for to carry me home  
But still my soul feels heavenly bound  
Coming for to carry me home

*Chorus*