

Day 5

Changing our world with music



Day 5: Changing our world with music

Introduction

We'll look at various ways music can motivate human behavior and thought on a personal and grand scale. Singers and songs have been vital to social change, amplifying messages, raising awareness, and connecting people with similar ideas. Music also continues to inspire individuals to be their best selves.

We'll look at the historical role of music in American history, discussing times when music supported people who wanted to change the world and themselves. We may also explore specific performers and songs that have been instrumental in social and personal change.

Questions to guide explorations

- Can a song be a time capsule?
 - Can music motivate people?
 - Can music make us braver?
 - What impact does singing together have on a group?
 - Can songs give us new ideas?
 - Why is music motivating? What can music motivate us to do?
 - What are examples of songs that have helped changed people's minds or their behavior?
 - Who has created change-making music?
 - How has music been created and used to spark and promote social change?
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Activities

- **Activity 1:** Music as a Time Capsule
- **Activity 2:** Explore Voices and Songs of Social Change
- **Activity 3:** Music for a Better World
- **Activity 2:** Music for Inner Peace



Children's Books

Fiction

- *Anna Hibiscus' Song* by Atinuke (Ages 6-9)
- *La La La* by Kate DiCamillo (Ages 3-6)
- *The Rooster Who Would Not Be Quiet! / El gallito ruidoso* by Carmen Agra Deedy (Ages 6-9)
- *When Grandmama Sings* by Margaree King Mitchell (Ages 6-9)
- *Your Name Is a Song* by Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow (Ages 6-9)

Poetry and songs

- *Change Sings: A Children's Anthem* by Amanda Gorman (Ages 6-9)
- *Ellington Was Not a Street* by Kadir Nelson, Ntozake Shange (Ages 6-9)
- *This Land Is Your Land* by Woody Guthrie and Kathy Jacobsen (Ages 6-9)
- *We've Got the Whole World in Our Hands / Tenemos el mundo entero en las manos* by Rafael López (Ages 3-6)

Nonfiction

- *A Band of Angels* by Deborah Hopkinson (Ages 6-9)
- *The Golden Thread: A Song for Pete Seeger* by Colin Meloy (Ages 6-9)
- *Harlem's Little Blackbird: The Story of Florence Mills* by Renee Watson (Ages 6-9)
- *Josephine: The Dazzling Life of Josephine Baker* by Patricia Hruby Powell (Ages 9-12)
- *Legends, Icons & Rebels: Music That Changed the World* by Robbie Robertson (Ages 9-12)
- *Leontyne Price: Voice of a Century* by Carole Boston Weatherford (Ages 6-9)
- *Let Your Voice Be Heard: The Life and Times of Pete Seeger* by Anita Silvey (Ages 9-12)
- *Like a Bird: The Art of the American Slave Song* by Cynthia Grady (Ages 9-12)
- *Mama Africa! How Miriam Makeba Spread Hope with Her Song* by Kathryn Erskine (Ages 6-9)
- *Nina: Jazz Legend and Civil-Rights Activist Nina Simone* by Alice Brière-Haquet (Ages 6-9)
- *Nina: A Story of Nina Simone* by Traci N. Todd (Ages 6-9)
- *Odetta: The Queen of Folk* by Stephen Alcorn (Ages 6-9)
- *Red Bird Sings: The Story of Zitkala-Ša, Native American Author, Musician, and Activist* by Gina Capaldi, Q.L. Pearce (Ages 9-12)



Children's Books

Nonfiction (continued)

- *RESPECT: Aretha Franklin, the Queen of Soul* by Carole Boston Weatherford (Ages 6-9)
- *Sing a Song: How Lift Every Voice and Sing Inspired Generations* by Kelly Starling Lyons (Ages 6-9)
- *Soldier Song* by Debbie Levy (Ages 9-12)
- *The Voice That Challenged a Nation: Marian Anderson and the Struggle for Equal Rights* by Russell Freedman (Ages 9-12)
- *Voices of Freedom: Fannie Lou Hamer: The Spirit of the Civil Rights Movement* by Carole Boston Weatherford (Ages 9-12)
- *We Shall Overcome: The Story of a Song* by Debbie Levy (Ages 6-9)
- *When Bob Met Woody: The Story of the Young Bob Dylan* by Gary Gallo (Ages 6-9)
- *When Marian Sang: The True Recital of Marian Anderson* by Pam Muñoz Ryan (Ages 9-12)
- *Woody Guthrie: Poet of the People* by Bonnie Christensen (Ages 6-9)



Music Words

Mantra

A word or sound repeated to aid concentration in meditation.

Meditation

A set of techniques that are intended to encourage a heightened state of awareness and focused attention. Meditation is also a consciousness-changing technique that has been shown to have a wide number of benefits on psychological well-being.

Social change

The transformation of culture and society over time.

Time capsule

A container that people fill with things that are popular in the time that they live. Time capsules are often buried in the ground for future generations to discover later.





Activity 1: Music as a Time Capsule

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Introduction

Do you know what a **time capsule** is? It's a container that people fill with things that are popular from the time in which they live. Often, people will bury these capsules in the ground for themselves or future generations to discover later. The idea is that whoever digs up the capsule will understand the people who buried them.

There are various options for making a time capsule. You and the kids can make little individual time capsules and share with the group what you chose to put inside. You can also have each kid in your group select one item from their personal time capsule to put into a collective one. Or you can create the entire time capsule together. Make each choice a democratic process.

Supplies

- Computer or laptop for watching a video together as a group
- Pencils and pens
- Paper
- A container for the capsule(s) — Tupperware® is one option, or you may choose a shoebox or a more special box

Get kids thinking

Write “Changing Our World” on the Music Mural and then write “Time Capsule.”

Some songs hold history to remind us where we've been. Do you know what a slave is? A slave is a person who is forced to work for someone else without pay, and is usually considered the property of the other person, similar to a farm animal or pet.

Did you know that thousands of years ago, a group of people called the Hebrews or Israelites were held as enslaved people in Ancient Egypt? A leader named Moses guided them to freedom through a very long, difficult, and dangerous journey.

Two hundred years ago, slavery was legal in certain parts of the U.S. Many brave leaders helped enslaved people in America to become free. One of the most famous was named Harriet Tubman. That's why she was called the Moses of her people.



Activity 1: Music as a Time Capsule

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Listen to this song:

“Louis Armstrong — Go Down, Moses” (Aleksandr Mäeots)

<https://youtu.be/8JNCS27rtQ8>

This song is actually about both Hebrew and American enslaved people. Can you hear how this song holds the difficult history of their experience, as well as, the bravery of leaders like Moses? Can you think of any other songs that remind us of how things were in the past?

Other songs to listen to:

“Bob Marley & The Wailers — Redemption Song” (Bob Marley)

An acoustic song from the reggae artist, with themes of spirituality and the power of a free mind.

<https://youtu.be/yv5xonFSC4c>

“Star Spangled Banner with Lyrics, Vocals, and Beautiful Photos” (MusicPlay)

The National Anthem, inspired by the Battle of Baltimore (War of 1812).

<https://youtu.be/vPKp29Luryc>

“Don McLean — American Pie” (Young Pilgrim Music)

This is a long, poetic song that refers to many events in the composer’s life.

<https://youtu.be/Z13vOA7s0FI>

In addition to those songs, here is a **list of songs based on historical events**. Many are about wars and massacres and won’t be appropriate for discussion with young kids. But have a look and see if a familiar song leaps out as an opportunity for conversation.

<https://www.songfacts.com/category/songs-about-historical-events>

Let’s get started!

Step 1

Make the **time capsule**. This can be a literal, physical container filled with physical items to which the kids temporarily contribute. Alternatively, kids may choose to draw and write a few



Activity 1: Music as a Time Capsule

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words about what they think should go into the capsule. Or, it can be a simple list that they compile of things, music, people, movies, and ideas that represent their lives. As you're choosing what to put in the capsule, consider why each item or list is important and what it tells about who we are now.

Step 2

Create a soundtrack. While you're filling this capsule, consider playing contemporary songs that the kids suggest. This may require some discretion, as each group or family will have different standards of what's appropriate. Perhaps you, as the guide, can create your own soundtrack of modern songs, or refer to Kidzbop (<https://kidzbop.com/>).

Step 3

You may choose to turn your list of items into a rap. Remember it doesn't have to feature serious topics. For more personal time capsules, pets, number of siblings, favorite songs and colors would be appropriate. For a group capsule, it can be challenging to recognize the elements of our culture — what didn't exist before and what might be surprising to future generations. Think: cellphones and game consoles; artists like Ariana Grande; politicians; world issues that interest or concern the kids. These are all valid possibilities.

More time capsule resources

Writing Prompt: Create a Time Capsule

<https://youtu.be/1kgUs4UHVk8>

How to Create a Time Capsule with Your Kids

<https://youtu.be/h7h9CbUYGfk>

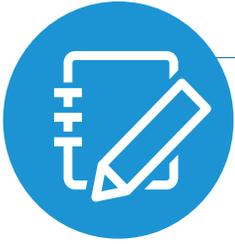
How to Make a Time Capsule (Moogoopi)

<https://youtu.be/UkkGAtRMmJs>

Create Your Own Time Capsule (American Museum of Natural History)

<https://www.amnh.org/explore/ology/archaeology/create-your-own-time-capsule2>





Activity 2: Explore Voices and Songs of Social Change

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Introduction

Many artists have used their voice, songs, and presence to bring about **social change**. Social change is the transformation of cultural and social institutions over time that has a big impact on individuals and society. Examples include the Civil Rights Movement and the Environmental (Green) Movement.

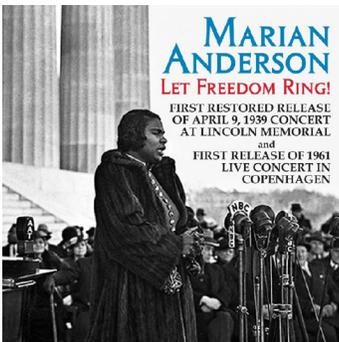
Supplies

- Computer or laptop for watching a video together as a group
- Pencils and pens
- Paper

Get kids thinking

Write the words “Creating Social Change” on the Music Mural.

What difference can music make? Does it matter who’s singing or what they’re singing about? Here are some examples of artists whose lyrics and persona made a big impact on peoples’ worldview:



“Marian Anderson Sings at Lincoln Center” (Robert H. Jackson Center)

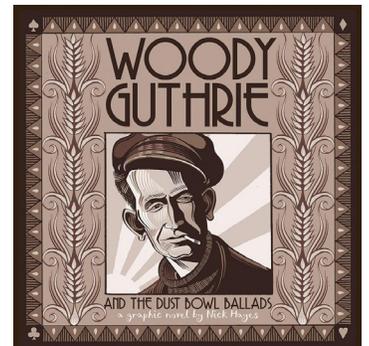
Anderson was a pioneering opera singer who rose to fame by singing for an integrated audience in 1939. She was the first Black American to sing at the Metropolitan Opera.

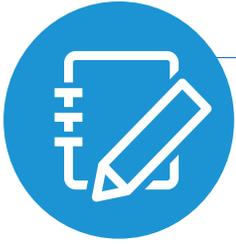
<https://youtu.be/mAONYTMf2pk>

“Woody Guthrie —This Land Is Your Land” (alargedog)

Guthrie was a folk songwriter who sang about challenges of poor people and equality.

<https://youtu.be/Xa15IRuS2aE>





Activity 2: Explore Voices and Songs of Social Change

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Joni Mitchell — “Big Yellow Taxi” (RetroTop10)

Mitchell is a songwriter whose song “Big Yellow Taxi” talked about caring for our environment. <https://youtu.be/94bdMSCdw20>

This version has lyrics and brilliant animation:

<https://youtu.be/2595abcvh2M>

Are there musical artists out there who you feel represent you and the things that are important to you?

Let's get started!

Choose one of the musical artists from the videos, or one who speaks to you. Ask the kids to draw a picture of their artist and write something about their music or legacy that inspires them. You can also choose to assign small groups to different artists. Or, kids may choose another musical artist to write about, but be sure to explain how their music or their presence helps to bring about social change.

Another idea for older groups would be to draw a make-believe artist who represents and speaks for them. What kind of music would this person sing? What would they sing about?



Activity 3: Music for a Better World

5

Introduction

Songs can spring from or act as fuel for movements of social change. When people want to see things about the world or their society change, music can often help hold the vision, create solidarity, and build courage for bringing that new idea into reality.

Supplies

- Computer or laptop for watching the video ‘We Shall Not Be Moved’ together
 - Space to move around (if available)
-

Get kids thinking

Watch this video together as a group:

**“The Freedom Singers Perform ‘We Shall Not Be Moved’ at the March on Washington”
(Boston University)**

<https://youtu.be/duvoETGVvYU>

Ask: What do those lyrics “ We Shall Not Be Moved” mean? What were the singers saying to each other and to those listening? Do you think it is easy or difficult to be part of a movement for change? Why? What are some things in the world that you would like to change? Do you think many people agree with you?

Ask: Do you think it would be easier to make those changes alone or if you work together with a group of people who agree? Do you think it’s important that different perspectives and voices be heard — or should everyone just agree?

Let’s talk about singing (or speaking up) alone and in groups. It is helpful to build the confidence to speak up in front of others. However, it can be difficult to do so if what we’re saying, singing, or asking for is not familiar or popular. Imagine how brave Dr. King must have been to stand up and say that he thought many people were wrong and the country should change. Most people don’t like to hear that they’re wrong and should change. Still, he had the courage to share what he believed would be better.



Activity 3: Music for a Better World

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But, remember, Dr. King gave his speeches alone, but he was part of a movement. Many people stood beside and behind him. Many people believed in what he was speaking about and he helped inspire them just as he was inspired by the voices and presence of the people around him.

Let's get started!

Step 1

Singing alone, especially in front of a group can be scary, but it can also feel empowering. Ask the kids if they have ever sung along in front of a group. How did they feel?

Invite the kids to come in front of the group and sing one by one. A short, simple song, like "Twinkle, Twinkle."

Encourage the audience to be supportive, to applaud or snap, and speak kindly to one another. Some people love to perform and be in front of a group. Some people are terrified by this experience.

Step 2

Most of us have sung together in a group. Ask your kids if they have ever sung in a group. What was it like? Would they want to do it again, regularly ... and why?

Have the group choose a simple song to sing together. "This Little Light of Mine" would be perfect.

In case some of the kids aren't familiar with that song, you can play this video first:

"Odetta — This Little Light of Mine" (EileenML aka Adamfulgence)

<https://youtu.be/J2kDsqGeoLU>

Once you have sung this together, ask you our kids: How does it feel to sing with other people? Is it fun?

Do you like the feeling that your voice is part of one big voice? Do you feel braver? Can you imagine that singing together would help people feel braver when they working toward big changes in the world?



Activity 3: Music for a Better World

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Step 3

Brainstorm more with the kids about the power of singing together. Remember to listen to each other and make your voice part of the one big voice. Here are some ways to sing together:

- Try clapping while you sing together.
- Try sitting on the floor and singing together.
- Try singing close together or spread out around the room.
- Sing quietly. Sing loudly.

How do you feel different? Which do you like best? Can you think of other ways of singing together?

Here is another song that's wonderful to sing together. It has a call and response on the verses and then a simple chorus.

"Lead with Love (SATB Choir, a cappella) — by Melanie DeMore" (Hal Leonard Choral)

<https://youtu.be/PbCLa0iUQd4>

And this video will inspire you and the kids during this activity about changing the world:

"Home" (The Jerusalem Youth Choir)

<https://youtu.be/YJaPUF3IHYg>



Odetta singing at the 1963 March on Washington



Activity 3: Music for a Better World

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More resources on music and social change

10 Social Justice Songs That Made History (Human Rights Careers)

<https://www.humanrightscareers.com/issues/social-justice-songs/>

10 Songs for Social Change (Amnesty International)

<https://www.amnesty.org.au/10-songs-for-social-change/>

Classic Protest Songs (Smithsonian Folkways Shop \$)

<https://folkways.si.edu/classic-protest-songs-from-folkways/african-american-music-folk-struggle-protest/album/smithsonian>

The Power of Pete Seeger's Songs and Stories (Smithsonian Folkways)

<https://folkways.si.edu/power-pete-seegers-songs-stories/childrens-folk-devotional/music/tools-for-teaching/smithsonian>

Protest Music: Songs and Free Speech (First Amendment Museum)

<https://firstamendmentmuseum.org/exhibits/virtual-exhibits/history-of-protest-music/>

Songs of the Civil Rights Movement (Smithsonian Folkways)

<https://folkways.si.edu/search?query=civil+rights+movement>

Top 25 protest songs of all time including 'Lift Every Voice and Sing' and 'Strange Fruit'

<https://www.usatoday.com/in-depth/entertainment/music/2021/02/11/black-music-moved-movement-best-25-protest-songs-all-time/4407532001/>



Activity 4: Music for Inner Peace

Introduction

Peace in the world is possible when people have peace in their hearts. Music can help individuals to focus on the inner experience they choose.

Supplies

- Computer or laptop to listen together
 - Space and opportunity to sit on the floor (if available)
-

Get kids thinking

Write the words “Mantra” and “Meditation” on the Music Mural.

Ask: What do those lyrics “We Shall Not Be Moved” mean? What were the singers saying to each other and to those listening? Do you think it is easy or difficult to be part of a movement for change? Why? What are some things in the world that you would like to change? Do you think many people agree with you?

Let’s get started!

Step 1

Practice these 36-second meditations:

Singing bowls

“Purity Sound Bath, Meditation for Cleansing the Mind and Spirit — Singing Bowls”
(Healing Vibrations)

<https://youtu.be/pcoXfD3PtTY>

Native American flute

“Eagle Song (Live Performance) Mark Akixa — Native American Flute” (Mark Akixa)

<https://youtu.be/9MgRGyTUFVo>



Activity 4: Music for Inner Peace

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Hang drum and percussion

**“Solo Hang Drum in a Tunnel, Daniel Waples — Hang in the Balance, London, England”
(Daniel Waples)**

<https://youtu.be/EDQgU1CPpis>

Just play each for the allotted time, so your kids get an impression of relaxing to the sound. Tell the kids to simply listen, keep your body still, focus on your breathing and on the sound. Then, pause and let them take a breath. Finally, show them what instrument was being played.

Ask: Which sound do you like best? What do you think would happen if you listened to this every day? Or for a longer time? Do you think the music we listen to matters? Does music impact the way we feel?





Activity 4: Music for Inner Peace

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Step 2

Listen to the songs below that use affirmations — spoken words to choose an emotional experience. Consider using the motions, as well.

“I’ve Got Peace Like a River in ASL and Closed Captioning by Rock Church Deaf Ministry” (ConnectRockDeaf)

<https://youtu.be/9L30kChm1aY>

“I am happy. Meditación para niños y adultos” (Anubha Yoga)

<https://youtu.be/mvue3TDWqKY>

Step 3

Talk to the kids about mantras — a mantra is a phrase that is meant to practice a certain feeling.

Ask: What’s your **Mantra**? How would you like to it to make you feel? Make up a mantra for yourself such as “I like myself,” “Today is a good day,” or “I’m learning so much...”

Try putting your mantra to a melody so you can sing it to yourself whenever you think of it, or when you need a little reminder.

Podcasts for kids

Like You: Mindfulness for Kids

<https://likeyoupodcast.com/>

Music Blocks (Colorado Public Radio)

<https://www.cpr.org/podcast/music-blocks/>

Sound Walks (ABC Kids Listen)

<https://www.abc.net.au/kidslisten/soundwalks/archive/>





Open Mic

As you prepare for your final Open Mic, make sure to check in with any kids who haven't had the chance to perform or host yet.

Giving kids a chance to be performers and audience members is the highlight of Tune In!

Learn about how to plan an Open Mic on page 8. Watching this video about how to enjoy performing can help to set the stage for sharing and generosity:

"How to Enjoy Performing" (by Mary Amato)

<https://youtu.be/lx1a8UoNCF8>

Tune In Tonight

Before kids leave for the day, send them home with this suggestion:

Tell your family something you learned this week. Ask them if they have any stories to tell you about music in their lives.

