



The United States Army Field Band

The Joy of Singing

Companion Lesson Plans

THE JOY OF SINGING: ELEMENTARY CHOIRS

This lesson is suitable for inclusion in an elementary school or sixth grade chorus.

OBJECTIVES:

- Students will listen to a recording of *Zion's Walls*, clapping on the steady beat and on the rhythmic beat of the soprano line.
- Students will assess the lyrics and write a description of the scene of the song.
- Students will share their understanding of the scene with the class.
- Students will watch the video portion of *Zion's Walls* and compare their version of the scene with the scene as depicted in the video.
- Students will sing *Zion's Walls* and describe where steps and leaps occur in the melodic line.

MATERIALS:

- *The Joy of Singing* video
- *The Legacy of Aaron Copland* (recording available from The U.S. Army Field Band)
- *Zion's Walls*, Aaron Copland (Boosey and Hawkes, Inc.)
- Paper and pencils

PROCEDURES AND EXPLORATION:

Activity #1: Exploring Rhythm and Melody

1. Listen to the Soldiers' Chorus CD recording of *Zion's Walls*. Ask the students to clap on the steady beat of the music.
2. Listen again and ask the students to clap on the rhythmic beat of the soprano line of the music.
3. Divide the students into two groups and ask half of the class to clap on the steady beat while the other half of the class claps on the soprano line rhythmic beat. Prior to playing the recording for the third time, ask the students to listen to the words and be ready to describe the meaning of the song's lyrics.

Activity #2: Integrative Technique: Exploring Music through Creative Writing

1. Ask the students to write a short paragraph that describes the scene of the song. How might a movie scene or a video of the song look?
2. Ask a few students to read and share their paragraphs with the class. This might also be accomplished in small break-out groups in the older grades. Ask the students to notice the variety of pictures or scenes that are represented in each of the paragraphs.

Activity #3: Exploring Diversity through Music

1. Watch the Soldiers' Chorus video portion of *Zion's Walls*. Ask the students to write down words that describe the scene.
2. Questions for discussion:
 - *How did the video scene depicting the Grandma Moses' painting compare with the imagined scene as described in your paragraph?
 - *How did your family, school, or community affect how you depicted your scene?

Activity #4: Sing!

1. Distribute music for *Zion's Walls* to the students. Ask the students to sing the soprano line, measures 6-24. If the a-flat in measure 23 is beyond the students' range, sing in a lower key.
2. After the students have learned the melody, ask them to assess where the steps or leaps occur in the melodic line.
3. Sing again, and ask students to raise a hand when they sing a leap in the melody.

ASSESSMENT:

- Did the students clap on the steady and rhythmic beat of the song with at least 75% accuracy?
- Did the students write a description of the scene that worked with the song's lyrics?
- Did the students compare their imagined scenes with the scene as depicted in the video?
- Did the students sing the soprano melody (meas. 6-24) with at least 75% accuracy?
- Were the students able to assess where the steps and leaps occurred in the melody?

NATIONAL STANDARDS*:

- 1a. Singing independently, on pitch and in rhythm, with appropriate timbre, diction, and posture, while maintaining a steady tempo.
- 2f. Performing independent instrumental parts while other students play contrasting parts.
- 5a. Reading whole, half, dotted half, quarter, and eighth notes and rests in a variety of meters.
- 6b. Demonstrating perceptual skills by moving, by answering questions about, and by describing aural examples of music.
7. Evaluating music and music performances.
- 8b. Identifying ways in which the principles and subject matter of other disciplines taught in the school are interrelated with those of music.
- 9c. Identifying various uses of music in their daily experiences and describing characteristics that make music suitable for each use.

**From National Standards for Arts Education. Copyright © 1994 by Music Educators National Conference (MENC). Used by permission. The complete National Arts Standards and additional materials relating to the Standards are available from MENC—The National Association for Music Education, 1806 Robert Fulton Drive, Reston, VA 20191.*