

## Music Tells Our Story

### OVERVIEW

#### ESSENTIAL QUESTION

What role might music play in a person's life, identity, and community?

#### OVERVIEW



*In this lesson, students explore the role music plays in their lives by singing together, discussing songs they like, and examining how songs can express their identity and community.*

A favorite song can say a lot about us. It can hold a special place in our heart because of the feelings it stirs up. When we hear a particular song, it can spark memories from a certain time. Songs can also play a significant role in shaping our identity. They can express who we are and connect us to who we spend our time with—creating a community connected by songs. The songs we know and love over the course of a lifetime can represent a musical version of our life story. Gathered together, we could think of them as our Life Songs.

*What is Life Songs?*

*Life Songs is an intergenerational media project organized into a four lesson unit plan. Over the course of the unit, students participate in a group singalong, identify and discuss their favorite songs, prepare interview questions about another person's favorite songs, and conduct and record an interview with an adult who shares how certain songs shaped their life. The unit culminates in students presenting a completed version of their Life Songs Interview. Through Life Songs, students acquire beneficial skills and experience in media production while participating in social and emotional learning activities.*

### OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this lesson, students will:

#### 1. KNOW (KNOWLEDGE):

- The role of music in their classmate's lives
- What different feelings a song can evoke
- How a song can help shape someone's identity
- How songs can foster a community

#### 2. MASTERY OBJECTIVE:

- Students will be able to identify the role music plays in their lives by participating in a group singalong and discussion, and asking and answering questions about the songs they like.

## ACTIVITIES

### MATERIALS THAT MAY BE NEEDED FOR THIS LESSON:

- Audio or video recording of a chosen song as a supportive backing track
- A PDF or a printed lyric sheet of the chosen song's lyrics for students to reference

### MOTIVATIONAL ACTIVITY

**Note:** *It may be best to poll students about songs they know in advance of the singalong to allow adequate preparation, organize any necessary materials, and ensure maximum student participation in the singalong.*

1. Ask students:
  - What's a song you like to sing along to?
2. Reach a consensus on a song and inform students that they will be participating in a class singalong. *(If you are not able to reach a consensus on a song for the singalong, you might consider these options depending on the age of the students: "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" [lullaby], "The Alphabet song" [lullaby], "ABC" [R&B, Soul, Pop], "Happy" [Pop, Rock, R&B], "Old Town Road" [Hip Hop, Country], "Let It Go" [Show Tune].)*
3. Play a recording of the song as a supportive backing track and have students sing along. Afterward, ask students:
  - How did singing the song make you feel?
  - What do you remember about the first time you heard the song?
  - How did you learn the words to the song?
  - Does the song connect you to any particular people in your life?

### PROCEDURE:

1. Display **Image 1, Life Songs Questions**.
2. Instruct students to take out a blank sheet of paper and label it "Life Songs." Then, ask them to think about one of their favorite songs and answer the questions displayed.
3. Direct students to pair up with a classmate and share the answers on their Life Songs sheet. Encourage students to note any similarities between the songs they chose. They should also note any similarities between the answers they gave for the questions.

4. Bring students back together as a class to discuss their pairing and sharing. Ask students:
  - Did your songs have a similar sound? (*For example: the same artist, genre or style, instrumentation, time period, etc.*)
  - Did your songs evoke similar feelings?
  - Did you similarly want to move or dance around to your songs?
  - Did you have similar memories that connected you to your songs?
  - Did your songs have similar connections to particular people in your lives?
5. Ask students to think about their answers and prioritize what resonates most with them about the song they chose: the sound, feelings, movement, memories, or people.
6. At locations around the classroom, label five stations: **Sound, Feeling, Movement, Memory,** and **People**. Instruct students to choose one of the stations to represent their song based on the answers to their questions and then place their Life Songs sheet at that station.
7. Instruct students at each station to share with each other why they chose to place their sheet at that particular station. Once all students have shared with each other, they can return to their seats.

### SUMMARY ACTIVITY

1. Guide students to recognize how the Life Songs sheets at each station represent a group of people: the students who placed their sheets at that station. Ask students:
  - Recognizing that the Life Songs sheets placed together at a particular station represent a group of people, what's a word for a population of people who live together in a particular location? (Guide students to "community.") Would you consider each station a type of community? Why or why not?
  - Could our classroom be considered a type of community? Why or why not? What kind of community might we be?
  - What are some other groups of people or communities that you identify with?
  - Do those communities have songs that you associate with them? (*Examples could be: classmates you play with together, after school clubs or teams, neighborhood friends, etc.*)
  - Do you recognize any similarities or connections between the song you chose and songs associated with another community you identify with?
  - Might there be a person in your life that you could talk to about their Life Songs? Who might that person be? (*Options could be a family member, a teacher/coach, a friend, or a classmate.*)

## EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

1. Ask students to retrieve their Life Songs sheet and place it at a different station that represents their song. Then, have a class discussion about the new communities that were created at each station.
2. Examine the lyrics to an important song in your life. Then, create something inspired by the song. Once completed, share it with others, like your class or another community you identify with. Creative options could be:
  - An audio or video recording of you reciting or singing the lyrics
  - A poem
  - A drawing, painting, or design
  - An infographic

## STANDARDS

### COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS

#### *College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening (K-12)*

Comprehension & Collaboration 1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Comprehension & Collaboration 2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

Presentation of Knowledge 4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

#### *College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Language (K-12)*

Language 1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.