**TE430 – Art Integrated Lesson Plan: Underground Railroad Coded Songs - Joni Starr**

**“I can” learning targets:**

* I can describe how songs are related to the Underground Railroad.
* I can decode messages from African American spirituals.
* I can identify and define rhythm, rhyme, and tempo.
* I can write coded lyrics.
* I can define, compose, and perform a ‘call and response’ song.

**Grade**:  5th **Time**:    90 minutes

**Michigan Curricular Connection:**SOCIAL STUDIES  
-5 – U2.2.2 Describe the life of enslaved Africans and free Africans in the American colonies.

(National Geography Standard 5, p. 152)

-5 – U2.2.3 Describe how Africans living in North America drew upon their African past (e.g., sense of family, role of oral tradition) and adapted elements of new cultures to develop a distinct African-American culture. (National Geography Standard 10, p. 162)  
MUSIC  
-ART.M.IV.5.1 Describe distinguishing characteristics of representative music genres and styles from various historic periods and cultures.

-ART.M.II.5.4 Create and arrange songs and instrumental pieces within specified guidelines.

**Source Materials**: National Geographic Education*:* *Introduction to the Underground Railroad.* <http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/activity/introduction-underground-railroad/?ar_a=1>, ArtsEdge, *What Does This Song Really Say*. <http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/educators/lessons/grade-3-4/What_does_this_song_say.aspx#Preparation>

**Teaching Materials:** Lyric sheets for Hoe Emma Hoe and Wade in the Water, prompt cards for discussion groups and lyric writing, percussive instruments

*Hoe Emma Hoe*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SIoWRVE-H58>  
*Wade in the Water*: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dhjGzBCOw88>

***Engagement - 10-15***

**Guided Pantomime** – ask students to pantomime the following:

You have been up since dawn and working in the fields picking cotton. But these fields do not belong to you, you are enslaved to the plantation owner and he demands that you work in all conditions, six days a week with little or no break. Today it reaches 100 degrees at 10:00 am. You are thirsty and tired and are not allowed to stop.

You long to break free of this life but are fearful to attempt escape, yet others have tried and succeeded. You hear stories and begin to think about running away. But, right now, you are working in the field.

Play and sing the song: “Hoe Emma Hoe” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SIoWRVE-H58>

***Internal Assessment:***

* What time period are we introducing?
* What was life like during slavery?
* Why do you think music was important?
* Why would enslaved persons listen to songs if they wanted to escape?

*Grouping: whole group Time: 10-15 minutes Type: drama/music*

***Building Knowledge – 20***

***This section is done in small groups with content prompts. Each group receives all prompts but is then responsible for sharing out one of the areas of content with the whole group. After the sharing/discussion, play “Hoe Emma Hoe” again with students singing.***

**Part One: American Spirituals**

Africans brought with them long-standing religious traditions that highlighted the importance of storytelling. Music was an essential element in communicating identity, shared social mores, traditional customs, and ethnic history. The primary function of the spirituals was as communal songs sung in a religious gathering, performed in a call-response pattern reminiscent of West African religions.

Enslaved persons were not allowed to talk while working, but they could sing; therefore, many slaves disguised their communications through song. The spiritual is a type of song that served many functions for slaves. These songs reflected their connection to spirituality, their desire to be free, and they often gave instructions to other slaves about how they could escape.

Discuss the genre of spirituals.  
How does the song Hoe Emma Hoe reflect the genre of a spiritual?

**Part Two: The Underground Railroad**

The Underground Railroad was neither underground nor a railroad but is was secret (underground) and passengers traveled on it (railroad). It was a series of “stations” hosted by sympathizers that escaped slaves could travel to find freedom in Canada. The Underground Railroad has been described as "silent and secret" and "running on silent rails in the dark of night." People developed codes, passwords, and secret signals, to be used by runaways and "investors" in the Underground Railroad.

Discuss the terms: freedom train, conductor, stations and agent.

What might these terms mean to escaping slaves?

**Part Three: Song Writing**

Refer to the song “Hoe Emma Hoe” from the engagement. Introduce the call and response form in music: one leader sings the melody and others repeat (respond) as a group.

These songs helped the slaves synchronize group tasks and made the work of difficult labor easier.

Review these songwriting terms:

1. *Repetition*: how many times are words or phrases repeated, this emphasizes meaning and feeling
2. *Rhyme*: words that rhyme emphasize meaning and assist with remembering words and themes
3. *Tempo*: how fast or slow the song is, this helps creates an environment and feeling about the themes of the song

Define ‘call and response’ songs.  
Provide examples of repetition, rhyme, and tempo from Hoe Emma Hoe.

Play the song “Hoe Emma Hoe” again with students singing. Distribute song sheets.

***Internal assessment: to be discussed during student sharing of information***

* **What role did spirituals serve during slavery times?**
* **What is the Underground Railroad? Who traveled it?**
* **Why did slaves have to code their songs?**
* **What were some of the coded words or phrases?**
* **What is a call and response form?**
* **How much repetition or rhyme is in “Hoe Emma Hoe?”**
* **Does the tempo of the song make a difference in its feeling?**

Grouping:  small/whole group               Time:  20 minutes Type: music/discussion

***Explore - 30-40***

**Part One: Decoding Lyrics**Working in small groups hand out lyric sheets of “Wade in the Water” and ask students to interpret the possible meanings of the words for escaping enslaved persons.

Play song for students and discuss their ideas.   
*Wade in the Water*: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dhjGzBCOw88>

***Internal assessment:***

* What are some of the words or phrases found?
* Do some words or phrases have multiple meanings?
* How do you interpret them?
* Why might some lines be repeated?
* What is the tempo and how does it add to the feeling of the song?
* Is there much rhyme? Why is that important?
* When would they have sung these songs?

**Part Two**: **Writing Coded Lyrics in a Call and Response song**

Continuing in small groups, students turn their prompts into coded song lyrics in a call and response song. They can refer to any of the words or phrases already used, or they can write original phrases.

Distribute prompt cards with phrases for students to code. Use these in order to create a “story.”

1. I plan to escape tonight. Meet me by the river. The leader will show us the way.
2. Be sure to sleep in the day and travel at night. Stay away from roads. Hide in the woods.
3. Keep traveling north. Watch the sun and stars for directions. Leave no trace of your escape.
4. Travel quietly. Listen for dogs or slave hunters. Watch for those willing to help.
5. Keep freedom in your mind. Stay hopeful. Don’t be afraid.

Students rehearse their songs. They may use percussive instruments if desired.

***Internal assessment:*** *can be side coached in small groups or done as full discussion*

* Was it difficult to write the codes? Why or why not?
* What were some of the written instructions in the writing?
* Did you use repetition or rhyme?
* Why did you choose the tempo you did?
* Are songs easier to remember than the words? Why or why not?
* Do you hear instruments in your song?

Grouping: small/whole groups        Time:  30-40 minutes Type: listening/interpreting/writing

**Sharing - 15**

Students share their songs while the audience responds in call and response.

Assess after all groups have finished.

* What was the hardest part about composing a song?
* Did you use repetition or rhyme?
* Why did you choose the tempo you did?
* What song/phrase will you remember from the performances?
* What was it like to be hear others respond to you?
* What was it like to respond?
* Why was this form important during slave times?

Grouping:  small/whole group  Time:  15 minutes Type: singing

**Evaluation and Closure - 10**

* How did the songs reflect the Underground Railroad experience?
* Why were spirituals important in slave life?
* Why was it important to communicate in codes?
* How did rhythm, repetition, or tempo impact the songs or messages?
* What inspiration did you use when writing your lyrics?
* Was it difficult to write the lyrics/song?
* Why is the call and response song a good form for these coded songs?
* How are the songs different when performing them?
* In what places might we want coded songs today?

Grouping:  whole group  Time:  10 minutes Type: discussion

**After the Lesson students could:**

* Watch *The Journey*, a National Geographic interactive video on the Underground Railroad <http://education.nationalgeographic.com/education/multimedia/interactive/the-underground-railroad/?ar_a=1>
* Research the geographic path that defined the Underground Railroad.
* Draw a map that includes some of the coded phrases students created.
* Use tableaux to show traveling on the Underground Railroad.
* Research one of the historic individuals who contributed to the success of the Underground Railroad.
* Write a journal from the point of view of the runaway slave.
* Read one of the many books on the subject. Books vary from picture books to chapter books.

***Notes***:

* 'Call-and-response': One leader sings the melody and others repeat (respond) as a group
* These songs helped the slaves synchronize group tasks and made the work of difficult labor easier.

**Vocabulary – Social Studies and Music**

* Slavery/Enslaved persons
* Underground Railroad
* Sympathizer
* Spirituals
* Musical forms
* Call and response songs
* Repetition
* Rhyme
* Tempo

***Hoe Emma Hoe,*** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SIoWRVE-H58>

**Singer:**

Hoe Emma Hoe

You turn around dig a hole in the ground

Hoe Emma Hoe

**Chorus repeats**

Hoe Emma Hoe

You turn around dig a hole in the ground

Hoe Emma Hoe

**Singer**: Say, Emma you from the country

**Chorus**

Hoe Emma Hoe

You turn around dig a hole in the ground

Hoe Emma Hoe

**Singer**: Emma help me to pull these weeds

**Chorus:**

Hoe Emma Hoe

You turn around dig a hole in the ground

Hoe Emma Hoe

**Singer**: Emma works harder than two strong men

**Chorus:**

Hoe Emma Hoe

You turn around dig a hole in the ground

Hoe Emma Hoe

**Chorus:**

Hoe Emma Hoe

You turn around dig a hole in the ground

Hoe Emma Hoe

***Wade in the Water,*** <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dhjGzBCOw88>

**Chorus  
Wade in the water.  
Wade in the water, children.  
Wade in the water.  
God's gonna trouble the water.**

**Well, who are these children all dressed in red?  
God's a-gonna trouble the water  
Must be the children that Moses led  
God's a-gonna trouble the water.**

**Chorus**

**Who's that young girl dressed in white   
Wade in the Water   
Must be the Children of Israelites   
God's gonna trouble the Water.**

**Chorus**

**Jordan's water is chilly and cold.  
God's gonna trouble the water.  
It chills the body, but not the soul.  
God's gonna trouble the water.**

**Chorus**

**If you get there before I do.  
God's gonna trouble the water.  
Tell all of my friends I'm coming too.  
God's gonna trouble the water.**

**Chorus**

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