

**“This Little Light of Mine”
African American Spiritual
Arranged by Emily Crocker**

National Standards:

1. Singing, alone and with others, a varied repertoire.
5. Reading and notating music.
6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.
7. Evaluating music and musical performances.
8. Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts.
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture.

Objectives:

- Students will be able to hear and analyze different performances of the same song.
- Students will be able to read two scores of the same song and find differences in the musical phrases and musical notation of each using previously learned skills.
- Students will perform the song using correct posture, correct rhythms, and accurate pitches and incorporate ASL sign language in their performance.
- Students will further their understanding of the role of the African-American Spiritual style in musical development as well as the history of The United States.

Materials:

- 2008 World’s Largest Concert student copies of “This Little Light of Mine” (www.sibeliusmusic.com/menc)
- Two different recordings of “This Little Light of Mine” (The differences need to be in several types of elements to include; differing forms, styles, performing groups etc. One needs to be the “World’s Largest Concert” version.)
- Overheads of the sheet music to refer to in discussion section of lesson
- Pictures of ASL sign language signs needed to sign the song “This Little Light of Mine”
- Venn Diagram to note the similarities and differences of the versions
- Pens/pencils for students

Prior Knowledge:

- Students are familiar with basic rhythm and melodic notation.
- Students are familiar with basic terminology to describe form, styles, performing groups.

Procedures:

1. Distribute copies of both versions to each student in the class along with a pencil to mark differences they hear or find.
2. Explain that the class will hear two versions of the song “This Little Light of Mine” and it is their job to find the similarities and differences between the versions.
3. Have the students look at both scores and find anything that stands out to them as being different. List the differences the students find in separate lists on the board.

4. Lead the students into discovering that both versions have the same basic lyrics, melody, and rhythms.
5. Have the students discuss what they think they will hear in each version.
6. Have the students listen to each version (admonish them not to sing or hum along - they need to listen carefully). Ask them to notate anything they hear that is different on the scores of the music.
7. Using a Venn Diagram, discuss the differences between the two versions of “This Little Light of Mine.”
8. Using Solfege and/or Orff best practices to assist the students in learning the World’s Largest Concert version of “This Little Light of Mine.”
9. Lead the class in developing the ASL sign language to use when performing the song.

Indicators of Success:

- Students will demonstrate the ability to search a score for specific differences in phrases and notation & describe each.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to sing the song from beginning to end using correct singing techniques and in the sequence indicated on the score incorporating ASL sign language.
- Students will demonstrate the ability to listen to two different versions of the same song and describe the differences using musical terminology.

Interdisciplinary Extensions:

Science: Have the students decide if their “prediction” of what the differences and similarities were close to what they discovered after listening to the versions.

Language Development: Looking at similarities and differences in lyrics assists students to develop their verbal/auditory skills in listening and discriminating verbal messages they receive.

Math: Have the students “connect the dots” of the notes on the staves of the scores and discover the contour of the melody. This will assist the students skills in creating, reading and, comprehending line graphs.

Social Studies: Discuss the origin of the African American Spiritual and that they were used to assist the slaves in following the “Underground Railroad” to freedom in Canada.

Social Skills: By learning the ASL sign language to sing the song gives the students an appreciation of what is needed to communicate with people who have hearing

difficulties. This also opens the door to a discussion about respecting others even if they are different by means of a disability of handicap.

This lesson plan for “This Little Light of Mine” was created by Katie Northcraft Reynard, Music Specialist, Florida Music Educator’s Association Member, John M. Sexton Elementary School, Pinellas County Schools, St. Petersburg, Florida.