

JOURNEY IN... YEAR ONE

DIVINE WITHIN MUSIC

This lesson's Big Ideas:

- All human beings are a union of flesh and spirit. There are many words and metaphors that help us talk about the soul as *enfleshed* or flesh as *en-souled*.
- Within every human being, there is something of the Divine. All bodies and minds house a holy spark.

Lesson Materials

- Several examples or photos of musical instruments from each of the major musical families: brass, woodwinds, percussion, string, etc.
- CD player and CD of "A Child's Celebration of Soul" as well as a sample of blues and gospel
- Chromaharp or guitar
- Lyrics for "I've Got A River of Life"

TEACHER REFLECTION AND PREPARATION

🕒 Ahead of time

Our body is precious. It is a vehicle for awakening.

- Buddha

Nobody knows what the soul is.

It comes and goes

like the wind over the water ~

sometimes, for days,

you don't think of it.

- from "Maybe" by Mary Oliver

One tale [from a particular Native American tradition] is about how the person's shadow lives a life of its own. Each night, when one lies down to sleep, the shadow departs, going out to explore the world it is not free to explore during the day. The shadow may become quite intrigued by the large and strange world, and be reluctant to return home at daybreak. So it is necessary for the person, early in the morning, to hum the shadow home. Each person has a song that only its shadow will recognize, and the shadow must obey the hum. If one is too busy or too thoughtless, to hum the shadow home, the whole day will be difficult. Until the shadow comes home, the person is not whole, is not all together. It is like the person who got up on the wrong side of the bed - part of him is still missing. Humming the shadow home is necessary for harmony, for inner unity.

- Mary José Hobday
In Western Spirituality

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL LESSON

-
-
-
-
-

YOUR FIELD EXPERIENCES: FEEDBACK AND NOTES

-
-
-
-
-

GATHERING AND FOCUSING INSTRUMENTS' SOULS

🕒 10 minutes or so

Instruments need energy to bring them to life. Point out that an instrument does nothing—is just a body—until a human being gives it some energy.

- Have each student pick an instrument from your shelf or from a pile in the circle and hold it in their lap *or* show the group a series of pictures of different instruments. We'll have a circle discussion.
- All sound is vibration. Ask the kids for their own definition of 'vibration'. If vibration is what makes an instrument come 'alive', which part of each instrument holds its 'soul'? What does a person have to do to make it 'sing'?
- Can other objects in this room become musical instruments? How?

Wondering Together

- I wonder if music a living thing? How do you know?
- I wonder if music is more connected to people's bodies or people's spirits?
- I wonder how people's bodies and spirits are like instruments?
- I wonder what makes people alive? What's inside our bodies other than our organs? Is it a vibration? Is it a breath? Is it a song?
- I wonder, if your body were an instrument, which one would it be like?
- I wonder what happens if an instrument is broken or different from other instruments like it? Is it useless? Should it be fixed?

PRIMARY ACTIVITY ONE LISTENING AND LEARNING: SOUL MUSIC

🕒 15 minutes

Your group of children may or may not have heard of "soul music". Here's a little interesting history about it:

Soul music is a blend of two other kinds of music: blues and gospel. Blues music started in the southern states and talked mostly about the physical experience of being human: feeling hungry, being tired, needing a hug at night. (Play a sample of blues on a CD player and ask for observations about the sound, the instruments, the words). Gospel music was sung in church and was meant to inspire people to think about spiritual things. (Play a sample of gospel music). Some African American musicians in the South started blending the two kinds of music together, but

not everyone was happy about the new style. They said it wasn't good to sing 'body' words to church music or to sing 'spiritual' words to the blues music. The musicians argued that people are made up of body and soul and music has to celebrate and feed both. So blues became the 'body' and gospel became the 'spirit' and together they made 'soul music'.

We'll listen to some soul music and talk about it together. Play several tracks from "A Child's Celebration of Soul" and discuss them with questions like the following:

Wondering Together

- I wonder how this music makes you feel?
- I wonder if you heard some words about the body? About the spirit?
- I wonder what the songwriter wanted to share with us by writing that song?
- I wonder if you've heard any of these songs before? Where? Did you know that they were "soul music" songs?

PRIMARY ACTIVITY TWO

SONG: "I'VE GOT A RIVER OF LIFE"

🕒 10-15 minutes

With a chromaharp or guitar accompaniment, sing this song with the kids. If they sing with their whole spirit—loud, beautiful voices,—for the first two verses, invite them to play a percussion instrument during the last verse. Read the lyrics together before singing and ask if kids understand the words.

"I've Got A River of Life"

- cheesy words by Kerri Meyer,
adapted from the words and melody by L. Casebolt

I've got a river of life flowing inside me
Makes my heart beat strong, helps my eyes to see
Rushes through my veins, part of one big sea
I've got a river of life flowing inside me

Refrain:

Rise up and dance, oh, my body!
Rise up and sing, oh, my soul!
Rise up and live, oh, flesh and spirit,
In this union, I am whole!

I've got a holy spark glowing inside me
Makes my smile warm, gives me light to see
Burns with love and truth, shows me how to be
I've got a holy spark glowing inside me

refrain

I've got the breath of Life blowing inside me
Lifts my spirits high, sets my body free

Whispers in my ears of the Mystery
I've got the breath of Life blowing inside me

refrain and fin

Chords: D G D/D Bm E A7 / D G D / D Bm D A D
refrain— D G D / D E7 A / D G D / G D A D

SUPPLEMENTARY ACTIVITY

CREATING AN INSTRUMENT, PLAYING ITS SPIRIT

🕒 8-10 minutes

Feel free to use this activity to fill extra time. You don't have to send the flutes home with the kids; you can reuse the materials week after week. Put used PVC sections into a bin to be run through the dishwasher.

- The materials for this activity are simple: several varied, short lengths of hollow 1/2-inch tubing (bamboo, PVC, acrylic—whatever you've found and can cut), pennies and duct tape. We'll use these two materials to make small flutes.

Wondering Together

Before you begin making the flutes, name the children as 'creators'. Like the powerful beings of creation myths, we have the raw materials for the 'body' of our flute, which we must assemble before we can breathe 'life' into the instrument.

- If the children have been to the story lesson or drama lesson, ask them to name some of the materials the creators used to form the human bodies in the world stories.
- I wonder how our bodies came into being?
- Can something make music if it isn't an instrument? Does 'musical' have to mean 'manmade'?
- After we create the instruments, I wonder what we'll have to do to bring them to life?
- Allow each child to select one length of 'pipe'. They can test the sound, if they'd like, but Teachers and Guides should be aware of the potential to spread colds through saliva. Have antibacterial gel handy.
- Cap the pipes' bottoms with a penny and a square of duct tape. Make sure you have a good seal.
- When the flutes are assembled, invite the children to bring them to life by breathing into the flute. The pan flute is played by pursing the lips and blowing across the tops of the open tubes, just as you'd play an empty soda bottle.

GROUNDING ACTIVITY

HUMMING OUR SPIRITS HOME

🕒 8-10 minutes

- Read or summarize the reading about humming one's spirit home from the Teacher's Reflection.
- Ask the children to share stories about a really rough morning they've had, one where they just didn't feel like themselves and couldn't do even the simplest things. Perhaps the Native American belief explains this! We just have to call our spirits back by humming.

Have everyone lie on the floor and try to figure out what their spirits' 'hum' might be. It'll get noisy, so have them put their hands over their ears. Can they remember their tune well enough to hum it several times? Would they like to share it?

CLOSING AND LEAVE-TAKING

🕒 2 minutes

Teach the children the greeting word, *namaste* (pronounced evenly: nah-mah-stay). This Pali word translates as, “The Divine within me sees and greets the Divine within you.” Generally, the word is spoken with a gesture which the Thai culture names *wai*: the hands, pressed together, are held just above the heart and the head is bowed to meet the tips of the fingers.

Give the children time to say goodbye to each other and their Guide with this beautiful gesture.