

## EXPLORE CREATING MUSIC INSPIRED BY SWEET HONEY IN THE ROCK!



### YOUR TEACHING ARTIST: GIVE GET SISTET

As women of African descent, the members of Give Get Sistet have a visceral understanding of the power of music to engage, empower, heal, and transform. Being teaching artists gives them the opportunity to teach others to use their voices as instruments for building community, as technology for mental health management, and as tools for social change. They believe that singing together can change the world.

The Give Get Sistet is an expandable improvisational chorus of women started in 2010 and based in the Twin Cities, with ties around the world.

### ARTISTIC MODELS INCLUDED IN THIS LESSON:

- "Still the Same Me" by Sweet Honey in the Rock

### TO PREPARE FOR THIS LESSON:

- Have students listen to Sweet Honey in the Rock's music.
- Have students listen to Bobby McFerrin's music.

### LEARNING GOALS:

- Students will practice collaborating by making music with others.
- Students will practice working as a musical ensemble.
- Students will enjoy making music without the stress of doing it right.
- Students will experience the importance and necessity of their voice within their ensemble and within the classroom.

### MEASURING ACHIEVEMENT:

Reflect on students' ability to create music in a collaborative setting and learn to process feedback at the beginning and end of the lesson. Students should compose and perform at the end of the lesson together.

**GRADE LEVEL(S):** Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade



### COMPAS PRISM PROGRAM

Teaching Artist-designed lesson plans inspired by the work of local and national African American artists

## LESSON ACTIVITIES

**(COMPLETE THESE ACTIVITIES IN THE ORDER LISTED TO ACHIEVE CLASSROOM LEARNING GOALS)**

**Warm Up:** Thunderstorm - Students will create the sound of a thunderstorm using only their bodies.

- Students are seated in a circle. The leader begins a sound/action, then the musician to the left of the leader joins with the same sound/action, and the musician to his/her/their left joins and on and on until the sound/action comes all the way back to the leader.
- The leader begins the next cycle of sound and it continues around the circle. This cycle repeats until the storm is finished.
- 1st cycle: making wind sounds with the breath. 2nd cycle: tapping the index finger on the palm of the other hand to make the first rain drops. 3rd cycle: tapping all four fingers on the palm to make more rain. 4th cycle: clapping to intensify the rain. 5th cycle: slapping the thighs/chest/desk to make thunder.

Once the leader has gone through all the cycles of the storm, they do the whole storm in reverse, ending in silence.

**Reflection Questions:** Were we successful? Did we sound like a thunderstorm? Did it take all of us, or could one person make a storm by his/her/themselves? What other sounds can we add to the storm? How is this like a musical ensemble?

Try creating a new Thunderstorm without a leader. Each musician can choose his/her/their own sound and add it, or remove it when he/she/they chooses.

**Improv Time!** Play a recording of Improv Time - Rhythm Slamm

- Ask the students to sing or play each of the rhythms they hear. Talk about each instrument/part as a voice in a conversation.
- In groups of 4 - 8, have the musicians create their own percussion song. The parts can be created vocally, or with the body, or with percussion instruments.
- The first musician creates a 4 bar percussive phrase. (Encourage your students to make it up as they go along.) The first musician repeats his/her/their phrase 2 times. The next musician adds a new sound and rhythm to the song. Repeating his/her/their musical phrase at least twice before the next musician adds his/her/their phrase. Continue the process until all the musicians in the group have a part in the song.
- Have the musicians play around with adding and removing their musical phrase. Give the song a title. Play a recording of Improv Time! - African Oasis. Ask the students to sing or play each of the rhythms and vocal lines they hear. Talk about how adding vocalization impacts the song.
- In the same small groups, have each of the students improvise a vocal phrase to add to their song in the same sequence as the last activity. Students may not be able to play a rhythm and sing at the same time. It is ok, if they switch back and forth or choose one.

**Share:** Have each group share their original composition with the class. Encourage them to keep playing with their rhythms and vocal patterns even while they are “performing”, to keep exploring and finding new things, or improvise an entirely new part. You could also have one member from each group conduct the song by pointing to other members in the group to have them add their part or remove it, to hear different variations of the song.

**Reflection:** Discuss what it's like to create a song with others. If a group seemed to do it easily, have them talk about their process and what made it easy. If a group had an especially difficult time, have them talk about what made it so hard. Discuss what it feels like to improvise. Give the musicians the opportunity to compliment another artist or group in the room. Tell he/she/them specifically what you appreciate about their performance.

### EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ADDRESSED IN THIS LESSON PLAN:

- 3.5.4.7.1 Identify the elements of music including melody, rhythm, harmony, dynamics, tone color, texture, form and their related concepts.
- 3.7.5.10.1 Identify the characteristics of music from a variety of cultures including contributions of Minnesota American Indian tribes and communities.
- 3.1.5.10.1 Improvise or compose to express musical ideas using the voice or an instrument.
- 3.5.2.4.1 Reflect on a performance based on the feedback of others.
- 3.0.3.6.1 Describe how music communicates meaning.
- 3.1.2.3.1 Improvise and compose rhythms, melodies, and accompaniments using voice or instruments to express a specific musical idea.
- 3.0.3.5.1 Sing alone and in groups such as rounds and part songs or play instruments alone and in a group.
- 3.8.2.2.1 Analyze how the elements of music including melody, rhythm, harmony, dynamics, tone color, texture, form and their related concepts are combined to communicate meaning in the creation of, performance of, or response to music.

### EQUIPMENT/SUPPLIES NEEDED:

- Device to play music.
- Recording of “Still the Same Me” by Sweet Honey in the Rock
- Percussion instruments (optional)

### OTHER NOTES FROM YOUR COMPAS TEACHING ARTIST:

- We believe that the deep listening necessary to create music improvisationally builds community.
- We believe that singing together is transformative.
- We witness how music is a force for activism.
- We honor Sweet Honey in the Rock for their art, for their social justice work, and for their inspiration.
- We encourage you to share more of their music with your students, and to let it inspire you to make songs together about the way we are, and the way we hope to be.

**WHAT COULD A COMPAS TEACHING ARTIST  
HELP YOU ACHIEVE IN YOUR CLASSROOM?**

**Learn more at [COMPAS.org](https://COMPAS.org)**

