Dear Teachers,

Thank you for joining us for the Applause Series presentation of Soweto Gospel Choir. This internationally celebrated choir is acclaimed for their soul-stirring performances, which reflect the rich traditions of South African gospel and indigenous music. Through their high energy dance and brilliant vocals, it is our hope that students re-discover how music lifts the soul while also gaining a new understanding and appreciation for the rich cultures of South Africa.

We hope that this study guide helps you connect the performance to your in-classroom curriculum in ways that you find valuable. In the following pages, you will find contextual information about the performance and related subjects, as well as a variety of discussion questions and activities. Some pages are appropriate to reproduce for your students; others are designed more specifically with you, their teacher, in mind. As such, we hope that you are able to “pick and choose” material and ideas from the study guide to meet your class’s unique needs.

See you at the theater,

Des Moines Performing Arts Education Team

Support for Des Moines Performing Arts education programs and the Applause Series is provided by:

This study guide was compiled and written by Karoline Myers and Janelle Ketcher; edited by Michelle McDonald.
Des Moines Performing Arts is a private, nonprofit organization and is an important part of central Iowa’s cultural community. It is recognized nationally for excellence as a performing arts center and is committed to engaging the Midwest in world-class entertainment, education, and cultural activities.

Des Moines Performing Arts presents professional touring productions, including theater direct from Broadway, world-renowned dance companies, family programming, comedy, and concerts.

Education and Community Engagement programs are core to Des Moines Performing Arts' mission as a nonprofit performing arts center.

Public education programs allow audience members and local artists to make meaningful and personal connections to the art they experience on our stages. Guest lectures and Q&As with company members allow audiences to explore the inner workings of the performance. In addition, master classes, workshops, and summer camps taught by visiting performers give local actors, dancers, and musicians the chance to increase their skills by working directly with those who know what it takes to succeed on the professional stage.

Through its K-12 School Programs, Des Moines Performing Arts strives to ensure that central Iowa students have affordable access to high quality arts experiences as part of their education. More than 50,000 students and educators attend curriculum-connected school matinee performances through the Applause Series annually. In addition, Des Moines Performing Arts sends teaching artists into the schools to provide hands-on workshops and residencies in special opportunities that engage students directly in the creative process. And, through its partnership with the John F. Kennedy Center, Des Moines Performing Arts provides teachers with in-depth professional development training on how to use the arts in their classrooms to better impact student learning. The Iowa High School Musical Theater Awards is Des Moines Performing Arts’ newest initiative to support the arts in Iowa schools, providing important learning tools and public recognition to celebrate the achievements of students involved in their high school theater programs.

DID YOU KNOW?

More than 300,000 people visit Des Moines Performing Arts venues each year.

Des Moines Performing Arts opened in 1979.

Des Moines Performing Arts has three theater spaces:
- Civic Center, 2744 seats
- Stoner Theater, 200 seats
- Temple Theater, 299 seats (located in the Temple for the Performing Arts)

No seat is more than 155 feet from center stage in the Civic Center.

Cowles Commons, situated just west of the Civic Center, is a community gathering space that is also part of Des Moines Performing Arts. The space features the Crusoe Umbrella sculpture by artist Claes Oldenburg.

As a nonprofit organization, Des Moines Performing Arts depends on donor funding to support facilities, programming, and education programs.

The Applause Series started in 1996. You are joining us for our 20th season of school performances.
YOUR ROLE AS AN AUDIENCE MEMBER

Attending a live performance is a unique and exciting opportunity. Unlike the passive experience of watching a movie, audience members play an important role in every live performance. As they act, sing, dance, or play instruments, the performers on stage are very aware of the audience’s mood and level of engagement. Each performance calls for a different response from audience members. Musicians and dancers may desire the audience to focus silently on the stage and applaud only during natural breaks in the performance. Audience members can often take cues from performers on how to respond to the performance appropriately. For example, performers will often pause or bow for applause at a specific time.

As you experience the performance, consider the following questions:

- What kind of live performance is this (a play, a dance, a concert, etc.)?
- What is the mood of the performance? Is the subject matter serious or lighthearted?
- What is the mood of the performers? Are they happy and smiling or somber and reserved?
- Are the performers encouraging the audience to clap to the music or move to the beat?
- Are there natural breaks in the performance where applause seems appropriate?

A SPECIAL EXPERIENCE

Seeing a live performance is a very special experience. Although it is not required, many people enjoy dressing up when they attend the theater.

THEATER ETIQUETTE

Here is a checklist of general guidelines to follow when you visit the Civic Center:

- Leave all food, drinks, and chewing gum at school or on the bus.
- Cameras, recording devices, and personal listening devices are not permitted in the theater.
- Turn off and put away all cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices before the performance begins.
- Do not text during the performance.
- Respect the theater. Remember to keep your feet off of the seats and avoid bouncing up and down.
- When the house lights dim, the performance is about to begin. Please stop talking at this time.
- **Talk before and after the performance only.** Remember, the theater is designed to amplify sound. Other audience members and the performers on stage can hear your voice!
- Use the restroom before the performance or wait until the end. If you must leave the theater during the show, make sure the first set of doors closes before you open the second — this will keep unwanted light from spilling into the theater.
- Appropriate responses such as laughing and applauding are appreciated. Pay attention to the artists on stage — they will let you know what is appropriate.
- Open your eyes, ears, mind, and heart to the entire experience. Enjoy yourself!

GOING TO THE THEATER information is adapted from the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts study guide materials.
Thank you for choosing the Applause Series with Des Moines Performing Arts. Below are tips for organizing a safe and successful field trip to the Civic Center.

ORGANIZING YOUR FIELD TRIP
* Please include all students, teachers, and chaperones in your ticket request.
* After you submit your ticket request, you will receive a confirmation e-mail within five business days. Your invoice will be attached to the confirmation e-mail.
* Payment policies and options are located at the top of the invoice. Payment (or a purchase order) for your reservation is due four weeks prior to the date of the performance.
* The Civic Center reserves the right to cancel unpaid reservations after the payment due date.
* Tickets are not printed for Applause Series shows. Your invoice will serve as the reservation confirmation for your group order.
* Schedule buses to arrive in downtown Des Moines at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the performance. This will allow time to park, walk to the Civic Center, and be seated in the theater.
* Performances are approximately 60 minutes unless otherwise noted on the website and printed materials.
* All school groups with reservations to the show will receive an e-mail notification when the study guide is posted online. Please note that study guides are only printed and mailed upon request.

ARRIVAL TO THE CIVIC CENTER
* When arriving at the Civic Center, please have an adult lead your group for identification and check-in purposes. A Des Moines Performing Arts staff member may be stationed outside the building to direct you to a specific entrance.
* Des Moines Performing Arts staff will usher groups into the building as quickly as possible. Once inside, you will be directed to the check-in area.
* Applause seating is not ticketed. Ushers will escort groups to their seats; various seating factors including group size, grade levels, arrival time, and special needs seating requests may be used to assign a group’s specific location in the hall.
* We request that an adult lead the group into the theater and other adults position themselves throughout the group; we request this arrangement for supervision purposes, especially in the event that a group must be seated in multiple rows.
* Please allow ushers to seat your entire group before rearranging seat locations and taking groups to the restroom.
* As a reminder, children under the age of three are not permitted in the theater for Applause performances.

DIRECTIONS AND PARKING
* Directions: From I-235, take Exit 8A (Downtown Exits) and the ramp toward 3rd Street and 2nd Avenue. Turn onto 3rd Street and head south.
* Police officers are stationed at the corner of 3rd and Locust Streets and will direct buses to parking areas with hooded meters near the Civic Center. Groups traveling in personal vehicles are responsible for locating their own parking in ramps or metered (non-hooded) spots downtown.
* Buses will remain parked for the duration of the show. At the conclusion, bus drivers must be available to move their bus if necessary, even if their students are staying at the Civic Center to eat lunch or take a tour.
* Buses are not generally permitted to drop off or pick up students near the Civic Center. If a bus must return to school during the performance, prior arrangements must be made with Des Moines Performing Arts Education staff.

IN THE THEATER
* In case of a medical emergency, please notify the nearest usher. A medical assistant is on duty for all Civic Center performances.
* We ask that adults handle any disruptive behavior in their groups. If the behavior persists, an usher may request your group to exit the theater.
* Following the performance groups may exit the theater and proceed to the bus(es).
* If an item is lost at the Civic Center, please see an usher or contact us after the performance at 515.246.2355.

QUESTIONS?
Please contact the Education department at education@desmoinesperformingarts.org or 515.246.2355. Thank you!
VOCABULARY

CHORAL TERMS

chorus: this term is generally used to describe a group of vocalists in which each voice part (soprano, alto, tenor, bass) has more than one singer. Choral singing is one of the most popular ways to make music. Sometimes, there are separate choruses for males and females. Choirs with both men and women are called mixed choruses.

soprano: This is the highest sounding vocal or instrumental part. Usually only young boys and females can reach the notes required to sing the part. The range is usually middle ‘C’ to the ‘F’ that is 18 notes (2.5 octaves) higher.

alto: Italian for “high’, this term now used to generally describe the lower of the two vocal ranges for women. Alto is the second highest vocal range surpassed only by soprano.

tenor: this term is used to describe the highest natural range of a male voice. Today, tenor is one of the most expressive voices in a vocal composition.

bass: this is the lowest male voice part. Basses often sing the “baseline” of the song, which is made up of notes that follow the core of the melody and are fundamental to the structure of the song.

ensemble: this refers to the entire group or orchestra that performs a piece. The sopranos, altos, tenors, and bases or any members of a group performing together make up an ensemble.

a capella: this musical term comes from Italian meaning, “in the style of the chapel.” Developed during the Renaissance, the term was used to describe choral music that was pure and unaccompanied by music instruments.

CONTEXT TERMS

apartheid: a system in place in South Africa that separated people based on their race and skin color. Apartheid became law in 1948, when certain areas were declared as white only and other areas as black only. White people and black people had to live and work apart from each other. Even though there were less white people than black people, apartheid laws allowed white people to rule the country and enforce unfair laws. Apartheid finally came to the end in the early 1990s.

township: a segregated residential settlement for blacks, usually located outside a city or town. Soweto, the location that Soweto Gospel Choir is from, is an abbreviation for South Western Townships and encompasses an urban area bordering the south of the city of Johannesburg in South Africa.
ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

Soweto Gospel Choir dazzles audiences around the world with their traditional and contemporary gospel music. This Grammy award winning group from South Africa will have you clapping along to their heartfelt songs.

As time allows, there will be a brief opportunity for an audience Q&A with the choir.

Run Time: Approximately 1 hour

THE PIECES
During the performance, Soweto Gospel Choir will announce each of their song choices from the stage. Songs for the school show will likely be taken from the following set:

HLONOLOFATSA
The Soweto Gospel Choir treats this song as its anthem. It is an appeal to God to bless whatever activity you are engaged in.

ZIYAMAZ UMELUSI
This gospel piece is about the 'flock' knowing who their shepherd is and will therefore not be misled or go astray.

EMLANJENI & YELELE
means "by the river". This medley includes a tswana traditional song sang by young maidens to express their joy of being young. The dances are a depiction of animal movement and behavior. The movements are related to those of the Khoi and San people.

KAE LE KAE
This is a hymn from a hymn book that's also used by other churches in South Africa. The theme expresses total devotion to Christ and that those who believe will follow Him wherever He leads.

CALVARY
is commonly sang at "Good Friday" church services to remind the congregation of what transpired on this day: the crucifixion and suffering of Jesus Christ.

THIS LITTLE LIGHT
This medley originates from the early missionary work in South Africa. It is a call to believers and a promise to keep their faith alight.

AVULEKIL AMASANGO
means "the gates are agape." In a faith context, this refers to the gates of heaven being open to anyone whose faith is so strong that he or she has no fears, even of death. It has been adapted in the South African soccer fraternity. It is used to indicate that the opposition is exposed and that scoring opportunities are available.

WHAT YOU WILL EXPERIENCE
Soweto Gospel Choir’s songs, whether performed a capella or accompanied by a small percussion section, are characterized by earthy rhythms and rich harmonies. Their performances feature a mix of tribal, traditional, and popular African gospel styles, and they regularly perform in six of South Africa’s 11 official languages.

The choir is also known for their bright, colorful costumes and energetic dancing.

continued, pg. 8
ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

THE PIECES, cont.

SHOSHOLOZA
Loosely it means “push on”. Immigrant miners from countries bordering South Africa were transported around the country aboard steam engine trains, huffing and puffing their way around Rhodetia and Mozambique. Having to travel for days before reaching home and family, miners used to urge the train to move faster by singing the song, Shosholoza!

The song has been adopted by South Africans to encourage their teams to strive harder for victory.

HIGHER AND HIGHER
was composed by Jackie Wilson. The Soweto Gospel Choir arrangement uses the South African musical traditions and was chosen for its inspiring lyrics and beautiful melody.

UMOYA WENKOSI
This piece is adapted from the biblical prophecy of Ezekiel about dry bones being given flesh and life. It is a song of inspiration and revival to the group.

I FEEL GOOD
This song was written and made famous by American musician James Brown. The Choir likes to perform this song as it makes everyone who hears it feel good; bringing joy to their audience is one of Soweto Gospel Choir’s goals.

MAMA THEMBO
This is a wedding song traditionally sung in the black townships in South Africa, especially one township called Sophiatown. It talks about the preparations made before a wedding and the joy when these are concluded.

During the 1960s, South African singer and anti-apartheid activist Mirriam Makeba became well-known internationally for singing this song and Pata Pata.

PATA-PATA
Pata-pata is the name given to a dance style originating in the townships of South Africa. Pata-pata means “touch touch”. The dance involves touching your partner with your hands and your partner touching you in response. Pata-pata... touch-touch.

SOWETO GOSPEL CHOIR FUN FACTS

◊ The choir is made up of 24 voices.
◊ The singers range in age from 25 to 43.
◊ The choir members enjoy traveling, but miss eating their native foods and their family when they are on the road.
◊ There are five married couples in the choir!
◊ Their advice to aspiring performers: if you are able to work well with a group and be disciplined, you can go as far as your body and voice can take you!
◊ If Soweto Gospel Choir could describe itself in five words they would be: energetic, unstoppable, powerful, original and humble.

Based on an interview by Margo Jones with Shimmy Jiyane, choreographer, choir master, and founding member of Soweto Gospel Choir.
ABOUT SOWETO GOSPEL CHOIR

In 2007, Soweto Gospel Choir received probably its greatest accolade — a Grammy Award for their album *Blessed*, in the category “Best Traditional World Music”. They went on to win the Grammy Award in the same category in 2008 for their album *African Spirit*.

In addition to regularly touring internationally, the ensemble has a song featured in the Disney Pixar Film *Wall-E*.

GIVING BACK
The Soweto Gospel Choir has raised more than $1.5 million since 2003 from all over the world and actively support the Nkosi Johnson AIDS Foundation.

In 2003 the choir founded its own AIDS orphans foundation, Nkosi’s Haven Vukani, to help support families and organizations that receive little to no government assistance.

ACCOLADES AND HONORS
Since forming in 2002, the Soweto Gospel Choir has performed all over the world from Australia, to Finland, to Hong Kong. Throughout their vast travels the choir has accomplished numerous great feats including being the guests of popular TV shows, recording songs with famous musicians, and performing at diverse festivals like at the FIFA World Cup Kick-Off Concert in 2010 with the Black-Eyed Peas, Shakira, Angelique Kidjo and John Legend.

They have sung for Oprah Winfrey, U.S. President Bill Clinton, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and former South African President Nelson Mandela.

Spotted on...
Soweto Township
Soweto Township is an urban area in the City of Johannesburg, in Gauteng, South Africa. The name comes from South Western Township. It is estimated that 65% of Johannesburg’s residents live in Soweto. Soweto’s population is predominantly black, and all eleven of the country’s official languages are spoken there.

Many parts of Soweto rank among the poorest in Johannesburg, although individual townships within it tend to have a mix of wealthier and poorer residents.

Soweto township has changed greatly from the ghetto it once was under apartheid, but the scars of segregation remain. This 15-minute video showcases Soweto’s changes and ongoing challenges. Note: video contains some references to violence.
A LOOK AT MUSIC IN SOUTH AFRICA

GOSPEL MUSIC IN SOUTH AFRICA

Vocal music is the oldest traditional music in South Africa. Singing was a communal activity that accompanied dances and other social gatherings. Songs often involved elaborate call-and-response patterns.

This vibrant vocal tradition was in place when missionaries arrived in South Africa to spread the Christian faith. Within the churches they started, the missionaries placed a strong emphasis on choirs. Combining choral singing within the church setting, with the traditional vocal music of South Africa and other elements, led to a mode of acapella singing that blends the style of Western hymns with indigenous harmonies.

This tradition is still alive today in the form of isicathamiya. This singing style originated from the South African Zulus. The root of the word isicathamiya means “walking softly” or “tread carefully”. Isicathamiya focuses on achieving a harmonious blend between the voices, as well as the style’s tightly choreographed dance moves that keep the singers on their toes.

Today, gospel music in its many forms is one of the most popular genres of music in South Africa. Many gospel artists regularly achieve album sales of gold and platinum status.

MUSIC’S ROLE IN ENDING APARTHEID

For many decades in South Africa, the country existed under the laws of Apartheid: a system in which white people and black people had to live and work apart from each other and unfair laws were enacted upon the black population. Music played a major role in the dismantling of apartheid.

Within South Africa, music allowed people to build solidarity, express their struggles, and convey the injustice they experienced.

In addition, South African musicians like Miriam Makeba used music to spread international awareness and to educate the world about the inequalities faced by black South Africans. International pressure from around the world played a major role in finally convincing the South African government to end apartheid and to give all South Africans the right to vote for change.

"I’m not a political singer. I don’t know what the word means. People think I consciously decided to tell the world what was happening in South Africa. No! I was singing about my life, and in South Africa we always sang about what was happening to us—especially the things that hurt us." —Miriam Makeba

In addition to political figures like Nelson Mandela, South African musicians like Miriam Makeba are celebrated for their important contributions towards ending apartheid. Photo courtesy of bimba.co.za.
ABOUT SOUTH AFRICA, pg. 1

The Soweto Gospel Choir is comprised of members solely from the nation of South Africa. Before coming to the performance, learn more about South Africa and its history.

GEOGRAPHY
As its name implies, South Africa rests at the southern tip of Africa. It is divided into nine provinces. More than 51 million people reside in South Africa, making it the 24th most populous country.

Most of South Africa’s landscape is made up of high, flat areas called plateaus. These lands are covered with rolling grasslands, called Highveld, and tree-dotted plains call bushveld.

To the east, south, and west of the plateau lands is a mountainous region called the Great Escarpment. The eastern range, called the Drakensberg (or Dragon’s Mountain) is filled with jagged peaks, some more than 11,400 feet high.

Interestingly, South Africa has another country within its borders. Nestled in the Drakensberg is the mountainous kingdom of Lesotho. Much of South Africa’s water comes from the snowcapped peaks of this tiny, landlocked nation.

PEOPLE
Many different peoples make up South Africa, each with their own language and history. The country has 11 official languages and many more unofficial ones. This colorful mix of cultures gives South Africa its nickname “rainbow nation.”

South Africans are passionate about music, often using song and dance to express social and political ideas. They’re also known worldwide for their skill in sports, including rugby, cricket, golf, and soccer. In 2010, South Africa became the first African nation to host the World Cup.

NATURE
From aardvarks to zebras, South Africa is full of wildlife. The country takes up only about one percent of Earth’s land surface, but is home to almost 10 percent of the world’s known bird, fish, and plant species and about 6 percent of its mammal and reptile species.

South Africa works to preserve its wildlife with dozens of protected land marine areas, as well as thousands of privately-owned game reserves throughout the country. Nevertheless, many of South Africa’s animals are hurt by illegal hunting and loss of habitat. Dozens of its species are in danger of extinction, including the black rhinoceros, the cheetah, and the African wild dog.
HISTORY
In northern South Africa near Johannesburg, there is a cave formation called the Sterkfontein. Within these caves, archeologists have uncovered some of the earliest human fossils ever found. Some are more than two million years old. The find earned the region the nickname “Cradle of Humankind.”

About 24,000 years ago, tribes of hunter-gatherers known as the San, or Bushmen, began moving into South Africa. Many San still live around the Kalahari Desert in the northwest, much as their ancestors did.

In the 1400s, European ships heading to the Far East began stopping on the South African coast for supplies. In 1652, the Netherlands established the southern city of Cape Town, and Dutch farmers (called Boers) began settling in the areas around the city.

In 1806, wars in Europe left the British in control of the Cape Town colony. In 1910, the British united four colonies in the region and created South Africa. They established laws that separated whites from black South Africans, a practice of segregation called apartheid, which led to decades of conflict.

In 1963, Nelson Mandela, head of the anti-apartheid Africa National Congress, was given a life sentence in jail for “terrorist” activities. In 1990, after 27 years behind bars, he was freed by President F.W. de Klerk. In 1994, Mandela was elected president of South Africa.

GOVERNMENT AND ECONOMY
South Africa has been a democratic republic since holding its first truly open election in 1994. South Africa has three capital cities, each home to a different branch of government: Pretoria (administrative), Cape Town (legislative), and Bloemfontein (judicial capital).

Natural resources, agriculture, tourism, and manufacturing have made South Africa the largest economy on the continent. However, problems with unemployment, poverty, and AIDS continue to present huge challenges for the government to overcome.

SPOTLIGHT ON...
NELSON MANDELA
“South African activist and former president Nelson Mandela (1918-2013) helped bring an end to apartheid and [was] a global advocate for human rights. A member of the African National Congress party beginning in the 1940s, he was a leader of both peaceful protests and armed resistance against the white minority’s oppressive regime in a racially divided South Africa. His actions landed him in prison for nearly three decades and made him the face of the antiapartheid movement both within his country and internationally. Released in 1990, he participated in the eradication of apartheid and in 1994 became the first black president of South Africa, forming a multietnic government to oversee the country’s transition. After retiring from politics in 1999, he remained a devoted champion for peace and social justice in his own nation and around the world until his death in 2013 at the age of 95.”

-History.com
1) OUR STORIES THROUGH MUSIC

**Goals:** To explore how music shapes our identities

**Explanation:** By creating and sharing stories, students will explore how impactful and important diverse styles of music are to their personal identity.

**Materials:**
- 3-5 sheets of paper per student, folded and stapled into a small booklet
- Writing utensils

**Activity:**
1. Ask students to brainstorm a list of their favorite songs.
2. Encourage them to think about:
   - Their favorite songs now
   - Songs or chants they learned and liked as a child
   - Songs that remind them of family or traditions
   - Songs that are meaningful to them because of the lyrics, etc.
3. After they have created their list, have them jot down notes on why the songs are important to them. What memory do they have of the song? Who else do they share this memory with?
4. Last, give each student a booklet. Ask them to create a story (beginning, middle, and end) about one of their favorite songs and what it means to them. Have them add simple illustrations as they feel is appropriate.

**Follow-up Questions:**
1. What are the different styles of music that you wrote about?
2. What different feelings do you associate with your favorite songs?
3. Why do you think music is so impactful?
4. Do all of your favorite songs represent the same time period in your life?
5. Do your favorite songs represent different parts of your life? (Students may think of examples related to holidays, their faith, memories of being with family or friends, being part of a team, etc.)

2) PAINTING TO MUSIC

**Goals:** To explore the different emotions evoked by various styles, tones, and rhythms.

**Explanation:** In this activity, students will paint to various styles of music.

**Materials:**
- Access to YouTube or other source of music, such as CDs and CD player
- Speakers
- Three pieces of paper per student
- Paint and brushes (or other art materials)

**Activity:**
1. Choose 3 different pieces of music from around the world including one piece by the Soweto Gospel Choir (Examples: Beethoven, Calypso steel drums, Buddhist meditative sounds, jazz, etc.).
2. Cover tables or desks with newspaper and put out paint and brushes. (Dry media, such as crayons and colored pencils can be substituted if paint is not an option.)
3. Next, talk to students about emotions and expression. What colors represent what emotion for each student? What sort of lines or textures represent each emotion?
4. Give each student a piece of paper.
5. Play the first song that you’ve selected. As students listen, ask them to freely respond to each song through colors and strokes. Remind students that this is a quiet activity and that there are no right or wrong answers. They should simply try to represent what they feel listening to the song.
6. Repeat for the other two songs, providing students with a new piece of paper for each.
7. After playing the last song, have students look around the room at all the different creations.

**Follow up questions:**
1. What similarities do you see in the room?
2. How does your Soweto Gospel Choir painting compare to other paintings you made?
3. What feelings did you have while listening to each song?
4. What feeling do you think the Soweto Gospel Choir wants to provide to their audience with the piece we listened to?
3) GROWTH OF GOSPEL MUSIC

**Goals:** To develop a connection between US and South African history through gospel music and gain understanding of how the gospel music style developed in both countries.

**Explanation:** In this activity, student will research how gospel music developed in the United States and South Africa.

**Materials:**
- Internet access
- Library or other research materials

**Activity:**
1. Split students into small groups. Assign each group to research the history of American and South African gospel music.
2. Use the following questions to guide their research:
   - What are the general facts of these two historical movements?
   - What are the similarities and differences in how gospel music developed in South Africa and the United States of America?
   - What is the current state of gospel in both countries?
   - Why do you think a choir (rather than solo artists) was powerful for both of these movements?
   - What was its impact?
3. Have students present their information. (PowerPoint, poster, essay, etc.)

**Follow up questions:**
1. How did colonialism affect the creation of gospel music in South Africa?
2. How did slavery affect the creation of gospel music in the United States of America?
3. How were the movements similar? How were they different?

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4) MUSIC AND SOCIAL CHANGE

**Goals:** To recognize the connection between music and efforts for social change

**Explanation:** Apartheid and the Civil Rights Movement were two movements on separate continents in which black South Africans and African Americans resisted against deep injustice and defied oppression. In this activity, students will research how music was fundamental in dismantling apartheid in South Africa and Jim Crow laws in the United States.

**Materials:**
- Internet access
- Library or other research materials

**Activity:**
1. Split students into small groups. Assign each group to research the role music played in the Civil Rights Era in the US and in the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa.
2. Use the following questions to guide their research:
   - What are the general facts of these two historical movements?
   - What songs became emblematic of the movement?
   - Who were some of the musicians that became well-known for their use of music to promote change and support the movement?
   - Where were the songs shared? Looking at the lyrics of some of the songs, what themes are present in them?
   - What impact did the music have on those within the movement?
   - What impact did the music have on those outside of the movement?

**Follow-up Questions:**
1. How does music reflect a culture or society? How can music shape how a culture or society changes?
2. What surprised you most about your findings?
3. Are there other causes that you can think of where music has or is playing a role?
**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Who appeared to be leading the vocalists? What is this person’s role called?
2. Did the director lead the melody, harmony or rhythm?
3. Did the same person lead each piece?
4. How did the director use his or her body to show the singers what he or she wanted to hear?
5. Did the singers look at and listen to each other? How can you tell?
6. How were the musicians dressed? What colors or patterns did you notice? What do you think these things represent?
7. Did the musicians use faces to express how they were feeling?
8. How did the musicians use their bodies? How would you describe the motions or movement that you saw them utilize?
9. Songs can convey different moods, emotions, stories or feelings. Did most of the performed songs communicate similar feelings? What feelings or ideas did they convey?
10. Did you have a favorite piece? Which one was it? Why did it speak to you?
11. What things or messages are important to Soweto Gospel Choir? How do you know?
12. What, if anything, surprised you about the performance?
13. How does the music you create or listen to reflect your culture? What you value? The community of which you are part?
14. Were there any instruments used in the performance? If so, what were they? How did they sound?
15. Could you hear the different vocal parts and harmonies?

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**1) WRITE A LETTER**

**Goal:** To reflect on the performance experience and to practice writing skills.

**Explanation:** In this activity, students will write a letter about their experience to either the performers or to Des Moines Performing Arts education donors whose support keeps Applause Series tickets accessibly priced for school groups.

**Materials:**
- Paper
- Writing utensil

**Activity:**

1. After attending the performance, discuss the experience with your students. Use the following discussion questions to guide the conversation:
   - How did the performance make you feel?
   - What surprised you about the performance?
   - What do you think was the main message or idea of the performance?

2. Next, invite students to write a letter to the performers or to Des Moines Performing Arts donors about their theater experience.

**Example letter starter:**

Dear Soweto Gospel Choir // Dear Donors...

My favorite part of the show was…
While watching the show I felt… because …
If I could be in your choir, I would …

3. Mail the letters to:

Des Moines Performing Arts
Attn: Education Department
221 Walnut Street
Des Moines, IA 50309

**Follow-up Questions:**

1. What did you include in your letter? Why did you want to share that particular idea?
2) WRITE A REVIEW

Goal: To write a review of the performance.

Explanation: In this activity, students will reflect on the performance by writing their own review.

Activity:
1. Ask students to imagine that they are a critic for the school newspaper. They are going to write a review of Soweto Gospel Choir to inform others about what they experienced.
2. In the review they should describe with detail:
   ◦ what they saw
   ◦ what they heard
   ◦ how the performance made them feel
   ◦ what the performance reminded them of
   ◦ what their favorite part was and why
3. Remind students that they must paint a picture of the experience with their words so that others who did not see the performance can imagine it as vividly as possible.

Follow-up Questions:
1. What did you include in your review? Why did you want to share that particular idea?
2. What things did writing the review make you think about that you hadn’t thought of by just watching the show?
3. Is there anything that you would change about the show if you could? Would you add something or take something away?

3) DESIGN A CD COVER

Goal: Students will synthesize their ideas about Soweto Gospel Choir, using imagery and typography to capture the mood and message of the ensemble.

Explanation: Artists need to determine how to represent themselves to the public and stay true to their particular vision or art form. Often they have to rely on others to help make the message both attractive and accurate. In this activity, students will act as advertising and graphic design professionals and design a CD cover that represents the Soweto Gospel Choir.

Activity:
1. Ask students to imagine that Soweto Gospel Choir has asked them to design a cover for their newest CD recording.
2. Have students think about important ideas and images that come to mind when they think about the performance and use those ideas to guide their design.
3. For a greater challenge, limit students’ color palate to black, white and one accent color.
4. After students have created their cover using art materials, have them imagine that they are going to present their design to Soweto Gospel Choir’s director (played by the teacher). Ask students about the elements they included in their design, why they made those design decisions, and what the design communicates about the message of Soweto Gospel Choir.

Follow-up Questions:
1. What was your inspiration for the images and typography you chose?
2. How did you choose the colors in your design?
3. Which CD designed by your classmates is your favorite? Why?
RESOURCES AND SOURCES

BOOKS

The Soccer Fence: A Story of Friendship, Hope and Apartheid in South Africa, by Phil Bildner. Putnam. 2014. (Grades 1-5)


DISCOGRAPHY

Check out a CD or DVD by the Soweto Gospel Choir:

◊ Divine Decade (2013)
◊ African Grace (2011)
◊ Live at the Nelson Mandela Theatre (2008)
◊ Blessed (2006)
◊ Voices from Heaven (2005)

ONLINE RESOURCES

“Kids from South Africa.”
http://www.factmonster.com/ipka/A0934644.html
Provides information on school, play, family structure, and foods enjoyed by young people in South Africa.

“Woolworth’s and Soweto Gospel Choir’s Tribute to Nelson Mandela”
View this video of Soweto Gospel Choir’s tribute to Nelson Mandela after the leader’s passing, in which they surprise shoppers with a performance. http://goo.gl/nUrV3r

STUDY GUIDE SOURCES

“Nelson Mandela.” History Channel.
http://www.history.com/topics/nelson-mandela

“South Africa.” National Geographic Kids.

Soweto Gospel Choir official website. www.sowetogospelchoir.com
