BabagaNewz Pesach Music Sampler

LESSON PLAN BY AVI WEST AND JACKIE LAND

There will be a feature article about Pesach music in next month's issue of BabagaNewz. In anticipation, we have enclosed the BabagaNewz Pesach Music Sampler CD with this issue of the Teachers' Guide. (We know that many teachers will begin teaching about Pesach immediately after Purim, so we wanted you to have the CD as you begin preparing your Pesach lessons.) In this lesson about Pesach music, students will listen to songs from the Seder and songs about the values of Pesach, explore the themes and meaning behind these songs, and reflect on how the songs enhance their understanding of the holiday.

CONCEPTS AND OBJECTIVES

- Music is a powerful medium for conveying a meaningful and spiritual message.
- Pesach music reflects the major themes of the holiday.
- Music enhances the Seder experience.

MOTIVATION AND DEVELOPMENT

1. Pose the following questions to students to initiate discussion:

Why do people sing songs?

How do you feel when you hear a song? Are there any songs that evoke particular emotions? Why?

Once you have brainstormed a list of reasons for singing, introduce the notion that song is an integral part of religious expression. Ask:

What role does song play in Judaism? Do you think song is an important part of Judaism?

Describe the ways that your family uses song at your Seder.

What do the "old and familiar" songs add to your Seder? How do you and your family members feel about including new tunes and new songs?

2. Below are thought questions for each song on the CD. Lyrics for the songs are available online at www.babaganewz.com. Play the song(s) of your choice for your students, distribute the lyrics to them for study, and use the following questions for your discussion. It is important that you listen to the songs before you play them for the class so that you can determine which songs best suit your class. Full credit listing follows the discussion questions.

"Avadim Hayinu," by Peri Smilow and The Freedom Music Project

NOTE

This song will be included in the feature article in the *Nisan* issue of BabagaNewz.

The Freedom Music Project is a group of Jewish and African-American teens who sing songs about freedom and civil rights. Why do you think a group of African-American teens is interested in singing a Pesach song?

This song is part of an album subtitled: "The music of Passover and the Civil Rights Movement." What do Pesach and the civil rights movement have in common? (Your students might want to refer to the article on pages 14–16 in the Adar One issue of BabagaNewz.)

This song uses traditional words (adapted from the Haggadah) and the traditional tune, but plays them to a modern beat. How do you like the song?

"Baruch Hamakom," by Sam Glaser

NOTE

This song, based on words from the Haggadah, will be included in the feature article in the *Nisan* issue of BabagaNewz.

What prayers of thanksgiving do you know?

For what are we praising God and feeling thankful in this version of the *Baruch Hamakom* prayer?

God has many, many names. Why is *Hamakom* (The Place) one of God's names? Why is this name chosen for God during the Seder?

"In Every Generation," by Kol B'seder (Jeff Klepper and Dan Freelander)

What are some of the ways one may interpret the mitzvah: "In every generation we must feel as if we were freed from Egypt"?

What other mitzvot (at the Seder and during Pesach) help us fulfill the mitzvah bekhol dor vador?

Our sages ask us to imitate God; in what ways may we imitate in every generation what God has done for us in our history?

"Piece of the Puzzle," by Craig Taubman

Can you add another metaphor to being "a piece of the puzzle, or link in the chain"?

Think of something you have done or could do that is like Aaron or Deborah? (Students might want to refer to the center poster in the Adar One issue of BabagaNewz to learn abut the judge and prophetess, Deborah.)

Why do you think the song mentions Hillel's saying, "If not now, when, and if not me, who?"

In what way is your own history like a puzzle?

"Surfing Passover," by Doug Cotler

The words "surf" and "serf" are homonyms (words that sound the same but have different meanings). Look up the word "serf" in the dictionary and discuss the play on the word "surfing" in this song.

The surfer uses the power of the wave and can float on top of the water and move forward rapidly. How did the splitting of the Sea of Reeds help propel the Israelites forward?

"The Ten Plagues," by Kol B'seder (Jeff Klepper and Dan Freelander)

How does being stubborn hurt a person?

A king or leader is supposed to work for the good of the people. What kind of leader was Pharaoh? Why?

Think about the custom of spilling off some of our full cup of wine when we mention the plagues. (That custom is alluded to in the last verse of the song.) How is war like a plague?

"Into the Sea," by Shlock Rock

The Israelites were promised a land of milk and honey, but they had to go through the sea and mud while chased by Egypt's army before they could even begin their journey to that place. What lessons from this experience can we learn about reaching goals, not giving up, and having faith?

Was the goal (to reach the Land of Israel) worth the chance the Israelites took?

How do you decide when a goal is worth the effort?

"Miriam's Song," by Debbie Friedman

What did Miriam add to the miracle at the sea?

When have you acted as a positive "cheerleader" for your friends?

From Miriam's actions described in this song, do you think can we consider her a prophetess?

Would you consider Miriam's music and dance a prayer? Why?

"Leaving Mother Russia," by SAFAM

Look up the biography of Anatole (Natan) Sharansky. (There is a very brief bio in the Iyar 5762 issue of BabagaNewz.) What do you think helped him go from being a Prisoner of Zion to a member of the Israeli Knesset? Would you consider these events to be miracles?

Why is it important to remember these stories of heroism?

What role did world Jewry play in Anatole's release?

Why do you think this song is included in a collection of Pesach songs?

"Close Every Door," sung by Michael Ian Elias from Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat

What does the story about Joseph have to do with the Pesach story?

How does this song convey a message of courage?

What promises are mentioned that are a part of the *brit*, covenant, between God and the Jewish people?

How does the Haggadah show that the "children of Israel are never alone"?

Does your family sing songs on Pesach that are not part of your family "Seder script?" Why or why not?

"The Seder Plate," by Julie Silver

What role do symbols play in celebrating the holidays and reminding us of the history, emotions, and values associated with Jewish holidays?

Do you think that food symbols are an effective way to remind us about the important messages of Pesach? Why/why not?

What new symbols would you suggest for your Seder table this year and why?

BABAGANEWZ PESACH MUSIC SAMPLER
FULL CREDIT INFORMATION

We extend our *hakarat hatov*, our deep appreciation, to the artists who have shared their songs with us and to Jackie Land and Avi West for their special assistance. All songs are used with permission.

The Pesach Music Sampler CD has been compiled and distributed by BABAGANEWZ for classroom use. This compilation is not available for sale. Unauthorized reproduction of this recording is prohibited by federal law and by *halachah*. For questions about the recording, please call 301-962-9636 x 14.

1. THE FREEDOM MUSIC PROJECT

"Avadim Hayinu"
From the album "Peri Smilow and The Freedom Music Project: The Music of Passover and the Civil Rights Movement," used with permission of Peri Smilow. www.FreedomMusicProject.com
Music by Shalom Postolsky. © ACUM, rights administered by the Harry Fox Agency.

2. SAM GLASER

"Baruch Hamakom"
Composed, produced, and arranged by Sam Glaser for Glaser Musicworks.
© 2002 Sam Glaser, ASCAP, excerpted from "The Bridge" CD available at www.samglaser.com

3. KOL B'SEDER

"In Every Generation"
From the CD "In Every Generation."
Words and music by Jeff Klepper. Hebrew text from the Haggadah. Performed by Kol B'seder (Jeff Klepper and Dan Freelander).
© 1993 Jeff Klepper

4. CRAIG TAUBMAN

"Piece of the Puzzle"
From the album "My Jewish Discovery."
Music and lyrics by Craig Taubman.
© Sweet Louise Music (BMI)

5. DOUG COTLER

"Surfing Passover"
From the album "It's So Amazing."
Music and lyrics by Doug Cotler.
© 1988 Wail and Blubber Music

6. JEFF KLEPPER

"The Ten Plagues"
From the album "Songs for Growin'." Distributed by Transcontinental Music Publications. Used with permission.
© 1981 Jeff Klepper.
Published in "Bible People Songs" by Alternatives in Religious Education, Inc. (dba A.R.E. Publishing, Inc.), Denver, Colorado. Used with permission.
Contact: (800) 346-7779 or www.arepublish.com

7. SHLOCK ROCK

"Into the Sea"
From the album "Sgt. Shlockers Magical History Tour."
Lyrics written and performed by Lenny Solomon and Shlock Rock.
© 1991 Solomon Label Music 2002 (ASCAP)
www.shlockrock.com

8. DEBBIE FRIEDMAN

"Miriam's Song"
From the album "The Journey Continues." Music and lyrics by Debbie Friedman. Lyrics based on Exodus 15:20–21.
© 1988 Deborah Lynn Friedman (ASCAP). Published by Sounds Write Productions, Inc. (ASCAP).
www.debbiefriedman.com and www.soundswrite.com

9. SAFAM

"Leaving Mother Russia"
Words and music by Robbie Solomon © 1978.
Recorded by SAFAM on the album "Encore" in 1978 and re-recorded for "SAFAM's Greatest Hits I & II" in 1991.

10. MICHAEL IAN ELIAS

"Close Every Door"
From the album "Keep the Light Shining."
Words by Tim Rice and music by Andrew Lloyd Webber, from *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*.
© Universal-Polygrm Intl. Pub. Obo Really Useful Group, Ltd.

11. JULIE SILVER

"The Seder Plate"
From the album "Together."
Music and lyrics by Julie A. Silver.
© 1997 Silver Girl Music (ASCAP). Published by Sounds Write Productions, Inc. (ASCAP).
www.juliesilver.com and www.soundswrite.com