



Lesson: Practice the Process of Circle Singing

OVERVIEW

When I Sing provides an excellent opportunity for students to engage in the practice of circle singing, giving them a chance to improvise music in real time as part of their performance. If you decide your students are not quite ready for improvised circle singing, begin with this structured approach to circle singing.

NATIONAL STANDARDS

Creating Music: MU:Cr1.1: Generate musical ideas for various purposes and contexts

Creating Music: MU:Cr2.1: Select and develop musical ideas for defined purposes and contexts

Creating Music: MU:Cr3.1: Evaluate and refine selected musical ideas to create musical work that meets appropriate criteria

LEARNING GOAL

Students will sing vocal patterns over a given ostinato using techniques found in circle singing.

PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

Students can:

- clap a simple syncopated rhythm
- use syllables to improvise short melodic phrases
- sing in 2-part harmony

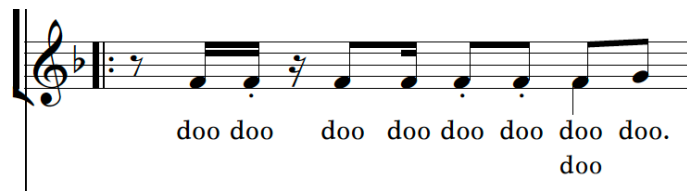
RESOURCES & MATERIALS

- Vocal Score to *When I Sing*
- [Video of Rosephanye Powell and the students engaged in Circle Singing](#)

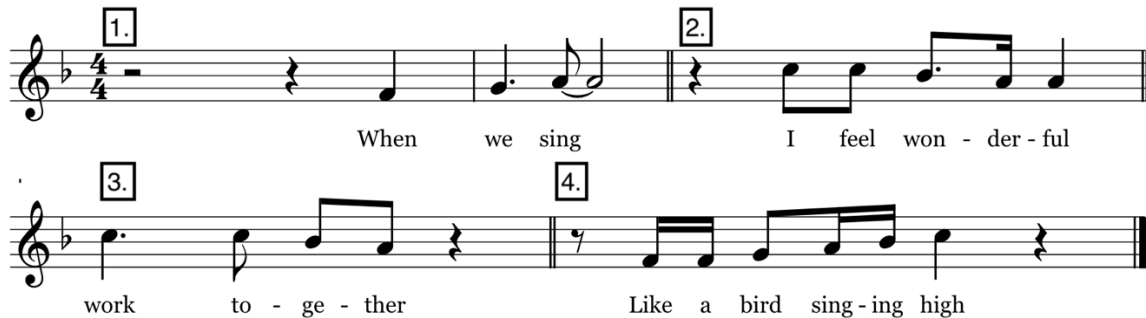
PROCESS

1. Watch the video recording of Powell and the students engaged in circle singing. The video is long, about 15 minutes. View it ahead of time and select the sections you wish to view with students.
2. Discuss how performers performed the circle singing. Brainstorm short word combinations, either taken from the lyrics or newly-composed along the themes of the lyrics – joy, love and peace. Write them on the board as words to use with short ostinato phrases later in the process.
3. Gather singers in a circle with the teacher in the middle.

4. Clap the following rhythm ostinato until it is secure:



5. Practice the following vocal phrases. Assign one or more students to each phrase.



6. The teacher begins the ostinato. When the rhythm is secure, the teacher points to selected students to add their vocal phrase. The ostinato continues until all vocal parts have sung their phrase. Try singing on a neutral vowel first, and then add words from the list on the board.
7. Have leader add or remove parts or try changing tempo and dynamics.
8. Leader moves the music to a close.
9. Feel free to have students create additional or optional phrases based on their previous brainstorming activity.

ASSESSMENT

Students successfully perform the circle singing activity.

EXTENSIONS

Move into improvised circle singing using the next lesson, "Creative Vocal Improvisation."