

Let Me Be the One–SATB, (also available for Three part mixed, SSA, Two part) & piano, optional instrumental parts for Synthesizer, Guitar, Bass, Drums and Timpani

Teaching resources for Voices in Harmony choral Series

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General guidelines for Social Emotional Learning Experiences

Varied formats

Teachers and students, review the format options below to gauge your comfort level regarding how best to engage in the suggested learning experiences. Teachers who feel comfortable and equipped to facilitate in-person discussions may choose to do so. However, conversations necessitate trust and rarely do all students feel comfortable participating initially. Individual reflection is also necessary.

The materials presented here progress through a range of options.

Types of prompts

Discussion starters – ideas for prompts or thought-provoking questions a teacher may introduce to get students thinking and sharing (see “Starting the conversation” for each learning experience below)

Recorded prompts – short videos of the composer facilitating the start of a conversation which teachers can play for a class or invite students to view on their own

Written formats – full journal prompts or printed guidelines that students can complete privately, using online forms or writing by hand, during or outside of class time (see below)

Types of responses

Anonymous or individual/private reflection – Students write anonymous responses as reflections or journal entries that only the teacher sees or remains private for the student and no one sees. The teacher can review these and later reflect to the class a summary of the kinds of responses students wrote in general while keeping contributions anonymous. Students can submit these anonymously through online forms or pen and paper versions without names. Teachers may invite students to include their name if they feel comfortable doing so.

Small group discussion – Some students may be more likely to speak in groups of 2-3. Students feel safer in smaller groups and can better perceive the value of their contribution. These groups can be assigned by proximity or by student choice. Over time, students will get to know each other better and will feel more comfortable speaking with classmates. Group representatives can report back to the class in a general way, or individuals may then feel more comfortable sharing in large group discussions.

Large group discussion – Teachers facilitate full class discussions, encouraging input from as many different individuals, identities, and viewpoints as possible. Teachers acknowledge and affirm all responses. This signals to others that all contributions are welcome. These discussions would involve higher levels of vulnerability and require a safe environment where students can feel brave enough to share. It is important to set ground rules before beginning these discussions, encouraging students to use “I statements” as a means to identify the singularity of their experience and perspective.

Artistic/non-verbal responses – For some learning experiences, students may respond in creative, non-verbal ways, representing their perspectives in a less literal manner. These may include visual art (drawings, collages, photography), dances, pantomimes, or improvisatory theatrical scenes. These might also include musical improvisations and compositions.

Levels of engagement and vulnerability

Level 1: Starting the conversation – Facilitate discussions about the skills/concepts the piece and text introduce without involving personal disclosures. Students maintain objective distance and safety by way of the music as a vehicle for these conversations.

Level 2: Making it personal – Provide options for individuals to become more vulnerable, with some individuals voluntarily sharing about personal perceptions and experiences anonymously or in small/large group discussions. Students experience this as a safe space for surface vulnerability.

Level 3: Opening up – Allow opportunities for students to open up and share more honestly, offering personal stories in pairs, small groups, or with full class. Students delve more deeply into personal connections with the music and explore ways where their voice can affect meaningful change in a brave space.

Social Emotional Learning Competencies and their intersections with arts education standards (<https://selarts.org>)

Music educators can help students explore three key areas (divided into five categories with nineteen competencies) through their development as musicians and artists learning to perform choral repertoire.

IDENTITY

01) SELF-AWARENESS

- 01) Recognize one's feelings and thoughts
- 02) Recognize the impact of one's feelings and thoughts on one's own behavior
- 03) Recognize one's personal traits, strengths, and limitations
- 04) Recognize the importance of self-confidence in handling daily tasks and challenges

02) SELF-MANAGEMENT

- 05) Understand and practice strategies for managing one's own emotions, thoughts, and behaviors
- 06) Recognize the skills needed to establish and achieve personal and educational goals
- 07) Identify and apply ways to persevere or overcome barriers through alternative methods to achieve one's goals

BELONGING

03) SOCIAL AWARENESS

- 08) Recognize and identify the thoughts, feelings and perspectives of others
- 09) Demonstrate an awareness of the differences among individuals, groups and others' cultural backgrounds
- 10) Demonstrate an understanding of the need for mutual respect when viewpoints differ
- 11) Demonstrate an awareness of the expectations for social interactions in a variety of settings

04) RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

- 12) Establish and maintain healthy relationships
- 13) Utilize positive communication and social skills to interact effectively with others
- 14) Identify ways to resist inappropriate social pressure
- 15) Demonstrate the ability to prevent and resolve interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways

- 16) Identify who, when, where, or how to seek help for oneself or others when needed

A G E N C Y

05) RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING

- 17) Develop, implement, and model effective problem solving and critical thinking skills
- 18) Identify the consequences associated with one's actions in order to make constructive choices
- 19) Evaluate personal, ethical, safety and civic impact of decisions

Strategies for empowering students by embedding SEL into choral music education experiences

LEARNING EXPERIENCES for *Let Me Be The One*

A few words from the composers

"Let Me Be the One" is a song that speaks to the importance of a good friend. It also stresses the significance of being there for others and how a mutual support system is key to any happy, lifelong friendship.

As co-writers, our friendship was important as we worked together to create this song. We would often challenge each other's thinking about the lyrics, the harmony, and even the melody in some cases. Because we each have great respect for the other's writing, we were able to make musical decisions in a thoughtful and respectful way. The result is a song that reflects the positive qualities that come from a friendship.

1. The Lyrics

SEL competencies: 01.01, 01.02, 03.08

01) SELF-AWARENESS

- 01) Recognize one's feelings and thoughts
- 02) Recognize the impact of one's feelings and thoughts on one's own behavior

03) SOCIAL AWARENESS

- 08) Recognize and identify the thoughts, feelings and perspectives of others

The title of a song is often derived from the lyrics themselves. You might be interested to know that the original title of the song was “Oasis in the Sun” but as the lyric content grew, we decided that “Let Me Be The One” was the overall theme of the piece. Qualities of a “best” friend are reflected in phrases such as “oasis in the sun,” and “shoulder when there’s none.” The bridge reflects ways that we become, build, and maintain friendships that last a lifetime regardless of time and distance. Your students are likely in the stages of creating lifelong friendships with their peers. It’s amazing to think about the way that “a look,” a “laugh,” “a smile,” or “a message” can lay such strong foundation.

Starting the conversation

Reflect on the different kinds of friendship ranging from acquaintance, to friend, to best friend. What are the qualities or characteristics of each? How do we act around each level of friend? Once you’ve determined these qualities, have students make a list of people from their own lives who fall into each category.

Making it personal

Share your list anonymously with others in a small group and see if they can guess who the writer is. This should be fun and enlightening.

Opening up

For those bold enough to share. Tell the class who your best friend is and why.

Tangible artifacts

Beyond thinking and discussing, what can you and the students “create” that will result in something tangible. For example, re-write the lyrics and dedicate these new lyrics to someone. Have fun daydreaming of other projects.

2. The Song Form

SEL competencies: 02.05, 03.11

02) Self-Management

05) Understand and practice strategies for managing one’s own emotions, thoughts, and behaviors

03) Social Awareness

11) Demonstrate an understanding of the need for mutual respect when viewpoints differ

Let's explore the music itself to understand how the form of this song (A,B,A,B,C) can give us insight into friendships:

A *verse* describes certain distinct qualities in detail, while the *chorus* reiterates the overall theme. For instance, we could say that Scott is very outgoing as a general theme while the particulars is that he is funny, kind, patient, and smart. You and Scott might be best friends, but what happens when a third person wants to join your circle? The *bridge* of the song consists of new musical material, yet it enhances the verse and chorus, much like new friends can enrich our lives if we let them.

Starting the conversation

Reflect on the times that a new person has come into your social circle. How did it make you feel at first? How did you treat them? How did you treat your existing friends? In the end, did you learn to value and respect *all* of your friends?

Making it personal

If you rejected the person into your circle, how could you make it up to them?

Opening up

Consider reaching out to those who are often left out of the “in crowd” and inviting them publicly to join in an activity with your established friends.

3. The Collaboration

SEL competencies: 05.17, 05.18

05) Responsible Decision-Making

017) Develop, implement, and model effective problem solving and critical thinking skills

018) Identify the consequences associated with one’s actions in order to make constructive choices

As collaborating composers we often had differing thoughts especially when it came to the bridge of the song. Roger wanted it to be complex with multiple melodies being sung simultaneously while Jack preferred the simplicity that you will find in the current arrangement.

It took Roger some time to re-think his original concept and defer to his friend’s opinion on what should be done. As problem solvers, it is often best to say “Let me think about that and get back to you” when someone has a contrasting idea.

Fortunately, there were no grave consequences in going Roger's way or Jack's when writing a song – both ideas were perfectly valid. However, had it been a decision among friends to experiment with risky behavior, the outcome might have been different.

Starting the conversation

Reflect on a time when you and a friend had a difference of opinion? How did you resolve it? What were the consequences, good or bad?

Making it personal

Divide up into groups of 3 or 4. Share your experience and the outcome with others. Have each person give their perspective on whether you made the correct choice or perhaps provide an alternative solution.

Opening up

Share with the class a bad decision that you made and the consequences that resulted from that decision, despite a friend's advice. Likewise, share a decision that you made with a positive outcome that would have resulted in disaster had you done otherwise.