

## Singing Spirituals

### 1. An Overview

“Singing Spirituals” is a 60-minute interactive workshop that is offered for middle school and high school chorus. To gain a basic understanding of the historical significance of spirituals, students will listen critically to “Swing Low Sweet Chariot,” examine its text, participate in call and response style singing, and perform a “Swing Low Sweet Chariot”.

### 2. Outline:

- 5 minutes: Teach class rhythmic ostinato, the teacher sings “Swing Low Sweet Chariot” over Ostinato
- 5 minutes: Class discussion with the following questions
  - What is a spiritual?
  - Where do they come from?
  - What spirituals do you know?
  - Has anyone heard “Swing Low Sweet Chariot” before?
- 10 minutes: Pass out Swing Low Sweet Chariot, Examine the text of Swing Low, and discuss
- 15 minutes: Teach “Swing Low Sweet Chariot” call and response (chorus only)
  - Project Verse text/melody onto the board
- 10 minutes: Sing “Swing Low Sweet Chariot:” everyone performs chorus, students volunteer to sing the different verses as solos or in small groups
- 10 minutes: (optional, time permitting) comparative listening: students will listen to excerpts of different versions of “Swing Low Sweet Chariot” and answer: What is similar or different between these versions and the one we just learned?
  - [Moses Hogan Singers](#)
  - [Kathleen Battle](#)
  - [Fisk Jubilee](#)
- 5 minutes: Wrap up, final thoughts, Q&A

### 3. Materials Needed:

- Teacher
- Projector/Speakers
- Whiteboard + markers
- Piano