



## CMP Teaching Plan

Patricia Trump  
July 2021



Title: ***We Shall Overcome***  
Arranged by Pete Seeger

Source: ***Get America Singing...Again! Volume 2***  
A project of the Music Educators National Conference  
Hal Leonard Corporation, 2000.

### Analysis

**Broad Description:** Folk Song

**Type/Genre:** African American spiritual, labor ballad, and civil rights anthem

**Instrumentation/Voicing:** Unison voices with piano or guitar accompaniment

**Background Information:** The Library of Congress calls ***We Shall Overcome*** the most powerful song of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Though deeply rooted in American history, it has been embraced as a protest song and political anthem by people fighting for justice in every corner of the world.

The origins of ***We Shall Overcome*** are somewhat unclear. The music is most likely based on the African-American spiritual ***No More Auction Block for Me***. Both songs open with the same rhythm and the melodies are nearly identical. ***No More Auction Block for Me*** was a favorite of Black soldiers in the Union Army during the Civil War, so from the beginning there was a connection between this melody and the fight for freedom.

Some sources trace the melody of ***We Shall Overcome*** to the European hymn tune ***Sanctisima***. The phrase form of the two songs is identical, but the melody and rhythm are so different that a casual listener would miss the similarities. While the European style hymns sung in White churches certainly had some indirect influence on Black spirituals, gospel songs and freedom songs, the connection to ***Sanctisima*** seems a stretch.

The text has long been attributed to the Reverend Dr. Charles Albert Tindley (1851-1933). Dr. Tindley, the son of slaves, was a successful Methodist pastor who composed many iconic gospel hymns. In his hymn, ***I'll Overcome Some Day*** (1901), the text of the refrain is like the text of ***We Shall Overcome***.

Louise Shropshire, music director at Revelation Baptist Church in Cincinnati, Ohio during the 1960's, has also been credited as the lyricist. Shropshire, who died in 1993, was an accomplished singer, pianist, and composer of gospel hymns. She and her husband frequently hosted the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King in their home. In 1962 King was in Cincinnati to speak at a banquet honoring civil rights leader Fred Shuttlesworth. One of the

hymns Shropshire sang for him during his stay was ***If My Jesus Wills***. The text from the refrain of that hymn is nearly identical to the words we sing today in ***We Shall Overcome***. Those present remembered that the words made a profound effect on Dr. King, and that he asked Shropshire for permission to quote them.

Though the lyrics by Tindley and Shropshire deserve their due, it's also likely that some version of this text was already familiar to many African Americans. For example, a field song called ***I'll Be Alright Some Day*** was well known throughout the South. Whether at work, at worship, or as political expression, African Americans were singing about faith in a better future long before Tindley and Shropshire were even born.

Neither Tindley's nor Shropshire's melody is even remotely like that of ***We Shall Overcome***, and no one knows for sure when or how the text and melody we know today came together. The first published version to reflect that providential union was a piece called ***We Will Overcome***, found in a 1947 folksong collection published by People's Songs. People's Songs was founded by renowned folk singer and political activist Pete Seeger, who along with folklorist Alan Lomax and singer/songwriter Lee Hayes, was committed to reviving interest in American folk music during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

Seeger never claimed to have composed ***We Will Overcome*** though he deserves credit for bringing it to a wider audience. When he was asked where he had first heard ***We Will Overcome***, he said that he learned it from three friends: Zilphia Horton, Frank Hamilton, and Guy Carawan. Seeger had met them at the Highlander Folk School, a training school for social justice activists in Tennessee.

These three White musicians in turn had learned the song from Black members of the Food and Tobacco Workers Union. Several union members had come to Tennessee seeking training and support from the Highlander School where Zilphia Horton was the music director. According to Carawan's recollections, the workers originally sang the song with the words, "I will overcome," until Horton convinced them that "**We** will overcome," would be more effective on the picket line.

Seeger cited the contributions of Horton, Hamilton, and Carawan when he secured a copyright for ***We Shall Overcome*** in 1960, listing their names along with his own. Seeger and the others, readily acknowledging that they were not the original composers, created a charitable trust to manage the royalties generated by the song.

Seeger also credited input from "The African American members of the Food and Tobacco Workers Union in Charleston, South Carolina." He was referring to Local 15 of the Food, Tobacco, Agriculture and Allied Workers of America (FTA). In 1945 the union was on strike for better pay and working conditions. The American labor movement had long utilized protest songs on the picket lines, but these union workers, primarily Black women, turned to the gospel texts and spiritual melodies of their own culture to create a powerful new labor ballad and eventual civil right anthem. In the words of Lillie Mae March Doster, one of the union members, "*You think about that, it's almost like a prayer of relief. We didn't make up the song. We just started singing it as a struggle song.*"

Pete Seeger's recording of the song, along with versions by other stars of the folk revival movement like Joan Baez, made **We Shall Overcome** one of the most recognizable protest songs of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was sung throughout the American civil rights movement and later during the Vietnam War protests. It was performed at the March on Washington in 1963 by the Freedom Singers, accompanied by Joan Baez; Bob Dylan; Peter, Paul, and Mary; and Theodore Bikel. It was also sung in 1968 by the 50,000 attendees at the funeral of Dr. Martin Luther King.

In 2017, the family of Louise Shropshire, along with the producers of the movie, *The Butler*, and the We Shall Overcome Foundation, filed suit in federal court to have Shropshire recognized as creator of the text. They also sought to break the copyright held by the Seeger group. On September 11, 2017 a judge in the Southern District of New York declared Shropshire to be the lyricist of the first verse of **We Shall Overcome**, and in the final settlement, all parties agreed to place the song in the public domain. Today, **We Shall Overcome** belongs to all of us, figuratively and literally.

**Text:** The text evolved from a variety of sources. Several examples are listed below. In addition, numerous additional verses have been published and continue to be improvised in performance. We will sing verses 1, 2, 3, and 6 from the version found in the collection, **Get America Singing...Again! Volume 2** published by Hal Leonard. (See appendix)

***I'll Overcome Some Day*** by Charles Albert Tindley, published 1901. (Refrain only)

I'll overcome some day.  
I'll overcome some day.  
If in my heart I do not yield  
I'll overcome some day.

***If My Jesus Wills*** by Louise Shropshire, published 1942, copyright 1954. (Refrain only)

I'll overcome.  
I'll overcome.  
I'll overcome some day.  
If my Jesus wills,  
I do believe  
I'll overcome some day

***We Will Overcome*** published by People's Songs Inc. in 1947, located in the Old Town School of Folk Music Resource Center collection.

*We will overcome.*  
*We will overcome*  
*We will overcome some day.*  
*Oh, deep in my heart.*  
*I do believe.*  
*We will overcome some day.*

**We Shall Overcome** by Zilphia Horton, Frank Hamilton, Guy Carawan & Pete Seeger, 1960.

*We shall overcome  
We shall overcome  
We shall overcome some day.  
Oh, deep in my heart  
I do believe  
We shall overcome some day.*

Additional verses to be performed:

*We'll walk hand in hand  
We'll walk hand in hand.  
We'll walk hand in hand some day.....*

*We are not afraid  
We are not afraid  
We are not afraid today....*

*We will live in peace  
We will live in peace  
We will live in peace some day.....*

### **Elements of Music**

**Form:** **We Shall Overcome** is a short, hymn-like song in AB form (verse and refrain). The two sections are perfectly balanced, both having 32 beats, and each divided into 3 phrases. However, unlike many folk songs or gospel hymns, there is no clear sense of division between the two sections. The climax of the song occurs at the end of the A section, but the rhythm and melody continue almost seamlessly into the B section. The overall effect is a single musical idea.

Each section begins with two short 8-beat phrases that are identical or nearly so, and each section ends with a more elaborate contrasting phrase that's twice as long. The format is reminiscent of call and response, or of blues form where there is a statement, a repetition of the statement, and then an elaboration on the statement.

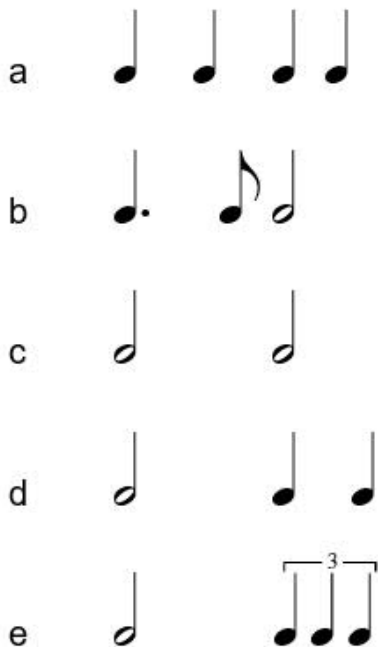
This balanced architecture provides a structure to support the haunting melody. Like the text, the form suggests strength and restraint. The form is easy to remember; the repetition encourages all who hear it to add their own voice to the singing. It's no wonder **We Shall Overcome** has found a place in the hearts of people all around the world. The music is simple but never simplistic; the message is succinct, yet profound.

**Rhythm:** The meter is 4/4 and the tempo is moderate. To avoid choppiness or an overly sluggish tempo it's helpful to conduct the piece in a slow 2/2 if the skills of the performers

permit. The rhythmic note set is fairly large and though within the ability of upper elementary and middle school students, it offers an appropriate level of challenge.



There are five rhythmic ideas in *We Shall Overcome*, three of which are remarkably simple. In fact, nearly the entire rhythmic content of the song is made up of just quarter notes and half notes. This creates an overall rhythmic affect that is plodding, almost like the marching of a weary army. The rhythm feels controlled and heavy; never playful or light-hearted. Even the dotted rhythm (b), the only subdivision of the quarter note beat in the whole song, lacks any sense of liveliness.



The slow tempo, slurred notes, and the use of half notes, whole notes, and tied notes, creates a rhythm that is somber and serious; one that reflects the immensity of the obstacles faced by the people who first created and performed this song.

The first two phrases in the song have identical rhythms (a+b). The third phrase begins similarly but ends with a new and surprisingly expressive rhythmic idea (e). The triplet division of the half note is reminiscent of the improvisatory rhythms found in gospel music. This single escape from an otherwise stolid rhythm suggests the desire of all who sing this song to “break free” as well. There is a version of the song without the triplet rhythm that makes it easier to read, but it is far less satisfying to sing. (See below.)



From the book *We Shall Overcome: A Song That Changed the World*, by Stuart Stotts.

As in the A section, the first two phrases of the B section have the same rhythm (d). The final phrase begins by recalling the rhythm of phrase 3 (a+c) and ends with a whole note tied to a dotted half note, bringing the song to a solid conclusion. The feeling of steadiness and assurance created by this reference to an already familiar pattern and the long ending note, add emphasis to the final line of text, “We shall overcome, some day.”

**Melody:** The melody is in C major. It has a range of a 9<sup>th</sup> (c<sup>1</sup> - d<sup>2</sup>). It moves mostly by step with a judicious but effective use of repeated notes and skips. There are six phrases (aabcc’d) though only four are unique. The repeated patterns, the diatonic pitch set, and infrequent use of skips makes for an appropriate sight singing assignment for upper elementary students.

The first two phrases are identical, and that repetition immediately catches the ear. It suggests resolve and persistence. When the opening repeated pitches reoccur in phrases 3 and 6, it further reinforces a feeling of determination.

### Phrases 1 and 2



The third phrase is a wonderful extension of the first phrase. It begins with the same opening three notes, but instead of falling it immediately rises to the highest pitch in the song, creating a poignant climax on the word “someday.” It continues by step down to g<sup>1</sup> with a gentle ornament-like movement. That little triplet figure is so profound. It’s as if the singer’s voice is breaking with emotion as it struggles toward the end of the phrase, knowing that resolution will come “someday,” but not today.

### Phrase 3



At this point the A section ends, but there is no time to rest at the half cadence. Two pick-up notes immediately rise by step into phrase 4, creating not only a seamless transition between the verse and the refrain, but also a secondary climax on c<sup>2</sup>. It is both ironic and powerful, that the word “deep” falls on the highest pitch in the refrain.

Like the A section of the song, the B section begins with two short, nearly identical phrases. Phrase 4 consists of only four pitches that descend by step. (It should be noted that the Seeger version printed in Stuart Stotts’s book, *We Shall Overcome: A Song That Changed the World*, is slightly different, skipping from do’ to la.)

#### Phrase 4



#### Alternate version



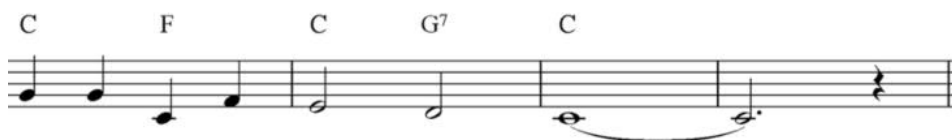
Phrase 5 repeats the pattern in sequence. There is something achingly sad about these phrases, as if someone falls, then struggles to step up, only to fall again.

#### Phrase 5



The final phrase of the song begins with an echo of the repeated pitches that opened the piece, but the similarity ends quickly. Phrase 6 is characterized by a skip down a 5<sup>th</sup> and then back up a 4<sup>th</sup>. These are the largest and only successive skips in the whole song. In fact, the entire piece has only four other skips, all of them a 3<sup>rd</sup>, and three of those are simply the familiar movement from *mi* to *so* between phrases. After so much stepwise motion and repetition of melodic material, these two skips are immensely expressive. They suggest determination in the face of the arduous tasks laid out in the text.

#### Phrase 6



It's interesting that every phrase in the song begins with a rising motion and ends with descending steps. It's as if the music itself is inhaling and exhaling; striving forward and being pushed back. In fact, one could view the entire melody as a single, large arched phrase that rises during the verse and falls during the refrain. The melody becomes a metaphor for dreams pursued and dreams denied.

It's also noteworthy that the entire song contains only four occurrences of *do* (c<sup>1</sup> or c<sup>2</sup>) and only the last one occurs at the end of a phrase. The long wait makes the final stepwise descent to a full cadence very satisfying. The melodic journey, like the journey described in the text, requires commitment and patience, but the wait makes the ultimate destination all the sweeter.

**Harmony:** Folk tunes usually begin as single melodies without accompaniment. Any added harmony would have been improvised in performance. As these tunes were shared aurally and traveled long distances, numerous variations appeared. Later, the songs were collected and converted to standard musical notation. Sometimes the final published version would have been unrecognizable to the original creator.

The spiritual **No More Auction Block for me**, the likely source of the tune for **We Shall Overcome**, was first published in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and its harmony is reminiscent of Protestant hymns popular at the time. Pete Seeger's version of **We Shall Overcome**, published in 1960, shares much of that harmonic material, particularly the plagel movement (C-F-C) and the deceptive cadence on A minor. The harmonic motion speeds up as it moves into the highly expressive 3<sup>rd</sup> phrase and slows into the final phrase.

Interestingly, the version titled **We Will Overcome** that was originally taught to Pete Seeger by Zilphia Horton has a more rudimentary harmony. Horton's melody is slightly different, changing the harmonization at the end of the first two phrases. Her version has no deceptive cadence and less harmonic motion in phrase three.

Clearly, the harmonic underpinnings of a folk song are transformed every time a new generation performs it, or a new arranger publishes it. The harmonies we currently associate with **We Shall Overcome** may have little or no connection to the original performances. Instead, they reflect the harmonic style of 19<sup>th</sup> century hymnals as interpreted by the musicians of the 20<sup>th</sup> century folk revival movement who were themselves certainly influenced by the popular music of their generation.

**No More Auction Block for Me** (transposed from E<sup>b</sup>)

C	F	C	C
F	C	d	G <sub>7</sub>
C	F	C	a
d <sub>7</sub> C	dG <sub>7</sub>	C	C

**We Shall Overcome**

C	F	C	C				
C	F	C	C				
C	FG	a	D <sub>7</sub>	G	D <sub>7</sub>	G	d <sub>7</sub> G
C	F	C	C				
F	G	a	a				
C	F	C/G	G	C	C	C	C

**We Will Overcome** (Highlander Folk School Version)

C	FG <sub>7</sub>	C	C				
C	FG <sub>7</sub>	C	C				
C	C	C	D <sub>7</sub>	G <sub>7</sub>	G <sub>7</sub>	G <sub>7</sub>	G <sub>7</sub>
C	F	C	C				
F	G <sub>7</sub>	C	C				
C	a	G	G <sub>7</sub>	C	C	C	C



**Timbre:** Traditionally the timbre of **We Shall Overcome** was a function of where and when it was performed. When sung at a demonstration, protest march, or in a crowded jail cell, the timbre would have been voices alone. At a concert or formal protest rally there would have been instrumental accompaniment, most likely guitar. We will perform the song using unchanged voices and piano.

**Texture** The texture of the Seeger version is homophonic. We will perform **We Shall Overcome** in unison with an improvised chordal accompaniment by the pianist. For the final verse the piano will drop out leaving the singers to depend only on each other for support.

**Accompaniment:** Piano (improvised)

**Dynamics:** There are no dynamic markings in the score, but an effort should be made to shape the phrases with a natural crescendo/decrescendo. The overall effect should be legato, but with a strong internal beat that is not overly slow.

The text suggests a few logical dynamic changes (i.e., louder for “We are not afraid” and softer for “We shall live in peace”) but these changes should feel spontaneous rather than rehearsed. **We Shall Overcome**, true to its gospel roots, must remain free to reflect whatever spirit is present among the people who gather to sing it.

**The Heart Statement:** The heart of **We Shall Overcome** is a valiant melody that persists in rising after every fall and refuses to resolve until it has achieved its long-promised destination.

### **Introducing the Piece**

Students will enter the classroom silently to **Étude Op. 10, No. 12, the “Revolutionary,”** by Frederic Chopin and complete a quick write assignment on displayed on the white board. The teacher briefly introduces the concept of “anthem” and asks the class to audiate another anthem (*Star-Spangled Banner*). The class sings the national anthem.

The class will view a montage of photos and read several quotes associated with **We Shall Overcome**. Teacher will ask them to identify the name of this anthem. Students will be asked to audiate the melody from hand signs. Students who are familiar with the song will sing one verse.

Students will move around the classroom to collect ideas for other possible anthems.

**Skill Outcome:** Students will apply various strategies to sight-sing diatonic melodies.

### **A. Strategies**

1. Identify whether a melody is moving up, down or repeating (thumb signals)
2. Remember the pitch – Use hand sign solfege to practice remembering *do and later so*. Drone on “do” as teacher sings. Think “do” as teacher sings. Same activity w/o teacher.
3. Using the song “If do is on a line.....” to internalize the tonic chord as a warm-up to sight singing activities.
4. Diatonic warm-ups and stepwise diatonic patterns .
5. Scale ladder echo: Begin with stepwise and repeated pitches. Add skips. Ask students to audiate the missing pitches. (Use post-it notes to cover pitches that are silent.)
6. Echo sing diatonic phrases (flashcards)
  - I sing solfege – You sing a neutral syllable
  - I sing a neutral syllable – You sing solfege
  - I sign – You sing
  - Think and read diatonic flashcards
7. Melodic study sheet of ***We Shall Overcome***
  - Think aloud
  - Sing/Sign together
8. Study sheets for familiar tunes: ***America, Great Big House, Tideo, John Kanaka***
  - Work in large and small groups
9. Name that tune
  - Students identify songs by audiating the melody from hand signs or notation.

### **B. Assessments**

1. Teacher observation of large group work.
2. Lightening round flashcards – teams, partners, solos
3. Sing in pairs/by rows/by teams
4. Small group study sheets – Teacher observes small group work.

**Knowledge Outcome:** Students will use standard musical vocabulary to label rhythmic notation and apply that information accurately.

**A. Strategies**

1. Flashcards (“I see...”)
2. Small flashcards with partner – #1 speaks/#2 writes – Do they match?  
#2 speaks/#1 writes – Do they match?
3. Chair rhythms using rhythm set in groups of 4 beats
  - Students create. Class speaks the rhythmic notation names.
  - Teacher speaks the rhythmic notation names. Students create.
4. Subdivision movement game. Two circles of 6. Each circle divides itself into groups of 2’s or 3’s as directed. Class “reads” the rhythm.
5. Body rhythms – You are a quarter note. How could you work with a partner to depict a half note, whole note, tied notes?
6. Moving to **Brandenburg Concerto** using micro/macro beat: quarter note, half note, eighth, sixteenth, whole note
7. Echo 4-beat rhythms
  - I say/You clap
  - I clap/You say
8. Dry erase board dictation
  - Teacher leads: I speak/You write I write/You speak
  - Students create and lead
  - Partners
9. Seated: Sway the half note beat – clap subdivision in 2’s then 3’s
10. Walk half notes, clap duple or triple subdivision
11. Clapping 2’s against 3’s (socks vs sandals)
12. Worksheets – circle the quarter, square the half note.....
13. Music math: large group, partners, individual
14. Ten in Ten Game: Identify music symbols and rhythmic set within the score
15. Read song on rhythm syllables and with names of each rhythmic symbol
16. Snap cubes – four colors/four cubes of each color. Create a variety of note values.

17. Movement to ***Pata, Pata*** using quarters, half, whole, dotted quarter/eighth

18. Individual written dictation (Ex: Write 2 quarter notes and one half note)

## **B. Assessments**

1. Teacher observation of group activities – dry erase boards, movement
2. Aurally quiz students in small groups and individually
3. Written: dictation, worksheet, quiz, music math

**Affective Outcome:** Students will explore how anthems unite and inspire people to work together for a cause they support.

## **A. Strategies**

1. Google slides.
2. Large and small group discussions, pair-share
3. Read aloud: ***We Shall Overcome: The Story of a Song***
4. Quick write: List songs from our spring concert that could be considered anthems. Add other possible choices.
5. Find your team: Write the name of an American anthem on a 3x5 card. Find others in the room that share your answer. Add new discoveries to your list.
6. Jigsaw Activity – background information for 4 anthems.
7. Post-concert reflection sheet
8. Written and oral reflections (large group, pair/share)
9. Album-cover drawings: Create an illustration for a song that makes you feel brave.
10. Choose an anthem for a cause you support. Research your song and create a poster to promote your song and your cause.
11. Listening activities: Chopin ***Revolutionary Etude, Respect, Nkosi sikelel' Afrika, Fortunate Son, We Shall Overcome*** (The Aeolians)

## **B. Assessments**

1. Observation of student participation in large and small group discussions
2. Quick write responses
3. Find Your Team list
4. Jigsaw assignment
5. Post-concert reflection
6. Drawing (Album cover)
7. Choose your own anthem activity

## **Music Selection**

There are many reasons to teach ***We Shall Overcome***. It is deeply connected to our nation's history and a true American anthem. It can serve as a springboard for exploring the contributions of Black Americans, particularly Black women. It can encourage students to explore and share their own feelings and values, and to understand the need for each new generation to pursue justice and equality.

In many ways, ***We Shall Overcome*** has become an international anthem. Its adoption by people from countries as diverse as East Germany, South Africa, Bangladesh, South Korea, and Czechoslovakia speaks to its universal appeal. It provides a perfect opportunity to help our students examine how great music speaks to all people and can influence the course of world events.

From a pedagogical viewpoint, ***We Shall Overcome*** is an appropriate song choice for upper elementary and middle school students. The range is comfortable and the melodic and rhythmic content conform to district goals for sight reading. It is also appropriate for public performances in nearly any setting, religious or secular, but especially for Martin Luther King Day and other civic occasions.

Teaching opportunities include:

- Sight singing melodies/Hand sign solfege
- Reading, writing, and performing rhythms
- Melodic and rhythmic analysis
- Macro/micro beat
- Subdivision of the beat into 2's and 3's; quarter and eighth note triplets.
- Appropriate phrasing/breath marks in a song
- Expressive singing, especially arched phrases
- Analysis of phrase structure, particularly strong and weak cadences
- Folk and gospel traditions

- Protest songs in America and around the world
- History of the Folk Revival Movement
- Preservation of folk traditions
- Social Studies connections: American civil rights movement and the March on Washington, Black History, racial injustice, American labor movement, the Civil War and Reconstruction
- Understanding the role of the composer, lyricist, arranger, publisher
- School-wide celebrations and other opportunities for team building
- Personal reflection and Social-Emotional Learning

## Sources

### Radio, Web, and Magazines

**“Classical Roots” Has Cincinnati Resonance** by Mary Elyn Hutton, from **Music in Cincinnati**, March 8, 2014.

[http://www.musicincincinnati.com/site/reviews\\_2014/Classical\\_Roots\\_Has\\_Cincinnati\\_Resonance.html](http://www.musicincincinnati.com/site/reviews_2014/Classical_Roots_Has_Cincinnati_Resonance.html)

**Dream Songs: The Music of the March on Washington** by the Culture Desk at **The New Yorker**, August 28, 2013. <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/dream-songs-the-music-of-the-march-on-washington>

**The Inspiring Force of “We Shall Overcome”**, National Public Radio: All Things Considered, August 28, 2013, Noah Adams reporting. Transcript: <https://www.npr.org/2013/08/28/216482943/the-inspiring-force-of-we-shall-overcome>

**A Leading Lady with a Leading Voice**, UC Magazine (University of Cincinnati), September 2018.

[https://magazine.uc.edu/editors\\_picks/recent\\_features/shropshire.html](https://magazine.uc.edu/editors_picks/recent_features/shropshire.html)

**One Woman, Three Words** by Kimberly Millhoan, ACLU Ohio, Feb 18, 2015 <https://www.acluohio.org/archives/blog-posts/one-woman-three-words-we-shall-overcome>

**Songwriter finally gets her due for penning “We Shall Overcome,”** by Mark Curnutte, USA Today Network, February 5, 2018: [https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2018/02/05/songwriter-we-shall-overcome/308788002/?fbclid=IwAR1XY2fpFPp2MHlcW5Jbui-xCyhg-wYI2\\_mYCqGbk4e387n8p2jTpLtWrrY](https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation-now/2018/02/05/songwriter-we-shall-overcome/308788002/?fbclid=IwAR1XY2fpFPp2MHlcW5Jbui-xCyhg-wYI2_mYCqGbk4e387n8p2jTpLtWrrY)

**The Surprising History of “We Shall Overcome,”** by David A. Graham, The Atlantic, May 9, 2015. <https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2015/05/we-shall-overcome/392837/>

**We Shall Overcome: The History of an American Folk Song**, Kim Rule, liveaboutdotcom, March 5, 2019. <https://www.liveabout.com/we-shall-overcome-1322523>

**We Shall Overcome by Pete Seeger**, Songfacts: <https://www.songfacts.com/facts/pete-seeger/we-shall-overcome>

**Woman Who Wrote “We Shall Overcome” Finally Gets Recognized for Civil Right Anthem** by Britni Danielle, Essence, February 9, 2018.

<https://www.essence.com/news/we-shall-overcome-louise-shropshire-recognized/>

## Books

***Anthem: Social Movements and The Sound of Solidarity in the African Diaspora*** by Shana L. Redmond, New York University Press, 2014.

***We Shall Overcome: The Story of a Song*** by Debbie Levy, illustrated by Vanessa Brantley-Newton, Scholastic, Inc. 2013.

***We Shall Overcome: A Song That Changed the World*** by Stuart Stotts, illustrated by Terrance Cummings, Clarion Books (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt), 2010.

***Charles Albert Tindley, Prince of Preachers***, by Ralph H. Jones, Abingdon Press, 1982.

***Get America Singing...Again! Volume 2***, a project of the Music Educators National Conference, Hal Leonard Corporation, 2000.

## Recordings

***Brandenburg Concerto No. 2 in F***, BMW 1047: I. *Allegro* from ***Bach: Brandenburg Concertos – Orchestral Suites – Violin Concertos*** by the Academy of St. Martin in the Fields, Sir Neville Marriner conducting.

***Pata Pata*** by Miriam Makeba from ***Spotlight on Music, Grade 2 (Disc 5)***, 2005.

***If My Jesus Wills*** by Louise Shropshire, arranged for orchestra by Timothy Berens, YouTube, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra Video Series ***Classical Roots***, March 2014, John Morris Russell conducting.

***Étude Op. 10, No. 12*** by Frédéric Chopin, performed by Ídíl Biret for the album ***The Very Best of Chopin***, Naxos Records. 1990.

***Nkosi sikelel' Afrika (South African National Anthem)***, by Enoch Sontonga, performed by the Soweto Gospel Choir for the album ***Blessed***, Shanachie Records, 2005.

***Respect*** by Otis Redding and Ronnie Shannon, performed by Aretha Franklin for the album ***The Very Best***, Rhino Records, 1994.

***Fortunate Son*** by John Fogerty, performed by Creedence Clearwater Revival for the album ***Chronicle: The 20 Greatest Hits***, Fantasy Records, 1968.

## Videos

***We Shall Overcome***, The Aeolians, Oakwood University  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y7TaAFyvvIM&fbclid=IwAR2ZBQmoJ6NnkWO1CEVC2Za46Nemd2EiLyNkU5GDMgLRK39GM96MflyVACI>



## **Television**

***The Black Church: This is My Story, This is My Song***, produced, hosted, and written by Henry Louis Gates, Jr., PBS, 2021.

# We Shall Overcome

Musical and Lyrical Adaptation by ZILPHIA HORTON,  
FRANK HAMILTON, GUY CARAWAN and PETE SEEGER  
Inspired by African American Gospel Singing,  
members of the Food and Tobacco Workers Union,  
Charleston, SC, and the southern Civil Rights Movement

Moderately Slow

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of five systems of music. Each system includes a vocal line and guitar chords. The chords are: C, F, C/G, G, C, F, C; C, F, C, F, C; F, G, Am, D7, G, D7, G, Dm7, G; C, F, C, F, G, Am; C, F, C/G, G, C. The lyrics are: We shall o - ver - come, We'll walk hand in hand, We shall o - ver - come, We'll walk hand in hand, We shall o - ver - come some day, We'll walk hand in hand some day, Oh, deep in my heart I do be - lieve, We shall o - ver - come some day.

We are not afraid,  
we are not afraid,  
We are not afraid today...

We shall stand together,  
shall stand together,  
We shall stand together now...

The truth will make us free,  
the truth will make us free,  
The truth will make us free some day...

We shall live in peace,  
we shall live in peace,  
We shall live in peace some day...

TRO - © Copyright 1960 (Renewed) and 1963 (Renewed) Ludlow Music, Inc., New York, NY  
This arrangement © Copyright 2000 Ludlow Music, Inc.  
International Copyright Secured  
All Rights Reserved Including Public Performance For Profit  
Used by Permission

Royalties derived from this composition are being contributed to the We Shall Overcome Fund  
and The Freedom Movement under the Trusteeship of the writers.

# We Shall Overcome

The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of four staves. The first staff contains measures 1-4 with chords C, F, C, F, and C. The second staff contains measures 5-8 with chords G7, Am, D, G, and G7, including a triplet in measure 7. The third staff contains measures 9-12 with chords F, C, F, G7, and Am. The fourth staff contains measures 13-16 with chords C, F, C, G7, and C, ending with a double bar line.

1. We shall overcome...someday
2. We'll walk hand in hand...someday
3. We are not afraid...today
4. We will live in peace...someday

# I'll Overcome Some Day

By C. Albert Tindley

## WHEN I GET HOME. - Concluded.

I get home, All sor-row will be o-ver, When I get home.  
I get home, when I get home,

## No. 27. I'LL OVERCOME SOME DAY.

C. A. T. "Ye shall overcome if ye faint not." C. ALBERT TINDLEY.

1. This world is one great bat-tle-field, With fore-es all ar-rayed;
2. Both seen and un-seen pow-ers join To drive my soul a-stray,
3. A thousand snares are set for me, And mountains in my way;
4. I fail so oft-en when I try My Saviour to o-bey;
5. My mind is not to do the wrong, But walk the nar-row way;
6. Tho' many a time the signs ap-pear, Of an-swer when I pray;

If in my heart I do not yield, I'll o-vercome some day.  
But with his word a sword of mine, I'll o-vercome some day.  
If Je-sus will my lead-er be, I'll o-vercome some day.  
It pains my heart and then I cry, Lord, make me strong some day.  
I'm pray-ing as I jour-ney on, To o-vercome some day.  
My Je-sus says I need not fear, I'll be like him some day.

CHORUS.

I'll o-vercome some day (some day), I'll o-vercome some day;

If in my heart I do not yield, I'll o-vercome some day.

## NO MORE AUCTION BLOCK FOR ME

*Defiantly*  $E\flat$   $A\flat$   $E\flat$   $A\flat$   $E\flat$   $F$   $B\flat 7$

The musical score is written in a key signature of three flats (B-flat major or D-flat minor) and a common time signature (C). It consists of two systems of music. Each system has a vocal line on a single treble clef staff and a piano accompaniment on two staves (treble and bass clefs). The piano accompaniment features a steady bass line and chords that support the melody. The lyrics are written below the vocal line.

No more auc-tion block for me, no more, no more,

$E\flat$   $A\flat$   $E\flat$   $Cm$   $Fm7$   $E\flat$   $Fm7$   $B\flat 7$   $E\flat$

No more auc-tion block for me, ma-ny thou-sand gone.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>1. No more auction block for me,<br/>No more, no more!<br/>No more auction block for me;<br/>Many thousand gone.</p> | <p>3. No more peck of corn for me,<br/>No more, no more!<br/>No more peck of corn for me;<br/>Many thousand gone.</p> |
| <p>2. No more driver's lash for me,<br/>No more, no more!<br/>No more driver's lash for me;<br/>Many thousand gone.</p> | <p>4. No more pint of salt for me,<br/>No more, no more!<br/>No more pint of salt for me;<br/>Many thousand gone.</p> |

This anthem of liberation probably dates from "the Year of Jubilo." On January 1, 1863, Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation came into effect. Soon many of the Negroes he had set free were fighting with the Union forces, and as they marched they sang the thrilling lines of "No More Auction Block For Me."

The "pint of salt" and "peck of corn" were slavery rations. From a speech delivered in 1862 comes this comment:

"I asked one of these blacks where they got these songs. 'Dey make 'em, sah!' How do they make them? 'I'll tell you, it's dis way. My master calls me up and order me a short peck of corn and a hundred lash. My friends see it, and is sorry for me. When dey come to de praise-meeting dat night dey sing about it. Some's very good singers and know how; and dey work it in—work it in, you know, till they get it right; and dat's de way!'"

# 281 We Will Overcome

By FTA-CIO Workers  
Highlander Students

This simple and moving hymn tune becomes especially thrilling when you consider where the song was first sung. It was learned by Zilphia Horton of the Highlander Folk School, in Tennessee, from members of the CIO Food and Tobacco Workers Union. Many a visitor to the south has never forgotten hearing the rich harmonies of some little band, and the determination in these words, even though surrounded on all sides by hate, Jim Crow and all the forces of power and money.

Zilphia writes: "It was first sung in Charleston, S.C., and...one of the stanzas of the original hymn was...we will overcome'...At school here they naturally added other verses...Its strong emotional appeal and simple dignity never fails to hit people. It sort of stops them cold silent."



C (F G7) C (F G7) C  
 We will o - ver - come, We will o - ver - come,  
 D7 G7  
 We will o - ver - come some day. Oh  
 C F C F G7 C  
 Down in my heart, I do be - lieve,  
 Am G G7 C  
 We'll o - ver - come some day.

The Lord will see us through,  
The Lord will see us through,  
The Lord will see us through, some day,  
(CHORUS:)

We're on to victory ...  
(CHORUS:)  
We will overcome ...  
(CHORUS:)

## CMP Demo Lesson Background Information Sheet

This sheet offers participants a “peek behind the curtain” to the things that were considered in the creation of this CMP plan. Remember that the beauty of the model is that it can be adapted by *all* teachers to meet our own unique circumstances! NO EXCUSES...ROCK THE STAR!

ABOUT THE STUDENTS	
Age(s)/grade(s) of the students the plan is intended for?	Grade 4 or 5 (Appropriate for grade 4 to adult)
Describe the student population of the group (how long have you known them, are they mature/immature, how well do they know how to rehearse, do you have special needs/students with aides in the group, are they motivated/unmotivated, etc.)	<p>I retired 3 years ago after 43 years of teaching, mostly at James Monroe Elementary in Des Moines. When I was there Monroe had approximately 565 students in grades K-5. The mobility rate was high. In a typical 5<sup>th</sup> grade class, I might have had 5 or 6 kids who had been enrolled since kindergarten. Our families were mostly working poor and 100% of them qualified for free lunches. Many of my students were immigrants or refugees. They spoke 33 different languages or dialects. There was no majority racial group.</p> <p>We served special needs students in all categories and with the exception of a small class of students with severe and profound disabilities, all SPED students were integrated into regular classes. Class sizes were moderate: 20-28 per class. Our test scores were near the bottom both district-wide and state-wide.</p> <p>Motivation was a moving target. Some days were better than others. Some students were more motivated than others. Some of our students were traumatized and suffered from anxiety and depression. Some were happy, healthy, and loved to learn.</p>

	<p>Most parents wanted the best for their children, but they had extremely full plates. Some of my students lived in happy, loving homes, some lived in chaos. Some were struggling to make the transition from the 3<sup>rd</sup> world to American culture; others were savvier about the ways of the world than I was at 30. They were also beautiful and clever and sometimes amazing.</p> <p>During my long tenure at Monroe, I watched it change from a school with a broad socio-economic range to a school where the middle class had nearly disappeared, and the deck was stacked against those who remained.</p>
<p>How frequently do you see this group each week?</p>	<p>I saw my students once every 4 days for 45 minutes. There were 4 sections of 5<sup>th</sup> grade that would combine for concerts. There was no time for a joint rehearsal. We put it together the night of the concert. I figured parents and administrators might as well see how the sausage is made. 😊</p>
<p>Readiness of the students for this piece (will it be a challenge for them, is it on their current level, or is it on the easier side)?</p>	<p>This lesson would be challenging but not a hard sell. My students always needed support and encouragement and I had to break the process down into “digestible bites” so they didn’t get discouraged. (Because so many of my students had to deal with constant academic failure, they sometimes didn’t express discouragement in healthy ways.) On the upside, music and art often offered my students a chance to excel in ways that were different from the regular classroom. Sometimes students with meager abilities in reading would have beautiful singing voices or a gift for dance.</p>
<p>What percentage of students in this group study privately?</p>	<p>Almost none. About 25% participated in band or orchestra and they received a group lesson once a week. Occasionally, I had a student who took piano lessons, but it was extremely rare.</p>



<b>PERFORMANCE CONSIDERATIONS</b>	
Time of year/concert cycle intended for?	Our concert was usually in April, though I would teach this song even if it were not intended for performance.
How many other pieces/how many more minutes of music will this group be performing on the concert with this piece?	They usually performed about 5 songs (15-20 minutes). Our after-school, non-select chorus would also perform so the entire concert was approximately 40 minutes long.
Are there any unique time constraints for this concert cycle (testing, holidays, breaks, etc)?	State testing was scheduled in April. Generally, my teaching schedule was altered but not cancelled for testing. There were often students missing because they were being given additional time to complete their testing. I integrated the "program songs" into my regular curriculum throughout the year so we wouldn't be scrambling to learn stuff for the concert....but sometimes we scrambled despite my efforts.
Describe your physical space and any constraints you might have.	My classroom was approximately 1000 sq ft. It had hardwood floors. There were chairs, a piano, and lots of Orff instruments so it was tight. Movement was a challenge, but we got pretty fast at stacking chairs and/or adapting to limited space. Our stage area for performances was only about 300 sq ft so we were accustomed to "making it work."
<b>TEACHER THOUGHTS</b>	
Have you done this piece before? Why did you choose to do it again/do it for the first time?	I've never done a CMP plan with this song before nor included it in a program nor taught it in an intentional way. I'm ashamed to say that. I know it would have spoken to my students in a deep way. A dear friend always taught it to his entire elementary school, and they sang it on MLK Day with all 400 students holding hands. I chose to use this song in my demo lesson as both a penance for failing my students and as a tribute to my

	colleague. God Bless You, Mike Jones!
<p>How did you hear about this piece? Where did you first find out about it?</p>	<p>I think I first heard this song in 1963 as a 5<sup>th</sup> grader watching the March on Washington on TV. I grew up to be a fan of the folk revival movement and loved the versions by Joan Baez and Peter, Paul &amp; Mary. As a child of the 60's it was simply part of the "musical water" I swam in. I didn't see a notated version or know anything about its history until I was well into my teaching career. When I discovered the picture book by Debbie Levy in 2014 I started including <b><i>We Shall Overcome</i></b> as a part of our repertoire of American historic and patriotic songs.</p>
<p>What were your priorities in choosing to do THIS piece for your CMP plan for the year?</p>	<p>The usual expectation for the elementary demo is that the participants will experience an avalanche of strategies. General music teachers usually have a BIG bag of tricks to engage their diverse students, so normally I'd choose a song I'd taught a hundred times.</p> <p>For this plan I did something completely different. (Being part of CMP tends to do that to people, even a very "old dog" like me.) I choose a song I <u>wish</u> I had taught. I've always loved the melody and the message is as relevant today as it was during the Civil War. When I took the time to analyze the music I was pleasantly surprised to find that not only was it truly a wonderful piece of music, but it also aligned with my district's melodic and rhythmic learning targets. Quality music, solid outcomes, and a message my students can grapple with for a lifetime; who could ask for anything more?</p>