

# STORIES OF MUSIC USERS' GUIDE

סיפורי מוסיקה  
STORIES OF MUSIC






**Welcome to Stories of Music.** We are excited that you have considered introducing your community both to the world of Jewish music and to Jewish culture through music. We hope you and your community of adult learners will find the adventure of each lesson exciting, interesting, thought-provoking, and offering a portal through which one can consider and reconsider one's own Jewish connections and understandings.







Whether you are a cantor, educator, rabbi, or lay leader, we hope that you will find this journey a rich, rewarding experience for yourself and your community. This document is designed to help you to hold up your strengths and, as instructor and guide, provide the best experience for your community, and for each particular cohort of class participants.

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## Part 1 — Getting started

### ? What is Stories of Music and how do you use it?

Stories of Music is a turnkey adult education project of the Lowell Milken Center for Music of American Jewish Experience at The UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music. Our goal is to provide easy-to-deliver, fully-prepared lessons on a broad range of musically related topics that can touch every learner.

Each lesson is designed to engage participants in adult education programs to think about the American Jewish experience through stories of the evolving nature of Jewish music. Our lessons provide appropriate historical context and invite reflection on the American Jewish experience.

***Each lesson is designed to best serve your learners when done over two sessions.*** For each we have provided a place to break, replete with summaries, an outro, and closures for both the first and final sessions. We realize that some instructors may wish to do certain lessons in one session only or, alternatively, expand certain lessons into three sessions. Either is certainly doable with some preparation, but such decisions should be made by keeping in mind the expected (or hoped-for) learning results for your class participants.

### ? What is a “turnkey curriculum”?

The word “turnkey,” in its 17th-century origins, referred to the person who had all the keys. In those days, it often referred to the town jailer. [Please assume no necessary analogy to your classroom!] Here it refers to a system that provides you with all the keys you need to be successful. Thus in today’s world, the word is an adjective meaning “fully equipped; ready to go into operation.”

We have curated this material to bring together Jewish music and culture in ways that will bring freshness, perspective, curiosity, and engagement to the forefront of the classroom experience. Our lessons have been reviewed by teachers who specialize in music education, Jewish education consultants, synagogue educators, cantors and rabbis, in addition to our Stories of Music team, to ensure clarity of content, ease of use, and deep engagement by your students.

Turnkey lessons still require the love and care of the instructors who know their respective communities and cohort of learners personally. You will, of course, need to read through the lesson, familiarizing yourself with such matters as the Enduring Understandings, Essential Questions, the music used, the arc/flow of the lesson, and the proposed activities. After reading through the lesson each instructor will want to devote several (two or three) hours, at least initially, to ensure control of the pedagogy, content, timing, choices, focuses, etc.

### ? What will you find in each Stories of Music lesson?

Each Stories of Music lesson will contain:

- A brief ***overview of the lesson*** itself.

- The **enduring understandings** that each lesson promotes. They constitute the horizon, the macro view, the bigger picture that all parts of the lesson will help students uncover.
  - Enduring understandings are statements summarizing important ideas and core processes (not “facts”) that are central to the lesson, but which have lasting value beyond the classroom.
  - Enduring understandings synthesize what students should understand (not just know or do) as a result of the learning experience.
  - Finally, enduring understandings articulate what students might most want or need to “revisit” over the course of their lifetimes in relation to Jewish music and Jewish culture.
- The **essential questions** that lead to the enduring understandings of the lesson. These promote the inquiry that helps students to uncover the lessons’ key ideas. If we think of the enduring understandings of each lesson as the horizon we hope to move toward, the essential questions are the engine or locomotive that will get us there. Essential questions:
  - Have no simple “right” answer
  - Provoke and sustain inquiry
  - Address conceptual or philosophical foundations
  - Raise other important questions
  - Stimulate vital, ongoing rethinking
  - Retain relevance and importance beyond the lesson itself
  - Engage both a specific and diverse set of learners
- A brief **outline of the lesson** that can serve as both an overview and a road map of the lesson.
- A **complete lesson plan**, replete with features such as:
  - **Music**--plenty of it! All provided and curated for you.
  - **Key background material** given in easy-to-use bullet-point form.
  - **Discussion questions**
  - **Talking points** and easy-to-read **summaries** of sections
  - **Links** to the music and other material, whether more background or ideas that could extend the discussion in a particular direction
  - **Options** that will help you to make the lesson your own (see, [“Making the Lesson Your Own”](#))
- **Supporting materials**, including:
  - **Class Presentation** slides with embedded links to all musical selections, key discussion questions, and interesting visuals to further the lesson.
  - **Student Worksheet** that can help enhance the experience for your class participants.
  - **Resource Guide** that has all the links to music and background materials, as well as all lyrics in one place for easy reference.

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## Part 2 — Engaging with your students

We understand that each of you have different communities of eager adult learners, of

different ages, life experience, Jewish background, and more. We have thought deeply to craft something that can speak to all of them.

With the Enduring Understandings and Essential Questions guiding each lesson, we have focused upon a welcoming, open approach to learning that invites students to uncover or discover the larger ideas and themes. (See more on this “Discovery-Based Learning” approach below.)

Because the Enduring Understandings and Essential Questions inform the lesson, the discussions (whether with the entire class or in breakout groups or pair shares, described below) will not have a “right or wrong” feel, but a “You’re Right and You’re Right” tone.

We have included various types of activities that can help students engage in various ways. We especially include breakout groups and pair shares (see below). These not only vary the setting from large group to smaller group, but help promote everyone finding their voice in connecting to the material. You are welcome to use other activities, such as polling, instead of or in addition to these.

Finally, no matter what choices you make, the communication of instructions, ideas, etc. clearly--and concisely as possible--is often a key to a great lesson.

When in communication with your learners, it’s always a good idea to be aware of active listening and passive listening modes. If students are passive, please don’t hesitate to ask them if they are with you, et al. When students are sharing, it’s always a good idea to listen actively by inserting “Yes,” “That’s interesting,” or “Fantastic!” to let them know that you are valuing their engagement.

When playing music, some students may check out, particularly if it is something they may have heard before or if it’s a style that does not easily resonate with them. It’s often a good idea to let students know that you will be asking them for a reaction to the music, or ask them to put a one-word reaction to the music in the chat. This might help guide your discussion afterward.

The lessons are portals to deeper discovery. We hope you and your students find rich, lasting rewards on the other side.

### **Discovery-Based Learning (DBL)**

Discovery-Based Learning (DBL) is the process through which we learn by actively engaging with the material, rather than passively receiving information, such as in the context of a lecture. In DBL, the learner is given the opportunity to take ownership of the material and learning process, using their own experiences and foundational knowledge as a starting place for them in their new learning journey. In DBL, it is up to you as the teacher/facilitator to curate, or gently steer, a conversation toward the Enduring Understandings.

### **Best practices around discussions**

As a general principle when teaching a lesson, think of yourself as a facilitator of the conversation, guiding the discussion toward discovery. As the facilitator, you should use

constructive language, always building on what your students say, and encourage the use of it by all of your learners. Try not to outright void or negate anything your learners say. Consider the use of the “yes and...” principle: In responding to students, begin with “yes and...” For example, when you are discussing a composer and someone offers their personal experience having performed one of their works, you could say “yes, and that is indicative of how prolific that composer was at the time.” When “Yes” feels inappropriate, try using another word or phrase, such as “That’s interesting” and “How fascinating.” Find ways to use these interjections as opportunities to strengthen the enduring understandings.

If someone offers a non sequitur or some other opinion or topic that may derail the discussion, think about proposing an alternative time in the class or offering some other avenue for the discussion, so you can stay on topic.

If you are teaching online, the use of the chat requires some thought. For example, consider when to invite people to put a thought into the chat and when not to do so. In addition, while you are teaching, sometimes students lose focus and use the chat box to discuss items not on topic. In such cases, you might encourage people to regain focus. If it appears many have been doing this, perhaps invite everyone to stand up and stretch and then resume. In some cases, you might even consider disabling the chat function, at least for specific parts of the lesson.

If using the chat, you might designate someone to monitor the chat. This person can look for questions (or interesting comments) to bring to everyone’s attention, perhaps when you offer them a prompt. [Questions, even good ones, might be deferred to another time or “offline,” if not on point.] The monitor could be an additional support person or, perhaps, one of the participants if they are experienced with Zoom. Having a monitor can free you up so that you can be more present with the participants. In addition, a savvy monitor could set up breakout rooms or help with other tech needs.

## **Use of exercises to promote engagement**

### **🔍 What is a breakout group?**

A breakout group is an opportunity for your class to break into smaller groups where they can discuss a topic in greater depth. The benefit of breakout groups is that students will often feel more comfortable to share their ideas, and even debate the topic driving DBL.

The use of breakout groups motivates discovery in small groups without your adult learners feeling so dependent upon you as a “lecturer” to provide “definitive answers.”

When using breakout groups with in-person teaching, the instructor should consider the room.

- Is there adequate space for students to divide into groups and work effectively in their own area of the room.
- If not, are there other areas nearby in the building where at least some groups might meet?

- Even if there are other areas available, will it be time effective to do so?

When teaching online, many platforms have a way to readily move participants into separate spaces (e.g. Zoom has a breakout room function giving you the ability to deliberately divide participants into specific groups, or Zoom can randomly assign students to one of the number of breakout rooms that you designate). Finally, consider the time frame and the reason for a breakout group. In some cases, you may want to allot 5-10 minutes; in other cases, they may need a longer time frame, even 15-20 minutes, to accomplish the deliverable. If you are not sure how long this might take, a good rule of thumb would be to start with the smaller number of minutes within your target range, then add time if practicable.

### **What is a pair share?**

A pair share is a short, two-person breakout group. Pair shares are a great way to encourage your students to quickly process the topic at hand. Pair shares are usually short exchanges, rather than back-and-forth conversations, but they promote meaningful processing of the material. Moreover, pair shares can help your students make connections between the material, their sense of Judaism, and their lives.

### **Why do we include these types of exercises?**

Exercises such as pair shares and breakout groups help to create community. They also allow the students to find their way to the Enduring Understanding using their own critical reasoning in processing the information related to the musical, cultural, and historical context.

Throughout the lessons you will find “*extension ideas*,” which allow students to go slightly deeper into a given topic, or veer into a topic that is connected but not aimed at getting to an Enduring Understanding. If there are time restrictions, these sections can be omitted, but if you have the time, these sections will allow for great discussions with your group.

### **Talking about music**

Talking about music is not something we all naturally do. We are trained to speak and write about many things in school/life, but how to describe and analyze music is generally not one of them, and for that reason discussions around music require a significant amount of facilitation, especially if you are leading a group of majority non-musical individuals.

**Modeling language** is very helpful to give your students the confidence to begin speaking about music. For the earlier examples in the lessons, offer your observations first to demonstrate the vocabulary you can use to explore the material. Using concepts they understand already, offer a starting place: What is the tone of the song--Is the song dark or bright? What moods or emotions does it convey? Does it have a danceable quality to it or is it morose...even dirge-like? When students begin to find their own descriptions, offer some suggestions if they get stuck on a particular description.

**Using terminology the students already know and understand** will be the difference between a lively conversation and silence from your students. Suggest to your students

adjectives that they use all the time; remind them that music can be “light, dark, heavy, happy, sad, etc.” Once they feel comfortable in the use of this vocabulary in relation to music, you can begin to get into the finer points of how a given composer/musician achieves that quality, if you find it helpful to the lesson (e.g. this composer achieves a light and happy mood with the quick tempo, major key, etc.).

### **How to introduce terminology that you feel students need**

New topics often require new terminology. When introducing a new term, take the time to explain it using common terminology. You may even want to explain it in multiple ways with different wording if it is a particularly complex term. Be certain to offer examples of what you are explaining and, if there is time, you may want to invite a student to explain the term/topic in their own words. This often helps other learners process the concept in a deeper way.

### **Talking about Jewish culture**

The Stories of Music team understands Jewish culture quite expansively. Jewish culture encompasses religion, to be sure, but it also incorporates ideas, practices, institutions, values, holidays, languages, food, the arts, and more. Jewish culture has evolved, and continues to evolve, within a sociohistorical context. We encourage ideas, perspectives, and discussions that promote thinking about Jewish culture and Jewish life in broad terms.

### **Promoting diversity and inclusion**

The Stories of Music team promotes diversity and inclusion in a number of ways. First, we honor the existence of all Jewish communities and subcultures. We often think of Jews ethnically (and geographically) as Ashkenazi, Sephardi, or Mizrahi, but these terms themselves do not represent homogeneous, monolithic or single cohesive Jewish communities. Moreover, other Jewish communities, such as the Abayudayan Jews of Uganda, do not fall into any of these terms.

Jews not only differ by ethnicity, they also differ along lines of philosophy and observance. We often think broadly of Reform, Conservative, and Orthodox Jews. However, these designations, too, do not represent a single, cohesive, homogeneous community or type of Jew. Moreover, there are other groupings, including Reconstructionist, Renewal, and Humanistic Jews. Other Jews self-define as independent of these groups, as “transdenominational” (i.e. overlapping with any number of these groups), or as independent.

The Stories of Music curriculum welcomes all Jews to our material. In fact, a variety of Jewish experiences and thinking about Judaism and Jewishness will liven and deepen the learning experience for all. We do not presuppose any entry point for any Jews, nor do we try to mold a student into a particular kind of Jew.

### **Teaching virtually vs. in-person: It works either way!**

**Access...** While certain social aspects of the class can be lost when taught virtually, teaching a class online (whether through Zoom or some other platform) can offer members of your community with limited access or mobility an opportunity to attend a class that would



otherwise be unavailable to them. It will likely require some different preparation such as becoming acquainted with your platform (e.g. Zoom), but if you have a community that cannot get together in person, this is a great option!

When teaching virtually, consider how to best further the *social dynamics* of your class. The conversations that take place at the beginning of the session, at the breaks, and as you are leaving the room do not happen naturally. If you want your students to interact in that way (you may not if it is a very large class), you will need to facilitate it. This can be done with use of the chat, extra time in the Zoom room and/or breakout groups, and other creative ways. For example, you can have everyone type in the chat--even one word--that represents how they are doing today, their reaction to the music they just heard, their understanding of a topic before beginning that part of the lesson, etc.

Remember that teaching online will also limit the direct feedback you get from your students. The facial expressions, sounds, etc., that we use to discern whether our students are understanding the material are absent. There is no harm in stopping regularly to check with the class about how well they are understanding the material. When on Zoom, this can be as simple as asking your students to wave or give a thumbs up to confirm understanding.

If teaching live (or in a hybrid of live and online), you should consider the configuration of the room you will use to support participant engagement and to address the objectives of the session. Will participants be grouped in smaller clusters, all facing the same direction, in a semi-circle or circle, or some other option? This may influence your choice of rooms or how you choose to set up the room you are using.

If teaching online, it would be a good idea to identify someone who is tech savvy in your community. It would be worthwhile to brainstorm with them ahead of time about any concerns you may have with technology and what options you might have should technology fail.

### **Teaching as if there is no screen**

If you choose to teach the curriculum online, we encourage you to always teach as if there is no screen in front of you. While this may seem formidable, making the effort to connect with your class on the other side of the screen as if the screen is not there will help your students engage in a deeper way. It is very easy for a learner to become a passive participant when on Zoom, so it is incumbent on you to constantly engage with your students. If you don't have experience teaching on Zoom, it will require some practice to connect with your class participants in this way, but it will be well worth the time.

### **Making the lesson your own**

Stories of Music lessons are easily adaptable to your community and to each specific cohort of learners. Among the ways you might consider:

- Which of the Enduring Understandings (and Essential Questions) do you think need special highlighting with your students?

- Which discussion questions might provide your students with deeper, more expansive thinking? Which might best lead to the Enduring Understandings you most wish to highlight?
- Which discussion venues (all-class, breakout groups, pair-shares) might be most effective with each particular cohort? We feel that utilizing a variety of ways to process material is usually a good idea. Yet a small class might not be conducive to breakout groups. If the class has an uneven number of participants, you may need to think of being a participant in a pair-share.
- In some cases, we offer options around how many pieces of music you may want to use, or the length of a particular selection. Choices might be made based on your particular cohort of students and your particular strengths. Of course, choices should also be made with a view toward getting to the Enduring Understandings in the most effective manner.
- Are you teaching these in a 45-minute session, a 60-minute session, a 90-minute session, or some other length? The length of your class sessions will inform and direct choices about how much of each lesson to include in a session.
- Instructors can easily replace a musical selection or add a musical selection to which they have a particular connection and which also help bring out an enduring understanding or address an essential question in some way.
- There are seemingly endless options. Our Stories of Music team is always available to support you and assist you in talking through the possible choices, so that you feel confident of delivering the best lesson in the best way for your students.

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## Part 3 — Support materials

### The Classroom Presentation slides

We have provided all of the slides that you will need to help illuminate each topic discussed in every lesson, including all of the necessary videos, images, and audio files.

- Slides are provided through Google Slides, and give you the opportunity to download them in whichever format works best for you, e.g. PowerPoint, or simply work with the Google Slides version.
- You will need a computer, projector or TV, and power source if you are presenting the slides in person.
- If you are presenting through Zoom, you can either download the slides into your preferred format or use them directly from Google Slides.
- Just as a title page of a book is not numbered, the title slide in the presentation is not numbered either. You will find the slide number on the lower right corner of each slide. It corresponds to the slide number referenced in the lesson plan.
- Practice using the slides.
- You may choose to go “Full Screen” for some of the videos that reside on the slides
- If you are presenting directly from Google Slides, you will need reliable Wi-Fi.
- Remember: Slides are yet another teaching tool; we don’t rely on them for everything. It is best to avoid reading directly from slides, especially while teaching in-person. And, you will always need to contextualize the material on the slides.

- If one or more students asks for a copy of the slides, please direct them to the website.

### **The Student Worksheet**

The student worksheet is meant as a supplement when teaching a class, not as homework or to replace any of your role as the instructor. The worksheets offer translated songs, discussion questions (duplicate from the slides), and other helpful instructions to facilitate discussions and activities. *Prior to teaching*, go through the student worksheet to familiarize yourself with what it does and does not have, and to consider how it can support your efforts to move toward the lesson’s goals.

### **The Resource Guide**

Each lesson comes replete with a Resource Guide that lists:

- all the artists (in alphabetical order) in the lesson with links to the video(s) of their music used in the lesson, as well as links to websites that have a more extensive biographical background than we provide in the lesson. We have vetted the links.
- all of the recordings used, listed in the order they are used in the lesson itself
- all of the topics that the lesson addresses, with the links to supporting material. Again, links have been vetted.
- all of the lyrics used

You may choose to use the Resource Guide in any number of ways. Look through it initially to get a sense of the scope of artists, music, and topics that could be covered in some way in this lesson. Of course, not every artist, selection, or topic is covered in the lesson with the same depth. Some are studied in depth; others are used as an example, or part of a listening only experience, or are part of an “extension idea” (a nonessential, optional section).

Consider how to use the links to biographies, pieces of music or material supporting discussions during your class. You may want to send link(s) to:

- individual students who seem especially interested in a particular person or topic. This could be done in a follow-up email, for example, showing appreciation for their participation and engagement.
- the entire class if the entire class (or a large enough portion) shows interest, either by inserting a link into the chat (on Zoom) or sending the link to the class afterward.
- one (or two) items to the entire class to listen to *ahead* of a particular session, often to give a “teaser” to the lesson.
- *after* a particular session to the class for various reasons (e.g. a link to music that was not covered but they could now appreciate; a link for more background on a particular topic that had generated interesting conversation).

Of course, you may also want to send the entire Resource Guide to the whole class, although we would recommend doing so once the entire Lesson (e.g. all sessions) has been completed. Otherwise, it may be too daunting for learners who may not have the context to fully take in why all this material is here, and how to best appreciate it.

The Resource Guide provides the lyrics to *everything* that is studied/discussed and not just listened to, including items that support an “extension idea.” The Student Worksheet (see above) does not include all the lyrics that the Resource Guide provides. Once you have decided how to proceed with the lesson, it will be easy to determine whether to use the Student Worksheet (as is) for lyrics, or whether you want to create a more personalized Worksheet or Lyrics Sheet, or supplemental sheet, for the class.

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## Part 4 — Mechanisms of support for users of the Stories of Music curriculum

### Outreach to the Stories of Music team

Stories of Music is here to help ensure your success in using our curriculum. Whether you are worried about “fitting it all in” or want to ask about breakout groups, whether you wish to speak as you prepare a lesson or to debrief after teaching one, all questions and concerns are worthy, and we are here to assist you as you introduce Stories of Music to your community.

Please contact us by email at [infomilkcenter@schoolofmusic.ucla.edu](mailto:infomilkcenter@schoolofmusic.ucla.edu) or by phone at [310-825-3650](tel:310-825-3650).

### The Stories of Music team

**Dr. Mark Kligman**, the Mickey Katz Endowed Chair in Jewish Music at The UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music, is the Director of the Stories of Music project and heads our team.

**Dr. Lorry Black**, the Associate Director of the Lowell Milken Center for Music of American Jewish Experience at The UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music, is one of our curriculum writers.

**Rabbi Dr. J.B. Sacks** served as the Chair of the Department of Jewish Thought at the Academy for Jewish Religion California (AJRCA) for 12 years. He also headed the Tanakh (Bible) track at de Toledo High School. He is the spiritual leader of Congregation Am HaYam (Ventura, CA). He is one of our curriculum writers.

**Beth Kraemer**, Program Coordinator of the Lowell Milken Center, serves as our Project Manager.

Both Dr. Kligman and Ms. Kraemer serve as part of the review team. Each provides extensive initial feedback before we send the lessons for review by outside reviewers.

Our team of independent reviewers includes **Dr. Susan Helfter** (USC Thornton School of Music), **Rabbi Devin Villarreal** (Thrive Educational Services) and **Cantor Sheldon Levin** (Congregation Neve Shalom, Metuchen, NJ).

In addition, selected lessons have been reviewed by **Cantor Julie Berlin** (Temple Beth-El, San Antonio, TX) and **Rabbi Adam Schaffer** (Temple Aliyah, Woodland Hills, CA), both of whom have extensive education background and experiences.