

Our Orchestra Community: *Same and Different*



Pre-K – 2nd
Grades

Lesson 1 — *God Bless America*

Objective

Students will learn to sing the patriotic song *God Bless America*. Students will explore the purpose and function of patriotic songs.

Suggested Materials

- Music and lyrics for *God Bless America* (provided)
- Word Bank (provided)
- Optional: Recording of *God Bless America* (audio links can be found at [youtube.com/user/BfloPhilharmonic](https://www.youtube.com/user/BfloPhilharmonic))

New York State Arts Standards

- 1 – Creating, Performing, and Participating in the Arts
- 3 – Responding to and Analyzing Works of Art
- 4 – Understanding the Cultural Contributions of the Arts

New York State Social Studies Standards

- 1 – History of the United States and New York
- 5 – Civics, Citizenship, and Government

Common Core Learning Standards for ELA & Literacy

- Reading, CCR 1, 2 and 6
- Writing, CCR 4 and 9
- Speaking & Listening, CCR 1, 2, and 3
- Language, CCR 1, 3, 5 and 6

Procedure

- 1) Play and/or sing the chorus of the American patriotic song, *God Bless America* written by songwriter Irving Berlin.
Is this a familiar song to students?
- 2) This is a patriotic song. Discuss with students what the function of a patriotic song could be. When do we sing patriotic songs? Why do you think we sing them? How do they make you feel?
- 3) The title and main lyric of this song, “God Bless America,” came from a phrase that Irving Berlin’s mother used to say expressing how thankful she was that she was able to escape to America from the violence in her home country of Siberia. This is an important theme in the history of our country – the United States has served as a safe place for people from around the world to escape from dangerous and oppressive situations.

Ask students to think about what they are thankful for. If they wrote a song about it, what words (lyrics) would they choose? What would the music sound like? Would it be fast or slow? Loud or soft? Bright or dark? Choppy or smooth? Use the provided Word Bank for inspiration.
- 4) Practice singing the song with students so that they will be comfortable singing along with the BPO at the concert!

Learning Extension:

Expand on #3 by asking students to write a new song individually, or together as a class. First create the lyrics for the song (what are we thankful for) using the Word Bank provided for inspiration. Then try beatlab.com or incredibox.com for free sound-mixing software. Compose a tune to go along with the lyrics. Perform and share your work!

Our Orchestra Community:
Same and Different



Pre-K – 2nd
Grades

God Bless America

Music and Words by Irving Berlin

6 God Bless A - mer - i - ca, land that I love. Stand be - side her and

10 guide her thru the night with a light from a - bove. From the moun - tains, to the

15 prai - ries, to the o - ceans white with foam. God Bless A - mer - i - ca, my

home sweet home. God Bless A - mer - i - ca, my home sweet home.

The musical score is written on four staves of music. Each staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and a 4/4 time signature. The lyrics are printed below the notes, with line numbers 6, 10, and 15 indicating the start of each line of music.

© Copyright 1938, 1939 by Irving Berlin

Renewed 1965, 1966 by Irving Berlin

Copyright assigned to Trustees of God Bless America Fund

Our Orchestra Community:
Same and Different



Pre-K – 2nd
Grades

WORKSHEET

Name _____

LOUD!

FAST

Choppy

Bright

Major

Duple

Busy

HOT

Quiet

Slow...

Smooth...

Dark

Minor

Triple

Still

Cold

Add your own words to this list
