

Introducing the “5” Royales— The Soul of Winston-Salem

4th Grade Lesson Plan and Student Handout, DAY 1

by Elizabeth Carlson, Nicholas Sebesta, and Kathy White

GRADE LEVEL/SUBJECT: 4th Grade Social Studies

LENGTH: 20 minutes

CONTENTS:

- Teacher Preparation (pp. 1-2)
- Step-By-Step Procedure (pp. 2-8)
- Student Handout (pp. 9-10)

I. TEACHER PREPARATION:

Materials:

- Song: “[Help Me Somebody](#)” (1953)
- Website: “[The “5” Royales—The Soul of Winston-Salem](#)”
- Student Handout – website questions

Objectives: Students will learn that:

- The “5” Royales hold a distinguished place in North Carolina and national history.
- Their trend-setting music and singing style was rooted in the spirited gospel music typical in many African American churches in the North Carolina Piedmont during the 1930s, '40s and '50s.
- The “5” Royales traveled the segregated Chitlin' Circuit, where they performed for African American audiences.
- Rooted in gospel, the “5” Royales music and singing style influenced rhythm and blues, soul music, and rock and roll, reflecting the concept of “change over time.”

Historical Overview: The “5” Royales were a pioneering rhythm & blues (R&B) group from Winston-Salem whose roots were in the city’s thriving African American gospel scene. From 1952 to 1965, the group recorded more than 100 songs and 7 top-ten R&B hits. In 2015, the “5” Royales were inducted into the Rock & Roll Music Hall of Fame. Music historians view them as hugely influential. David Fricke, Senior Editor of *Rolling Stone* magazine, calls the “5” Royales the first rock and roll group.

Four members of the group grew up in Winston-Salem. John and Eugene Tanner and Lowman Pauling attended Kimberley Park School. The Tanners went to Atkins High School. Jimmy Moore went to schools in the city. Otto Jeffries and Obadiah Carter grew up in South Carolina and moved to Winston-Salem as young adults.

In the late 1930s, the “5” Royales began as a gospel group called the Royal Sons Quintet. Popular locally, they also performed around North Carolina and neighboring states. In 1952, the

Royal Sons signed with Apollo Records in New York City and changed their name to the “5” Royales. Their music retained its distinctive gospel sound, but now their lyrics were clearly secular.

In the 1950s and '60s, the “5” Royales traveled the segregated Chitlin' Circuit. From 1877 until 1964, many states and cities, especially in the South, were governed by Jim Crow laws, which provided separate and often unequal facilities for African Americans. The Chitlin' Circuit, a response to this segregation, provided African Americans safe and welcoming places to go to enjoy great African American entertainers.

Pedagogy:

Multisensory Learning: Music makes this lesson appealing to a wide range of learners.

Primary Source Materials: This lesson presents historical facts by engaging students in primary source materials.

NC Social Studies Standard:

4.B.1.1 Explain how traditions, social structure, and artistic expression have contributed to the unique identity of North Carolina.

Authors Bios:

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Acknowledgement: Thanks to the following “5” Royales descendants for providing the authors with first-hand information about the group: Darryl Pauling (Lowman Pauling’s son), Janice Pauling Lucas (Lowman Pauling’s niece), Karen Scales (Obadiah Carter’s daughter, Lowman Pauling’s niece), Dr. Fred Tanner (John’s and Eugene’s brother), Willard Tanner (John Tanner’s son).

II. STEP-BY-STEP PROCEDURE:

- Introduction
- Vocabulary
- Website Presentation

- Questions (Student Handout)

(In all discussions and written answers, be sure students provide evidence for their arguments.)

A: INTRODCTION (whole class):

1. Play in the background “[Help Me Somebody](#)” (1953) (You can also find this song on the Jukebox on the “The Singles” section of the [website](#).)
2. As the song plays, distribute the Student Handout (on pp. 9-10)
3. **Hook:** Tell students you will play for them three song clips by a group that was famous in the 1950s and '60s called the “5” Royales. The “5” Royales grew up in Winston-Salem singing gospel. They were one of the earliest and most influential groups in the creation of rhythm and blues, soul music, and rock and roll.

Ask students to listen and decide:

- which song is a gospel song from 1952
- which song is an early rhythm and blues (R&B) song from 1953
- which song from 1958 sounds like early rock and roll.

Play the songs in the order below.

- After each song, ask students to raise their hands if they think it sounds like gospel, if they think it sounds like R&B, and if they think it sounds like rock and roll.
- Don’t tell them whether they are right or wrong. Tell students that later in the lesson they’ll see if they were right.

“[Bedside of a Neighbor](#)”: 0–:25 seconds

“[Help Me Somebody](#)” 0 – :30 seconds

“[The Slummer the Slum](#)”: 1:17 – 1:35

(Continued)

B. VOCABULARY(whole class)

Procedure: Project these vocabulary words on the board. Read together and briefly discuss.

*Note: Words marked with and **asterisk** (*) are optional items to do if time allows.*

Jim Crow Laws: the name of laws that governed many states and cities, especially in the South, from 1877 until 1964; these laws provided separate and often unequal facilities for African Americans.

How this Affected the “5” Royales and other African Americans:

The “5” Royales grew up and performed during the time when there were Jim Crow laws. In Winston-Salem and throughout North Carolina and the South, this meant that the “5” Royales and other African Americans were not allowed in most places where whites were allowed. Schools, churches, parks, theaters, and restaurants were for African Americans only or whites only.

African American gospel music (n.) a form of joyful spiritual music that became very popular in the 1930s and is rooted in the church singing of the African American South.

rhythm and blues (R&B) (n.) a form of popular music of African American origin that arose during the 1940s from blues, with added rhythms taken from jazz.

rock and roll (n.) a popular music style that started in the United States in the late 1950s that mixes rhythm and blues (R&B), jazz, and country music with electric instruments.

Chitlin' Circuit (n.) A collection of performance venues throughout the United States that were safe and acceptable for African American musicians, comedians, and other entertainers to perform in during the time of racial segregation in the United States.

***soul music** (n.) a popular music style that started in African American communities in the United States in the late 1950s, with roots in African American gospel music and rhythm and blues.

***Southeastern gospel circuit** (n.) venues such as school auditoriums, theaters, and music clubs, where gospel groups performed around the southeastern United States. (In the case of the Royal Sons, they performed mostly around North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia.)

***Billboard Chart** (n.) (R&B, Pop, Hot 100) the music industry charts—divided into separate categories such as R&B, Pop, Hot 100—that each week measure the best performing songs and albums in the United States, with the results published in *Billboard* magazine.

***single record** (single) (n.) a small-sized vinyl record with only one or two songs.

***album** (n.) a collection of audio recordings issued on compact disc (CD), vinyl, audio tape, or digital formats. (The “5” Royales albums were vinyl discs encased in colorful cardboard album covers.)

***cover (song)** (n.) a new recording of a song by a musician who is not the original singer or composer of the song.

***jukebox** (n.) a coin-operated music player that automatically plays recordings selected from its list.

***tour** (v.) to travel from place to place.

***legacy** (n.) the long-lasting impact of particular events or people that took place in the past.

(Continued)

C. WEBSITE PROCEDURE: “The “5” Royales and the Soul of Winston-Salem”

Materials: “[The “5” Royales—The Soul of Winston-Salem](#)” website

Procedure (whole class):

1. Preview: Explain to students that they will watch a presentation about the “5” Royales from Winston-Salem.

Ask students to pay close attention to:

- The gospel quintet the Royal Sons that became the “5” Royales.
- The names of the “5” Royales group members.
- What was happening musically in the 1950s in North Carolina and around the country.

2. Go through [website presentation](#) with whole class.

D. QUESTIONS: (whole class and individual) (Teacher’s Answer Key included)

(Questions are about the website presentation they just saw.)

- Discuss each question as a whole class.
- Students should write the answers on their handouts, question by question, and should give evidence for their answers.

Note: If time is short, you can skip some questions or do a combination of written and oral responses.

Be flexible in accepting a wide range of answers.

For your convenience, the questions are listed below with possible responses *italicized in red:*

- 1) Before they became the “5” Royales and performed rhythm and blues music, what was the name of their group and what kind of music did they sing? *gospel music; Royal Sons*
- 2) In 1952, at the request of Apollo Records in New York City, the Royal Sons stopped singing gospel, started performing rhythm and blues, and changed their name to the “5” Royales. The style of the music was the same, but the words were different. What is the difference between the words in gospel music and in R&B?
Gospel music has religious words and subjects, often from the Bible. R&B has non-religious words, and the songs are about subjects having to do with life and love.
- 3) What were the names of the members of the “5” Royales, including the member who became their road manager? *Lowman Pauling: Guitarist and song writer; John Tanner: lead singer; Eugene Tanner: 2nd lead singer; Obadiah Carter: back-up singer; Jimmy Moore: back-up singer; Otto Jeffries: back-up singer (changed to road manager in 1953)*

- 4) In 1953, the “5” Royales had their second #1 hit song, “Help Me Somebody,” just after they switched from gospel to R&B. What words would you use to describe this song? ([Click here](#) or scroll down to the “The Singles” section and press on this song on the jukebox.) Accept any reasonable descriptive words students provide.
- 5) How did growing up in Winston-Salem during the 1930s and 1940s influence the kind of music the Royal Sons and then the “5” Royales made?
When the “5” Royales grew up in the 1930s and 1940s in Winston-Salem, gospel music was heard everywhere. People heard it at church and on radio and records. People’s lives revolved around church. Segregation excluded African Americans from many public places, and church served as the central part of many people’s lives.
- In the early 1950s when the Royal Sons became the “5” Royales, like many African American gospel groups around the country, they started performing rhythm and blues. The music stayed the same, but the words were no longer religious.*
- 6) In the 1950s, what was happening with music in North Carolina and around the country?
The “5” Royales were a part of the new R&B and rock and roll music scene that was growing in the 1950s. The emergence of the electric guitar, combined with popular dances of the period that audiences enjoyed dancing to, helped boost new music acts like the “5” Royales into the national limelight.
- 7) What can we learn from the newspaper clipping announcing a “5” Royales dance in the Coble Tobacco Warehouse in Burlington, North Carolina? (See the “1950s” section on the website.) Answers can include that the dance was at a tobacco warehouse, that there were other acts performing at the dance; that fans danced as the “5” Royales performed; that the Sherwin Williamson orchestra performed with the “5” Royales,
- 8) What is the name of this song that was covered by famous artists and became a big hit? What do you think the lyrics might mean?
Teacher should play part of “Dedicated to the One I Love” (1957) by [clicking here](#) or scroll down to the “The Singles” section and press on this song on the jukebox.
In this song, the singer expresses his love for someone and sings about how much he misses this person. (Lowman Pauling wrote this song for his wife Ellise, who lived in their house on Rich Ave. in Winston-Salem.)
- 9) What was the Chitlin' Circuit and why was it necessary? *The Chitlin' Circuit was a collection of clubs, theaters, and dance halls around North Carolina and the United States, especially in the South, where African Americans performed and African American audiences went to dance and listen to live music. Before the Civil Rights Act of 1964, in the South and other places, African Americans were not allowed into many of the same places as whites. For this reason, African Americans created their own entertainment spots where they were welcome and could relax and enjoy great music.*

- 10) Listen again to these clips of songs by the “5” Royales from 1952, 1953, and 1958 that you heard at the start of class. Which song sounds like gospel, which like R&B, and which like rock and roll?

Teacher should play in order “[Bedside of a Neighbor](#),” (0-:25) “[Help Me Somebody](#)” (0-:25), and “[The Slummer the Slum](#)” (1:17-1:35) to show the “5” Royales group’s progression from gospel, to R&B, to rock and roll.

In “The Slummer the Slum,” describe what you hear that sounds like rock and roll. What more recent music does it remind you of?

Students may recognize that the sounds of Lowman Pauling’s electric guitar work sounds like rock and roll. (You may want to tell students that some rock and roll music historians identify Lowman Pauling as being the first musician heard on record to purposely play feedback on electric guitar, predating the Beatles and other British rockers who got the credit for it. Senior Editor of Rolling Stone David Fricke considers the “5” Royales the first rock and roll group!)

- 11) What North Carolina awards have the “5” Royales received?

NC Folk Heritage Award (1992), NC Music Hall of Fame Inductee (2022)

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STUDENT HANDOUT:

Introducing The “5” Royales—The Soul of Winston-Salem
Questions

Directions: Please answer in full sentences.

- 1) Before they became the “5” Royales and performed rhythm and blues music, what was the name of their group and what kind of songs did they sing?

- 2) In 1952, at the request of Apollo Records in New York, the Royal Sons stopped singing gospel, started performing rhythm and blues, and changed their name to the “5” Royales. The style of the music was the same, but the words were different. What is the difference between the words in gospel music and in R&B?

- 3) What were the names of the members of the “5” Royales, including the member who became their road manager?

Guitarist and song writer: _____

Lead singer: _____

2nd lead singer: _____

Back-up singer: _____

Back-up singer: _____

Back-up singer: _____

(changed to road manager in 1953)

- 4) In 1953, the “5” Royales had their second #1 hit song “Help Me Somebody,” just after they switched from gospel to R&B. What words would you use to describe this song?

- 5) How did growing up in Winston-Salem in the 1930s and 1940s influence the kind of music the Royal Sons and then the “5” Royales made?

(turn over)

6) In the 1950s, what was happening with music in North Carolina and around the country?

7) What can we learn from the newspaper clipping announcing a “5” Royales dance in the Coble Tobacco Warehouse in Burlington, North Carolina?

8) What is the name of this song that was covered by famous artists and became a big hit? What do you think the lyrics might mean?

9) What was the Chitlin' Circuit and why was it necessary? _____

10) Listen again to these songs by the “5” Royales from 1952, 1953, and 1958 that you heard at the start of class. Which song sounds like gospel, which like R&B, and which like rock and roll?

“Bedside of a Neighbor”: _____

“Help Me Somebody”: _____

“The Slummer the Slum”: _____

11) In “The Slummer the Slum,” describe what you hear that sounds like rock and roll. Does it remind you of any popular performers you listen to?
