

## Helpful Hint

I have recently found myself wanting to incorporate more socially and culturally relevant lessons into the music classroom. These types of topics can sometimes be intimidating or uncomfortable to discuss. But I think it's important to talk to our students about some of the big picture issues going on in our world to help them understand that they can be agents of change to make the world a better place, both in small and sometimes big ways. And why not find time in the music classroom to incorporate and discuss these ideas?

If you don't know what topic to choose or how to choose something to talk about, **first think about something that is going on in your school community** – a problem that could be solved or an initiative that the school is doing (something like anti-bullying or a cleaner campus). It doesn't have to be a tough or controversial topic to start with. Begin with a topic that we all can largely agree on and figure out how you can plug that idea into your music classroom for a particular grade. What songs can you find that are written about it? How can you have your students create their own songs, chants, movements, skits, or other ideas around this issue? It could end up becoming a themed concert or informance for one of your grades, and then your students will have that opportunity educate their parents on an issue that hopefully they have become passionate about.

Once you start thinking in this way, the ideas and possibilities seem to present themselves more and more as to why and how to include socially and culturally relevant lessons in your teaching!