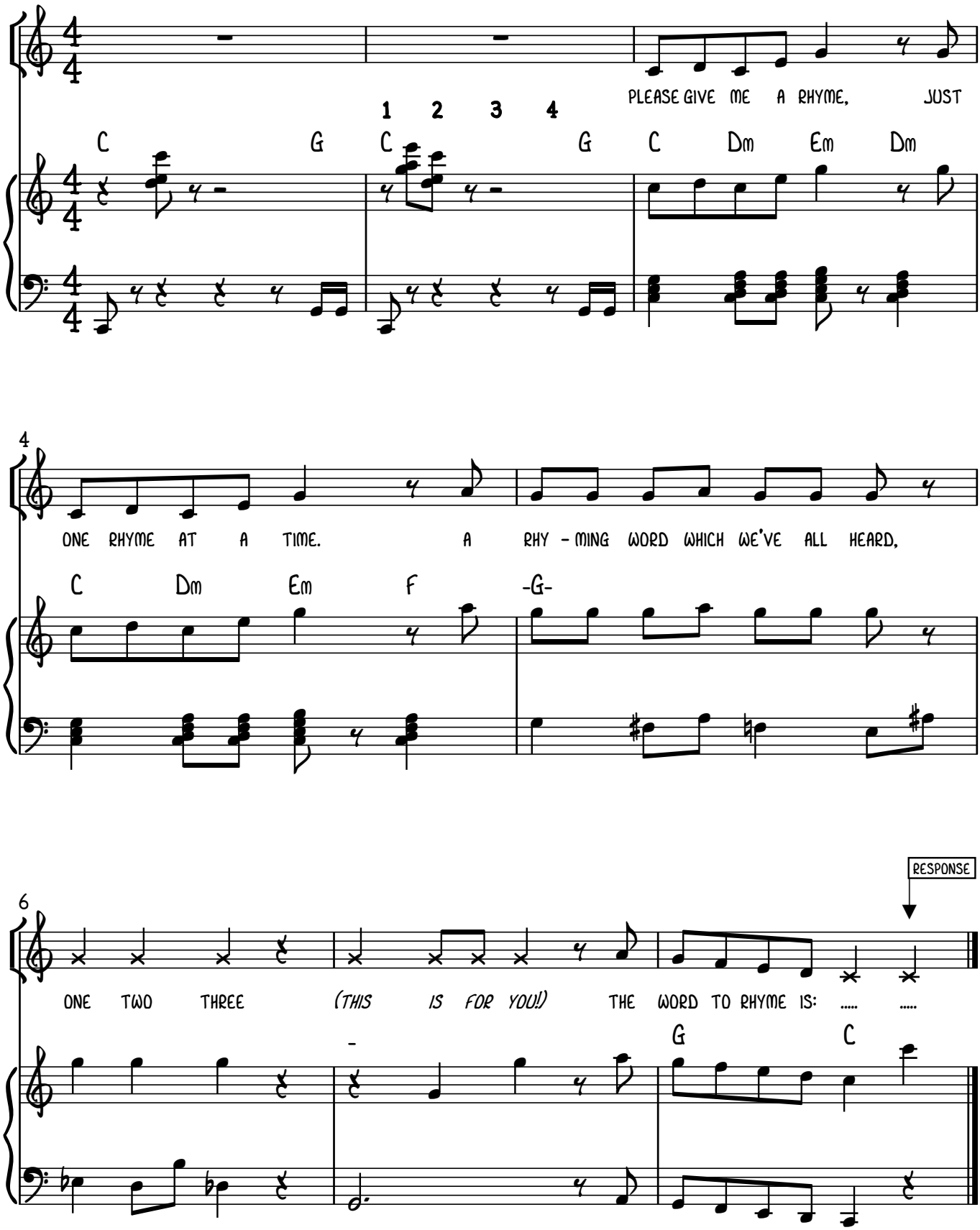
PLEASE GIVE ME A RHYME

DAVID STOLL

AS SLOW OR FAST AS NEEDED



8 THE RHYME GAME

PLEASE GIVE ME A RHYME

Please give me a rhyme,
Just one rhyme at a time. (note 1)

A rhyming word
Which we've all heard, (note 2)
One Two Three –
(This is for you.) (note 3)

The word to rhyme is: ..... (note 4)

..... (notes 5)

NOTES:

(1) Single answers only, one per pupil.
(2) No making up words or silly sounds.
(3) Specify pupil by name, or by pointing and saying “You”. No calling out, unless you as teacher have suggested it yourself.
(4) The word may be a single syllable or longer. See below.
(5) Leave time for thinking if needed. You should give the cues in rhythm and on the beat, but – even though an answer on the beat is preferable – this is not necessary in the early stages. When the pupils are more experienced, keep a beat going throughout (with quiet clapping) and try to encourage that the answer does fall on the beat.

RHYMES:

It is a good idea to have prepared some words which are easy to rhyme, and have them ready to use. There is more about rhymes and rhythms in the Teachers’ Notes.

After the exercise, discuss the answers and other possibilities.

ACCOMPANIMENT

The recorded accompaniment on the CD is provided at three different speeds.

USING SEALSONGS IN THE CLASSROOM

MUSIC LESSONS

It is a good exercise for pupils to listen to the song backings on the CD and identify which instruments are playing. The tracks have been mixed to work as balanced accompaniments, but also with this use in mind.

You can also use the music of one or more of the songs as a basis for improvisation, using the CD recording as an accompaniment to improvised music making. See also the notes above on creating accompaniments.

OTHER LESSONS

You could work on some movement or create dances to the CD recording. You could use the songs as part of a musical which the pupils develop, dramatising situations relevant to the topics. Pupils could draw pictures or design posters on the topics, or write stories about them.

You might wish to use the lyrics of the song in a lesson about poetry. You could analyse the structure of the song – how many syllables in a line, how many lines in a verse, etc, as an exercise in numeracy.

Most often you will want to use the songs as the basis for a class discussion on the SEAL topic in question. The lyrics have been written to include a wide variety of prompts for consideration in each topic. (There is more on this below.)

It's also worth noting that singing songs embeds the words in the singer in a different and deeper way than simply talking about the topics, and the messages become easier to remember.

WRITING NEW LYRICS TO THE SONGS

You can use the scores and recorded accompaniments in this project as a musical basis for writing new lyrics. While you could write completely new songs on any topic you like, probably the easiest way to use this material is to write some new words on the same topic as the songs in order to have some extra or more personal verses. The practice of lyric writing may be either an individual or a group exercise.

Once you have learned a song, let the pupils see the lyrics written out, properly structured in their lines and sections (as they are in this book). Discuss what the new lyrics are going to be about. It can be useful to collect words and phrases you want to use in the song, and then to write a 'rhyming dictionary' for some of the key words.

To begin with, use the same rhyming and rhythmic structure as the original lyrics. This will give you a template as to how many syllables there should be in each line, where the main stresses should fall and where the rhymes will be most effective. Try to ensure an accurate match. While it is often possible to fit in extra syllables or to miss out a rhyme, the song will usually suffer. It is particularly unfortunate when a word's natural stress is distorted to fit the melody. Songwriting is a craft as well as an art, and – if sensitively taught – pupils will enjoy the challenge of getting something just right. This is not only a technical matter. Songs work their way into the mind, and it is not helpful to have examples of wrongly stressed words in the system. For example, a pupil learning a song in which the word 'primary' is rhymed with 'dairy' is likely to mispronounce the first word in other situations.

Lyrics are effective as sounds as well as meanings, and good lyrics will have a power which works with the music to carry the emotion of the song. It is worth considering how and when rhymes are used in a song, especially in relation to strong beats and line structure. It is also useful to remember that that lyrics (like lines of poetry) do not always reflect the same way of using words as prose or everyday language. In order to make effects, it is sometimes possible to use less grammatical structures and more colloquial words. This must be handled carefully; a decision to go with a powerful phrase – which is not quite right in other respects – must be taken as a definite choice and not because a better one can't be found. (One example in these songs is the phrase "Everybody's people".)

You will decide how strict you want to be about rhyme. Half rhymes are usually acceptable ('now' and 'sound') but some people avoid them. Some people are strict about rhyming the stressed part of a word, others less so ('happily' strictly rhymes with 'snappily' and not with 'come to tea'.) You also need to take account of how the rhythm works for a whole musical phrase: 'the main <u>thing</u> was her pain<u>ting</u>' is wrong but 'the <u>main</u> thing was her <u>paint</u>ing' is all right. Be consistent and discuss possibilities; don't just settle for the first idea.

When writing new lyrics, remember the structure of the song as a whole, not just in its sections. Try and build through to a good ending.

Because the tracks on the CD don't include voices, you can use them as the accompaniments to your new versions. Don't forget to encourage the ownership which the pupils may feel in songs for which they themselves suggested some of the lyrics.