

La Misa Campesina

Objectives

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to:

- explain how *La Misa Campesina* reflects the concerns of the underclass in contemporary Nicaragua.
 - compare and contrast religious freedoms in the United States and Nicaragua.
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Materials

- Student Handout: **Vos Sos El Dios De Los Pobres**
 - Student Handout: **Kyrie**
 - Music from *La Misa Campesina*:
 - “Vos Sos El Dios De Los Pobres”
 - “Kyrie”
 - Student Handout: **Questionnaire**
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Note to the Teacher

La Misa Campesina is a song to God from the people of the Nicaraguan countryside. They sing to God of their life and hope. They resist the oppression all around them while at the same time building a new community out of the ruins—sun up to sun down. It is a song of love and liberty, a fight for just causes, for a normal everyday life.

La Misa Campesina proclaims the sacrifice and liberty from the point of view of the “pueblo” that gathers around the altar of god mustering all of their faith for a better tomorrow.

La Misa Campesina represents an era of frustrated hope. The Catholic hierarchy banned it from Nicaraguan churches, and a decade later it still is. Since the time it was conceived it has been performed in 6 different languages throughout the world.

Activities

1. Write the following excerpt from the First Amendment to the U. S. Constitution on the chalkboard.
 - a. “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof . . .”
 - b. Ask students to discuss their interpretation of the amendment. How much religious freedom to we have as Americans?
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Activities

2. Play the first song of *La Misa Campesina*—“Vos Sos El Dios De Los Pobres.” Ask students to listen carefully and to interpret its meaning.
 - a. Distribute the student handout entitled **Vos Sos El Dios De Los Pobres** and direct students to listen to the song again.
 - b. Ask students to underline cognates and words they already understand.
 - c. Divide the class into small groups to translate the song.
 3. Distribute the student handout entitled **Questionnaire**.
 - a. Direct students to answer Section A of the questionnaire.
 - b. Ask students to share their answers with the class and to discuss the meaning of the song.
 4. Play the second song of *La Misa Campesina*—“Kyrie.” Ask students to listen carefully and to interpret its meaning.
 - a. Distribute the student handout entitled **Kyrie** and direct students to listen to the song again.
 - b. Ask students to underline cognates and words they already understand.
 - c. Divide the class into small groups to translate the song.
 5. Direct students to answer Section B of the **Questionnaire** handout.
 - a. Ask students to share their answers with the class and to discuss the meaning of the song.
 6. After the students have discussed the “Kyrie,” direct them to answer Section C of the **Questionnaire** handout.
 - a. Ask students to explain the evident purpose of *La Misa Campesina* based on these two selections.
 - b. Ask students to hypothesize why this folk mass was banned by the Catholic Church? What type of changes do the songs call for?
 - c. Ask students to explain how the banning of the mass by the Catholic Church reflects on the issue of religious freedom?
 7. Extension Activity
 - a. *La Misa Campesina* has been translated into many languages around the world. Ask students to hypothesize why the underclass in many countries might embrace the ideas reflected in *La Misa Campesina*.
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Vos Sos El Dios De Los Pobres

(coro) *Vos sos el Dios de los pobres
El Dios humano y sencillo
El Dios que sudá en la calle
El Dios de rostro curfido.
Por eso es que fe hablo yo
Así como te habla mi pueblo
Porque sos el Dios obrero
El Cristo trabajador*

Vos vas de la mona con mi gente
Luchás en el campo y la ciudad
Hocés fila allá en el compomento
Para que te poguen tu jornal.
Vos comés raspando allá en el parque
con Eusebio, Poncho y Juan José
Y hasta protestás por el cirope
Cuondo no te le echan mucho miel.

(coro) *Vos sos el Dios de los pobres...*
Yo te he visto en uno pulpería
instalado en un caramanchel.
Te he visto vendiendo lotería
sin que te avergüence ese papel.
Yo te he visto en las gasolineras
Chequeando los llantas de un comión
Y hasta patroleando carreteras
con guantes de cuero y overol.

(coro) *Vas sos el Dios de los pobres...*

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Kyrie

Cristo. Cristo Jesús,
identificate con nosotros.
Señor, Señor mi Dios
identificate con nosotros.
Cristo, Cristo Jesús,
solidarízate
no con la clase opresora
que exprime y devora
a la comunidad
sino con el oprimido,
con el pueblo mío
sediento de paz

Questionnaire: La Misa Campesina

Section A

Vos Sos El Dios De Los Pobres

1. How does this music compare to other church or mass music that you are familiar with? Be specific.
2. What form of speech is used in this song? Formal /Informal? (give examples)
3. Explain the title of this song and its meaning.
4. Do you feel that this song respects God? Explain your answer.
5. What do they mean when they say: “Yo te he visto en una pulperia. Te he visto vendiendo loteria... te he visto en las gasolineras ... Y hasta patroleando carreteras?”
6. What is this song about?

Section B

Kyrie

1. What is this asking of God to do?
 2. Who is “la clase opresora”
 3. How does this song demonstrate the feelings of the people?
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Section C

Comparisons

1. As demonstrated in these songs, how do the Nicaraguan people feel about God?
 2. Why do you think this mass was banned from the Catholic Church?
 3. Going back to our discussion at the beginning of the class, compare religious freedom in the US to religious freedom in Nicaragua. What are the similarities and differences?
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