

# UNISON SONGS: There's Honey in the Rock



This African-American spiritual, like most spirituals, has evolved over the years. Guy and Candie Carawan learned it from Mrs. Alice Wine of John's Island, South Carolina. The songs from these islands as well as from the Georgia Sea Islands went unchanged for many generations. By the time this book's editor, Nick Page, learned it, it had become similar to the song you see here. He added some verses both original and, as is often the tradition, from other spirituals.

Spirituals constantly refer to stories from the Bible. The old Hebrew Bible has many references to "the rock" (*Tsur* in Hebrew), which is another name for God. There are many references to "honey and the rock" as well. Psalm 81, for example, reads "Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it . . . with honey out of the rock."



In recent years, accompaniments have been added, but spirituals are traditionally sung *a cappella*. This song may be sung in unison with soloists (or small ensembles) or in 2, 3, or 4-part harmonies. Singers should sing percussively, like they were hitting a drum with their voices (see Nick Page's "Marshmallow Technique" in the appendix). The background "Oo"s at ms. 17 & 21 are optional. The song works fine with just the solo part, but the choral responses at ms. 19 & 23 are needed. You can feature as many as eight soloists (or small ensembles), one for each verse. Soloists do not have to adhere to the melody that is written - they may embellish their melodies and add fills above the Refrain (but not the first time). Starting on the pitches C, Eb, or G (in any range), they can make up their own melodies. There is room for harmonies on the verses if sung with two or more singers. You are allowed to change the tempo and dynamics and add offbeat claps (on 2 & 4), but if you add new verses or make any other changes, be sure they respect African-American traditions.

Teach this song to your audience by rote. Using lots of emotion, have them shout back each phrase beginning with "There's honey in the rock!" When teaching it to your audience, have your singers sing the Refrain in unison, then have the audience sing it in unison with them. Once the audience knows the song, invite them to stand. They'll be ready to raise the roof!

Unison or  
with harmony

## There's Honey in the Rock

African-American Spiritual  
Arranged and Adapted with new  
verses 2, 7, & 8 by NICK PAGE

Swing (♩ = 126) (♩♩ = <sup>3</sup>♩)

Solo

Gm Dm

There's hon - ey in the rock for all God's chil - dren, hon -

Gm

- ey in the rock, hon - ey in the rock. There's hon - ey in the rock for

Dm D7 Gm

all God's chil - dren, feed ev - 'ry child of God.

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Solo out  
(cue audience)

**Refrain**

All (with optional harmony)  
Gm

Soprano  
Alto  
Tenor  
Bass

8

Dm Gm D7 Gm

11

Sing two verses  
then Refrain

Dm D7 Gm

14

**Verses 1 and 2**

(Soloists may embellish throughout)

Solo

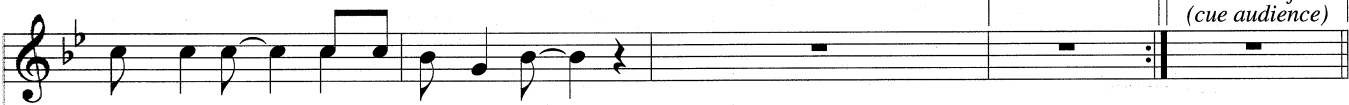
- 1. Hyp - o - crite, hyp - o - crite, God de - spise, \_
- 2. We can have jus - tice if we care. \_

Cm Gm Dm D7 Gm

17

(Optional) Oo \_\_\_\_\_ (Sing) Feed ev - 'ry child\_ of God. \_

1 2 Back to Refrain  
(cue audience)



Tongues so clean, but he still tells lies.  
Right is right and fair is fair.

Cm Gm Dm D7 Gm D7

(Opt.) Oo (Sing) Feed ev-'ry child of God. There's

div.

21

**Verses 3 and 4** Solo (with optional background "Oo"s)

Cm Gm All (as before) Dm D7 Gm Solo

3. Heart to heart and hand to hand, Feed ev-'ry child of God. To-

Cm Gm All Dm D7 Gm

geth-er we'll push to the prom-ised land. Feed ev-'ry child of God.

Solo Cm Gm All Dm D7 Gm Solo

4. When I'm hap-py, I'll shout and sing. Feed ev-'ry child of God. And

Cm Gm All Dm D7 Gm D7

make the heav-en-ly spir-it ring. Feed ev-'ry child of God. There's

Back to Refrain  
(cue audience)

**Verses 5 and 6** Solo (with optional background "Oo"s)

Cm Gm All Dm D7 Gm Solo

5. One of these morn - in's bright and fair, — Feed ev - 'ry child — of God. — Gon - na

Cm Gm Dm D7 Gm

take my flight — in the mid - dle of the air. Feed ev - 'ry child — of God. —

Solo Cm Gm All Dm D7 Gm

6. One of these nights a - bout twelve o' - clock, Feed ev - 'ry child — of God. —

Solo Cm Gm Dm D7 Gm D7

This whole world's — gon - na reel and rock. Feed ev - 'ry child — of God. — There's

*Back to Refrain (cue audience)*

**Verses 7 and 8** Solo (with optional background "Oo"s)

Cm Gm

(God.) 7. If we're gon - na be fair, — we got - ta o - pen the door. —

Gm Dm D7 Gm Solo Cm Gm

Feed ev - 'ry child of God. — We got - ta house the home less and feed the poor.

All Dm D7 Gm Solo Cm

Feed ev - 'ry child — of God. — 8. If the chains hold us down, we got - ta

Gm All Dm D7 Gm Solo Cm

break the lock. Feed ev - 'ry child — of God. — Then we'll taste sweet

Gm All Dm D7 Gm D7

hon - ey in the rock. Feed ev - 'ry child — of God. — There's

*Back to Refrain (cue audience)*

**REFRAIN**

There's honey in the rock for all God's children, honey in the rock, honey in the rock.  
There's honey in the rock for all God's children, feed every child of God.

1. Hypocrite, hypocrite, God despise; (Feed every child of God.)  
Tongues so clean, but he still tells lies. (Feed ...)
2. We can have justice if we care. (Feed ...)  
Right is right and fair is fair. (Feed ...)

**REFRAIN**

3. Heart to heart and hand to hand, (Feed ...)  
Together we'll push to the promised land. (Feed ...)
4. When I'm happy, I'll shout and sing. (Feed ...)  
And make the heavenly spirit ring. (Feed ...)

**REFRAIN**

5. One of these mornin's bright and fair, (Feed ...)  
Gonna take my flight in the middle of the air. (Feed ...)
6. One of these nights about twelve o'clock, (Feed ...)  
This whole world's gonna reel and rock. (Feed ...)

**REFRAIN**

7. If we're gonna be fair, we gotta open the door. (Feed ...)  
We gotta house the homeless and feed the poor. (Feed ...)
8. If the chains hold us down, we gotta break the lock. (Feed ...)  
Then we'll taste sweet honey in the rock. (Feed ...)

**REFRAIN**

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