Worksheet

Codes and Phrases Used on the Underground Railroad

**Abolitionist** — Person who demanded an immediate end to slavery.
**Agent** — Coordinator, who plotted courses of escape and made contacts.
**Baggage** — Fugitive slaves carried by Underground Railroad workers.
**Bundles of wood** — Fugitives that were expected.
**Canaan** — Canada.
**Conductor** — Person who directly transported slaves.
**Drinking Gourd** — Big Dipper and the North Star.
**Flying bondsmen** — The number of escaping slaves.
**Forwarding** — Taking slaves from station to station.
**Freedom train** — The Underground Railroad.
**French leave** — Secret departure.
**Gospel train** — The Underground Railroad.
**Heaven** — Canada, freedom.
**Jumping off place** — Place of shelter for fugitives.
**Load of potatoes** — Escaping slaves hidden under farm produce in a wagon.
**Moses** — Harriet Tubman.
**Operator** — Person who helped freedom seekers as a conductor or agent.
**Parcel** — Fugitives that were expected.
**Patter roller** — Bounty hunter hired to capture slaves.
**Preachers** — Leaders of and spokespersons for the Underground Railroad.
**Promised Land** — Canada.
**River Jordan** — Ohio River.
**Shepherds** — People who encouraged slaves to escape and escorted them.
**Station** — Place of safety and temporary refuge, a safe house.
**Station master** — Keeper or owner of a safe house.
**Stockholder** — Someone who gave money, clothing or food to the Underground Railroad.

**PHRASES**

**The wind blows from the South today** — A warning that slave bounty hunters were nearby.
**A friend with friends** — A password used to signal arrival of fugitives with an Underground Railroad conductor.
**A friend of a friend sent me** — A password used by fugitives traveling alone to indicate they were sent by the Underground Railroad network.
**When the sun comes back and the first quail calls** — Early spring, a particular time of year good for escaping.
**The river bank makes a mighty good road** — A reminder that tracking dogs could not follow the scent of fugitives through the water.
**The dead trees will show you the way** — A reminder that moss grows on the north side of dead trees, so if the North Star were not visible, they would know which way to walk.
**Left foot, peg foot** — A visual clue for escapees left by an Underground Railroad worker famous for his wooden leg.
**The river ends between two hills** — The Tombigbee River in Mississippi.
**When the great big river meets the little river** — The Ohio River and its tributaries.
**Steal away, steal away, steal away to Jesus** — Used to alert other slaves that an escape attempt was anticipated.

Source: http://www.safepassageohio.org/resources/weblesson.pdf