

WWW.POPMUSIC.TODAY



1. What's your opinion?

My favorite **music group** or **performer** is—

My favorite **song** is—

My favorite **radio station** is—

2. **Circle** the amount of time you spend listening to music on an average day.

none

5 minutes

30 minutes

1 hour

2 hours

3 hours

4 hours

8 hours

all day

3. Think of your **favorite song** again. What is it about? Summarize the message of the song in one sentence.

4. Read the statements and decide if you think they're **true** or **false**—

_____ If a song has questionable lyrics, it shouldn't be played on the radio.

_____ Today's popular music is no worse than music from other times.

_____ Christians should listen only to Christian music.

_____ My parents let me listen to any kind of music I want to hear.

_____ If Jesus were a teenager today, he would probably listen to the same music I listen to.

_____ The influences of music really aren't that big of a deal.

5. What is your interpretation of what **Colossians 2:6-8** says about music?

THIS WEEK

It's a fact that young people and adults in the church value music differently. Most teenagers listen to different types of music than adults do. And that's okay! Most young people identify with their peer group by listening to the same music as their friends. This TalkSheet was designed to facilitate a balanced discussion in regard to pop music.

OPENER

Begin the discussion by listening to a few different pop music CDs. Ask the kids to bring in their favorite CDs. They like the volume turned up loud, so you may decide to humor them for this discussion, to help you—and them—better understand the music that saturates the youth culture.

If available, bring a few records you enjoyed as a teenager. Most young people are familiar with the music of the all decades, including the 1970's and 1980's.

It is important to introduce this discussion in a positive way, without your young people thinking that you're criticizing their music. Try to be objective and listen to their thoughts and opinions.

THE DISCUSSION, BY THE NUMBERS

1. Have the kids share their favorites and tell why they chose them. Tally the results on a poster board or whiteboard and find out what performers, songs, and radio stations get the most votes.
2. Find out what time of day your kids listen to music—before school, during lunch, only on weekends, etc. Do they listen mostly to CDs? A portable CD player? The radio? Compare how much time they spend listening to music with how much time they spend doing other things, such as watching TV, working, doing homework, hanging out with friends, being with their families, and doing devotions.
3. This may show them that many don't even know the message of certain songs. Most people are passive listeners and don't realize what the words are saying! Discuss their favorite songs—do they contain questionable lyrics? What is the message in the song? Does the song talk about moral issues?
4. Have your kids take turns reading these aloud and find out what they think about each one. Hang on to your own comments until the wrap up.

5. Ask a few volunteers to read their applications of these verses to their music. Then discuss why God created music—he wanted us to enjoy it and use it to glorify him. Talk about what kinds of music God would approve of and what he wouldn't like. Point out that he'd want the music they hear to build us up and encourage us.

THE CLOSE

Teenagers spend millions of dollars on music CDs every year. It's important to encourage them to be aware of the kinds of music they listen to and how the music may influence them. It isn't wrong to like pop (or swing, rap, country, or anything else, for that matter), but it's wrong for Christians to spend time and money on anything that doesn't uphold the values of God.

A few suggested questions for them to ask themselves are, "Does this music draw me to or away from God?"; "What is this song telling me about my beliefs?"; and "Does the song support or oppose Christian values?" Challenge them to pay closer attention to the songs they listen to and to keep these questions in mind.

Brainstorm with your group some mainstream and Christian bands that are fun to listen to. Remember that it's not easy to label a band as "Christian"—there is so much crossover today. Encourage them to listen to the lyrics of the songs. What are they filling their heads with?

MORE

- Have the group study the Top 40 list of current hits and rate each song according to the content of the lyrics, the lifestyle of the artist, the music itself, and any other criteria you chose. Together rate each one and create your own Top 40 list.
- Encourage your kids to read the lyrics of the songs they listen to. It's surprising how much different a song is after you read the lyrics. You may want to read some lyrics for your kids, discuss them, and then play the song. How did reading the lyrics affect how they understood the song?
- Check out *Plugged In* magazine at www.family.org/pplace/pi/ (Focus on the Family) for the latest trends in music, TV, and movies. This is a useful resource for finding discussion information about news and reviews. Also, check out www.YouthSpecialties.com for information and links to finding discussion topics and latest news on teen culture.