

WWW.POPMUSIC.COM

1. Now for some info about you!
My favorite **singer** or **band** is—

My favorite **song** is—

My least favorite **performer** is—

My least favorite **song** is—

2. Circle the average amount of time you spend listening to music every day.

None	1 hour	4 hours
5 minutes	2 hours	8 hours
30 minutes	3 hours	All day

3. Go back and think of your favorite song again. What is it about? Summarize the song's message in one sentence.

4. Read the statements and decide if they are **T (true)** or **F (false)**.

- If a song has questionable lyrics or is performed by someone whose lifestyle is a bad example for others, it isn't good music.
- It's important for Christians to choose music carefully.
- Today's popular music is no worse than music from other times.
- Christians should listen only to Christian music.
- I listen to what I want to, within reason.
- If Jesus were a teenager today, he'd probably listen to the same music I listen to.
- Music really doesn't have that big of an influence.



5. What do you think each passage has to say about listening to mainstream pop music?

Deuteronomy 6:4-5

Galatians 2:17-21

Philippians 1:27

Colossians 2:6-8

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.

OPEN

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 1970s and 1980s.

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

THE DISCUSSION, BY 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 when your kids listen to music—before school, during lunch, only in the car, only on weekends, and so on. How much time they spend listening?
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? Point out that although they don't pay attention to the lyrics, the music still gets into their heads and can influence them, even though they don't think it does.
4. Have your kids take turns reading these aloud and find out what they think about each one. Give them time for discussion and 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 each other up and encourage us.

THE CLOSE

Pop music is one of many styles of music. No one can keep teenagers from listening to questionable songs and lyrics. Teenagers spend millions of dollars on music CDs every year. It's important encourage them to be aware 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?," or "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.

Now it's time for you to share your values and opinions about music. You may or may not have the same opinion as your kids. Explain what kinds of music you listen to and why. 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. Rate each one and create your own youth group 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.