

Goals

We are bombarded daily by controversial issues. Our students are bound to have questions like the following: How should Christians view homosexuality? Can a Christian ever drink alcohol? What kinds of pop music are acceptable in the eyes of God? These are the issues that need to be thought through and resolved. The Bible does not give us a list of do's and don'ts. But, through basic principles about God's requirement for us, the Bible does provide answers to these issues.

The lessons in this section will help the students think through some of the issues thrown at them by the media and their social surrounding. It is important that the teachers deal with these topics in a sensitive way and provide guidance through prayer.

unit
3**Teacher Devotional**

There is a story about a frog who was put into a pot of water. The temperature of the fire was set to rise so slowly that the frog would have time to assimilate with his surrounding temperatures. That way, he would not realize the danger he was in and would not attempt to jump out of the pot to save himself from his impending death. The sad story of the frog is actually a good parody of the situation that a lot of Christians are facing today. We are slowly being acculturated by the values and ideologies of the secular world, without our realizing it. We may think that we are vigilant if we go to services often and stay in touch with church friends. However, a large part of our time is spent with people who do not have the word of God, and who do not hold the same biblical principles we do. It is crucial that we check ourselves often, and also engage the support of fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. In our ways of thinking and our conduct, we need to make sure we have not been taken by the world.

Flee From All Evil

"Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you." (James 4:7, 8a)

Lesson 6

www.popmusic.today

Listed Scriptures

1 Sam 16:14–23; 2 Chron 20:1–26; Rev 18:4; Rom 12:2

Lesson Aim

- 1) To enable our students to understand that music lyrics do impact our thinking.
- 2) To help our students resolve to listen to godly music.
- 3) To help our students take control of their minds.

Memory Verse

"Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good; sing praises to His name, for it is pleasant." (Ps 135:3)

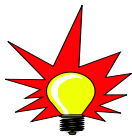
Bible Reading For This Week (for students and teachers)

Proverbs 16-18

B I B L E B A C K G R O U N D



There is no Bible background information for this lesson.

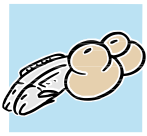


Music is a part of almost every person's life. But the type of music one listens to is a conscious choice.

What types of music do you listen to? Do you have any particular reasons why you listen to those types of music? Do you listen to different kinds of music at different times? What kinds of effects do those types of music have on you? (Teacher should simply allow the students to respond freely and candidly, without any pressure that the types of music they listen to may not be "acceptable" in the eyes of the teacher, their fellow church friends or even the church.)

We will keep in mind all your responses. Today, our topic of study is "Pop Music". One of the objectives of this lesson is for all of us to have an idea of what biblical principles to adhere to in our choice of music.

B I B L E S T U D Y

*Music in the Bible*

The history of music stems all the way back to Genesis (Gen 4:21). We know God granted us music to enjoy. It is almost something instinctive to us. In fact, there have been numerous studies in recent years that looked at the nature of music and the physiological effects on human beings. Some studies have shown that soft soothing music can regulate one's heartbeat. We have all probably experienced how music can sometimes help calm our nerves or even lift our spirits. Music is such an important part of our lives, and we should learn to utilize this gift of God well.

Can you recall events in the Bible where music is involved? Most of you will probably think of instances in the book of Psalms, for poetry is often very much intertwined with music. Indeed there are many psalms that talk about making music or singing praises to the Lord. Let's take a look at a few of these psalms. We'll also take a look at some other biblical instances where music is involved.

*A. Music to Praise God*

Read the following verses aloud:

Psalms 69:30, 31

Psalms 71:22, 23

Psalms 135:3

Psalms 147:1

Exodus 15:1–22

Luke 1:46–55

Questions to consider:

- Most of the psalms listed above involve singing to the Lord in praise. Why is it important to sing praises to God? Base your answers on both the verses referred to here as well as other instances in the Bible or experiences you may have had. (We sing praises to God because it is a pleasant experience. Singing hymns can remind us of the good things God has done for us, and that can lift up our spirits as well as glorify God's name. Sometimes, when we are really down, hymn singing can touch us and comfort us.)
- Music can move one to tears. Music can inspire fighting spirits. Music can create the atmosphere suited to the occasion. The power of music is great. Has music ever helped you in your faith? How?

*B. Music for Specific Purposes*

In the Bible, there are also instances where music played a special role in helping the biblical characters. Let's take a look at two of these examples. The questions will help you comprehend the passages:

1 Samuel 16:14–23

- Why did Saul need David to play the harp?
(An evil spirit tormented Saul.)
- What types of music do you think David played for Saul? Why?
(It was likely soothing and calming music, because Saul was tormented. The music was probably light and simple too.)
- Do you think the type of music produced has anything to do with the player of the instrument and/or the composer of the music? What kinds of music do you think David played? (It is possible to infer this from the lifestyle he led.)
(David was a shepherd boy who dwelled with his sheep in pastures, near sources of water. Sheep are very gentle and timid animals. Such an environ-

ment likely helped David to be a calm and peace-loving person. His music would have blended in with nature and his lifestyle.)

2 Chronicles 20:1-26

- a. What was Jehoshaphat's first reaction when he heard the news that the armies of the Moabites and Ammonites were advancing against his people? (He prayed to God right away.)
- b. What did the prophet Jahaziel (v. 14) tell the people? (He told them that the battle belonged to the Lord and that they should not be discouraged by the size of the enemy's armies. They would have victory even without fighting.)
- c. What was the strategy of warfare that Jehoshaphat employed (vv. 21, 22)? What advantage is there to such a strategy? (He told the people to sing to the Lord and praise Him. This is good because one can get courage and strength when one reminds oneself of God's power and grace as one sings.)
- d. What was the outcome of the war? (By God's mercy, the enemies started to turn against one another and attacked themselves, so the Israelites won the battle even without fighting.)

C H E C K F O R U N D E R S T A N D I N G



1 Why did Miriam sing and what did she sing about after crossing the Red Sea?

2 What is the content of Mary's song of praise to God?

3 What effect did the music of David have on Saul's spirit?

4 What was so special about the war strategy employed by Jehoshaphat in the battle against the Moabites and Ammonites?

Teaching Tips

Tips for the teacher: For this section, you may want to first bring in a sample of different types of music/songs that are in circulation today. You may choose to play a few to the students and ask for their comments on the effect they think the kinds of music will have on listeners. You may also want to print out copies of the lyrics of some secular songs (choose carefully!) and have the students realize how un-Christian and not edifying they are.

L I F E A P P L I C A T I O N



Part A- Guidelines in Choosing Music

As Christians, we must be very selective about what types of music we listen to. Revelation 18:4 says "Come out of her, my people, lest you share in her sins, and lest you receive of her plagues." This call to come out of the world entails more than just not actively participating in sinful deeds. It is also a call to be separate from the people of the world in terms of our lifestyle. The types of music we listen to are certainly part of our lifestyle.

Romans 12:2 says "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Hence, it is of utmost importance that we consider our choices of music.

Today, we are bombarded with all sorts of different music – classical, rock, country, hip hop etc. We know that music can affect our moods and in the long run, even our attitudes and behavior. Music has been known to generate certain moods. Can you think of some examples?

(Students to respond. Some examples: During pop concerts, the loud music has been known to generate moods of hysteria in the audience. In some restaurants, soft music is played in the evenings and candles are lit on the dining tables. That is to create a soft, romantic and relaxing mood for the diners. Baby-sized walkmans are used to play lullabies into the ears of premature infants to help them sleep better. We can all think of many other examples. The impact music has on one's moods cannot be ignored.)

On top of the various different types of music, the lyrics are also an important factor. Words by themselves are very powerful, able to motivate people in different

directions. That is why the news media are such an important part of propaganda. When words are combined with music, the power is far greater. We cannot but be aware and careful about what we listen to!

Now, in groups of three, work out a list of guidelines that you would draft for yourself and your fellow brothers and sisters in Christ concerning the types of music to avoid. For each of the guidelines, try to come up with at least one Bible verse to support your point. If you cannot find a verse, be prepared to explain why you set that guideline. You may want to use the chart given below for reference.

Guideline	Biblical Support	Explanation
Music that is not too rowdy.	"Surely I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with his mother; like a weaned child is my soul within me." (Ps 131:2)	It is important to feel calm and quiet in our spirits in order to be close to God, like a weaned child in his mother's bosom.
Lyrics that do not endorse activities or behavior that is contrary to the teachings of the Bible.		It is required of us, as believers of God to know His teachings well, so that we can distinguish what is acceptable or not for us to do, including our choice of music. Many pop songs today have explicitly sinful lyrics so we have to be very selective.

Part B- Music in Christian Worship

When the Israelites finally built a kingdom and ended their nomadic lifestyle, music ministry was started to meet the needs of worship. In the Old Testament, there were musicians especially dedicated to the music ministry in the temple of God. The book of 1 Chronicles outlines at least three different occasions when David organized the music ministry of the Levites.

1. To sing and play instruments as the Ark of the Covenant was brought back to Jerusalem (1 Chron 15:14-24)
2. To commemorate, thank and praise the Lord in the tabernacle (1 Chron 16:4-6)
3. To be musicians in the temple (to be built by Solomon) (1 Chron 23:5)

Questions to think about:

1. What types of music do we have in church today?
2. Which ones mentioned in the previous question are the equivalents of what the Israelites had in their music ministry during the Old Testament time?
3. What are the purposes of the music in our church today?
4. Are these purposes different from those found in the Bible?
5. Read Matthew 28:19, 20. These two verses give us the fundamental commission that the Lord Jesus has entrusted to His church in the New Testament – to preach the gospel and to teach and shepherd the believers. Do you think the music in our church today has been geared towards these two aims? How else can music contribute to these aims?

R E F L E C T I O N & P R A Y E R



In conclusion, let's read Isaiah 30:15 together: "In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength." This verse tells us a secret to a good relationship with God – inner sense of security and stability. When we are at peace inside, we can then turn our attention to God and to what God has to say about how to go about our life. May our choice of music be geared towards the direction of drawing closer to God, and not away from Him.