

Unavoidable. Pervasive. Inescapable. Secular pop music is everywhere. Even if you can get your young Christian friends to switch their listening habits from secular to sacred, they are still going to hear the top popular songs everywhere they go. In this section we provide you some

ideas to take advantage of some of the most popular secular songs. Use the opening questions, the thematic concepts and discussion ideas to spice up your Bible study, Sunday School lesson, camp/retreat meeting or outreach event message.

Artist:

## One Republic

**Song:** Counting Stars

**Album:** Native

**By:** Dave Felts  
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### Teaching Point:

Life is sometimes a struggle between right and wrong, rich and poor, successful and unsuccessful.

### Opening Questions:

- How do you picture your life two years from now; five years from now; ten years from now?
- Would you say that you are more hopeful or doubtful about your future?
- What is your measure of success? Money? Fame? Power? Integrity?

### Discussion:

"Counting Stars" by One Republic is a fun and catchy song with lyrics that seem to express a sense of struggle between rich and poor, right and wrong. Challenge students to identify the things that Ryan Tedder seemed to be struggling with as he wrote these lyrics. He starts with dreaming of how his life with his wife would be, but is torn between the idea of money and the ideal of simplicity. He struggles with "just doing what we're told"—a common struggle among musicians in the "industry"—but also with feeling right about doing right when wrong seems to feel better. There are many ways to see the lines, "Everything that kills me makes me feel alive" and, "Everything that drowns me makes me want to fly"—but my take is that there is exhilaration in overcoming impossible situations. Finally, he says, "Take that money, watch it burn, sink in the river the lessons I learned" which seems to imply that life lessons are more important than being rich.

**Matthew 7:7** is the "flashing sign" that he refers to. What do you think that means?

Read **Proverbs 4:12** and **16:25**. The trap that we so easily fall into is the "feelings" trap. There is so much pressure to be politically correct and "tolerant" in ways that we know are wrong but it "feels" better, or at least it is easier to just go along and not rock the boat.

### Conclusion:

Throughout our lives we will have to weigh our values and dreams, comparing them with the truth of God's Word. After thinking about that and considering the struggles expressed in this song, would you change any of your answers to the opening questions? What is your biggest area of struggle? Remember, God can give you the wisdom and the strength to negotiate these areas and come out victorious. That is exhilarating!

Artist:

## Passenger

**Song:** Let Her Go

**Album:** All The Little Lights

**By:** Cindy Engoy  
wurldgurl@hotmail.com

### Teaching Point:

God has a purpose for everything in our lives.

### Opening Questions:

- Have you ever heard that "opposites attract"? Do you really think that is true? Why or why not?
- I'm going to say a word and I want you to yell out the opposite: "UP" / "RIGHT" / "FAST" / "HAPPY" / "GIRL" / "LOVE" / "GOD" / "GOOD"
- Can opposing circumstances be good or bad for us? Why or why not?
- Can something that was good become something bad, or vice versa? How?

### Discussion:

In "Let Her Go" Passenger sings about opposites—about love lost, about wanting and needing something or someone after it's gone. Did you know that God spoke about opposites in the Bible?

**Ecclesiastes 3** starts off with, "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens." So right away, God let's us know that He has a reason for everything that happens in our lives. Read **Ecclesiastes 3:1-8**. God tells us in these verses that there are reasons and seasons for all the opposites in our lives. What are some of the opposites that are mentioned in these verses? Seems a little depressing, don't they?

**Romans 8:28** states, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." So, when junk seems to be happening to us, when those opposites do seem to be attracted to us, we can know and believe that God will work it for our good, which is the opposite of bad!

### Conclusion:

When we can't seem to make sense of our conflicting thoughts, emotions, or circumstances, we can know and claim that God has a reason and a purpose for even these opposites things in our lives. The writer of Ecclesiastes goes on to write, "He (God) has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end." Good to know, isn't it? God will make all these opposites a thing for beauty in our lives!

Artist:

## Paul McCartney

**Song:** Queenie Eye

**Album:** New

**By:** Jeff Williamson  
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### Teaching Point:

How are you playing the game of life?

### Opening Question:

What are some of the simple childhood games that you played? What life long lessons did you learn?

### Discussion:

"Queenie Eye, whose got the ball?" really is not much different from playing a game of Hide & Seek and calling out, "Ready or not, here I come!" Sir Paul, in his most recent hit "Queenie Eye," recalls the days of a childhood schoolyard game and the lifelong lessons that he did not realize that he was learning. What lessons can you learn from your childhood games and other teachings?

Playing a game to reinforce a teaching point is a great way to learn a life lesson. In the Old Testament we are told: "Love the Lord your God with all your HEART and with all your SOUL and with all your STRENGTH." (**Deuteronomy 6:5**)

What would life be like if "everything" we did were with the focus and intent of "loving the Lord"? Would the rules of the game matter? Would the life lessons change? Go ahead; recall for just a moment that great game of neighborhood Whiffle Ball, Hide & Seek, or any great game. When you played, you were all in! Nothing would stop you and you were indeed ready for the challenge!

Can the same be said of your spiritual walk?

Again the question is, what would life look like if "everything" you did were with the focus and intent of "loving the Lord"?

### Conclusion:

Consider another Paul, the Apostle Paul, and his instruction to us; *Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for God's glory. (1 Corinthians 10:31)* In everything, give God the glory. Whether playing a backyard game or learning a life lesson, He deserves the glory. When you are "all in" for Him with all your heart, soul, and mind, the lesson learned becomes a lifestyle lived: give God the glory in all things.