

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:

Avicii

Song: Wake Me Up
Album: True

By: Dave Felts
davefelts@gmail.com

Teaching Point:

The journey of self-discovery is a key element of adolescence and God's word holds the key.

Opening Questions:

Who are you, really? Do you sometimes wonder if you even know yourself? Are you sometimes impatient to be grown up? Do you think it will all become clear once you turn 18? 21? 30?

Discussion:

"Wake Me Up" by Avicii seems to be a song about finding yourself. That search can be very frustrating when you're a teenager with adults giving you mixed messages... "Act like an adult/be a kid while you can."

As followers of Christ we have the advantage of being able to discover our purpose in Christ. But, as Rick Warren said in *Purpose Driven Life*, "Focusing on ourselves will never reveal our life's purpose."

Colossians 1:16b (MSG) says, "Everything got started in Him and finds its purpose in Him." **Ephesians 1:11 (MSG)** says, "It's in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for..."

Self-identity is tied to purpose, which is tied to God. Without Him, we struggle to find either one. Well-known atheist Bertrand Russell said, "Unless you assume a God, the question of life's purpose is meaningless."

The thought of life with no purpose is very unappealing to pretty much everyone. The lyrics of this song seem to reflect a longing to find ultimate purpose and meaning in life but being frustrated by a subtle "lostness."

Conclusion:

Finding such a hopeless lyric in a fun and unique song is a little ironic. This fusion of EDM and bluegrass (in itself a little ironic) is fun to listen to, but expresses a common struggle among those who don't know Christ or Christians who don't realize what we have in Him. Look beyond the struggle to the One who made us for a purpose!

Artist:

Barenaked Ladies

Song: Odds Are
Album: Grinning Streak

By: Sarah Taylor
sarah_t@gmail.com

Teaching Point:

We're going to face trials, but God will never leave us.

Opening Questions:

What do you think the odds are of getting struck by lightning? How about the odds of someone spotting a UFO? Does anyone know the odds of getting audited by the IRS?

- Odds of spotting a UFO today: 3,000,000 to 1
- Odds of dating a millionaire: 215 to 1
- Odds of dating a supermodel: 88,000 to 1
- Odds of being struck by lightning: 576,000 to 1
- Odds of injury from mowing the lawn: 3,623 to 1
- Odds of being audited by the IRS: 175 to 1

Discussion:

The Barenaked Ladies have an upbeat way of looking at the bad things that can happen in life – a bee sting, getting struck by lightning, getting struck by a train, etc. Clearly, focusing on the bad stuff in life can be downer (despite the tone of the song). Worrying about IF something bad will happen can be a downer. When something bad DOES happen can be a downer – because we all know, eventually, it does – to some degree or another.

In **Psalm 142** we find David holed up in a cave, hiding from the people trying to kill him. He's afraid for his life. When something isn't going right for David, like in this Psalm, his response is to cry out to God. In this Psalm he says, *I have no refuge; no one cares for my life. I cry to you, O Lord; I say, "You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living."* David faced certain death, but he can find time to cry out to God and worship God in the same breath. **Psalm 121** *I lift up my eyes to the hills – where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip – he who watches over you will not slumber.* What's your typical response when something bad happens? Do you get angry with God? Do you praise God during the bad stuff? What changes do you need to make to begin praising God in the bad times?

Conclusion:

When things get bad, God is more than enough. God can handle our cries of pain and anger; He's more than big enough. When things begin to go bad for us, God remains faithful and just to see us through. God never leaves us alone to handle life on our own. And despite the stuff life throws at us, we – like David – can find the strength to sing to God through the storms.

Artist:

Capital Cities

Song: Safe and Sound
Album: In a Tidal Wave of Mystery"

By: Doug Ranck
dranck@fmcbsb.org

Teaching Point:

God's Protection

Opening Question:

When you felt scared as a child, where did you feel safest?

Discussion:

Franklin D. Roosevelt said, "The only thing we have to fear is fear itself." While this is a great quote, it is more easily spoken than practiced. We all have our own set of fears stemming from any number of circumstances or even our genetic wiring. Add the real threats in our world today and we can quickly feel a lack of protection physically, socially, emotionally, and even spiritually.

Capital Cities sings an upbeat song celebrating the great feelings of being "safe and sound." The song offers words of confident protection to the other person, *Even in a hurricane of frowns I know that we'll be safe and sound and In a tidal wave of mystery you'll be standing next to me.*

Many of the words in this song could be God singing to us. He is in fact offering protection. Read the words of **Psalm 3:3-6**, *But you, Lord, are a shield around me, my glory, the One who lifts my head high. I call out to the Lord, and he answers me from his holy mountain. I lie down and sleep; I wake again, because the Lord sustains me. I will not fear though tens of thousands assail me on every side. We who trust God, understand the bigger picture of how He sustains us not just in this life but also for all eternity. We may not always know how or when God protects those He loves, but we do know we are ultimately shielded and kept safe whether in this earthly life or throughout eternity.*

In the midst of our own fears, God calls us to trust Him and to be a person who provides safety for others. We can be a voice for the voiceless, we can provide sanctuary for the oppressed, we can offer words and the environment to help others voice their fears, their feelings, and know we provide a safe place.

Conclusion:

What is one fear with which you continue to struggle? What is one step you could take to trust God more? What is one way you could provide "safety" for a group or person in your life?