

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:

Taylor Swift

Song: Shake It Off

Album: 1989

By: Doug Ranck, Free Methodist Church
Santa Barbara, California dranc@fmcscb.org

Theme

Hope

Teaching Point

Students will learn to trust God when anxiety threatens.

Opening Question

What issue in your own life or in the national or world headlines causes you to be a little anxious?

Discussion

Taylor Swift writes one line in the middle of this song the summarizes the whole: *It's gonna be alright*. The world around us is going to do what the world is going to do. Players are going to play, *haters gonna hate, heart-breakers gonna break, and fakers gonna fake*. She goes on to say, *I'm dancing on my own; I make the moves up as I go*. Our lives will intersect with adversity and trials. With sin came injustice, loneliness, loss, and destruction. It is and will be easy *getting down and out about the liars and the dirty, dirty, cheats of the world*. At each of these crossroads we have a simple but challenging choice: take the road of being anxious about everything and experiencing discouragement, or take the road where we will stand tall in our conviction to trust God and have the attitude of joy.

God calls us to the path of standing firm in our faith and looking to the hope only He can bring us. As we place our identity in Him, fighting off the threats and despair of sin God will help us to *shake it off*.

1 Peter 5:7 describes how we live our lives with conviction and joy. God has given us everything we need to stand strong in our faith and walk forward with hope. This passage reminds us we do so in community, as many all over the world also experience suffering/anxiety but are choosing to trust God with their lives.

Conclusion

What is one step you can take to begin releasing an anxious part of your life to God? What adult or friend could walk with you in this?

Artist:

U2

Song: The Miracle (Of Joey Ramone)

Album: Songs Of Innocence

By: David Gantt, Sandy Ridge Baptist
Hickory, North Carolina davidg@srbconline.net

Theme

Thankfulness

Teaching Point

In a moment, what once seemed unclear can make sense and create in us a sense of thankfulness.

Opening Questions

Have you ever had a moment when things just didn't make sense? Maybe that moment was because you received something you didn't deserve. What was your moment, and how did you feel once everything made sense?

Discussion

What is a miracle? A lot of people think of extravagant things happening, like sudden healings or when Jesus turned water into wine. But miracles come in other shapes too. For instance, in this song the miracle is when the moment of clarity happens. It is the moment that they wake up or come to life because everything now makes sense.

Life hasn't made sense at times for most of us. But comfort and peace come with understanding that our story has been written already and that God won't let anything come our way that could destroy us. In the right time He will allow us to understand. Read **Jeremiah 29:11**. God's plan for us is to live a bright and plentiful life. We may not have all the understandings for why things don't work out sometimes, but we can have assurance, our miracle of revelation, that it's all going to be okay because God is in control.

Romans 8:28 explains that everything works together for the good of those who love Him. It's all going to be okay! It's all going to become clear—and at that moment we are going to experience a miracle because what once was cloudy and unintelligible is now clear. Look for your moment to wake up and be thankful that God lets us in on things when he knows we can handle it.

Conclusion

We're not always going to be able to figure out what is going on in our lives. We're not always going to have the answers, and at times we will question how a loving God could allow certain things to happen. But, be thankful. Be thankful that at the right time, God will make it clear to you. Be thankful that sometimes you get what you don't really deserve and that sometimes you don't get what you do deserve. The miracle is the clarity that God gives. The awesome part is that God has an awesome plan for your life—all you have to do is trust Him with it.



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