



**Educate
+ Engage**



MEDIA
MATTERS:



Music-The
Rhythm of Influence

OVERVIEW

In this initial Media Matters lesson, we examine the profound impact of music on our hearts and minds. Beyond the rhythms and melodies, we'll delve into the storytelling power of lyrics and the diverse range of musical genres. Our aim is to navigate the world of music with intentionality and purpose, ensuring that the music we choose aligns with our values and fosters spiritual growth.

Scripture Passage

Ephesians 5:19 (NKJV)

Speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,

God's Insight: God desires for us to use the tool of music to encourage one another and worship Him.

Proverbs 4:23 (NKJV)

Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.

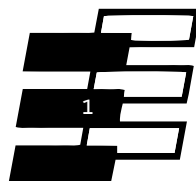
God's Insight: Be mindful of the music you allow to influence your heart.

EDUCATE

The Power of Lyrics

Music is a tremendous tool used to communicate thoughts, desires, intentions, and more, primarily through its lyrics. The interplay between words and accompaniment is vital, impacting the tone and effect of a song. It's imperative for listeners to be discerning and mindful of the lyrics to which we expose ourselves. Christian music, in particular, holds a unique space in worship, embodying prayers, praises, and reflections on faith.

Optional Activity: Pair students with one another to discuss the lyrics of a Christian song that has touched your heart. Explore how Christian music serves as a powerful conduit for expressing thoughts and emotions in our walk with Jesus Christ.



Lesson 1

Christian lyrics not only convey emotions but also biblical truths. Consider songs like “How Great Thou Art” or “Amazing Grace,” where the lyrics echo the magnificence of God’s creation and the transformative power of His grace. These songs become prayers, encapsulating eternal truths found in Scripture.

Discussion Questions: How do the lyrics of a Christian song impact your spiritual journey? Can you identify common biblical themes in your favorite Christian song?

Diversity in Music

Christian music spans various genres, each contributing to the rich tapestry of expressions in worship. The cultural and demographic diversity of our churches often influences the genres of music we encounter. In exploring the many Christian music genres, we discover that each genre resonates uniquely with individuals based on their background and age.

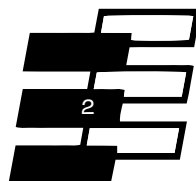
Optional Activity: Form small groups and ask students to discuss a genre of Christian music that may be new to them. Allow them to share their findings with the class, discussing what makes the genre unique and how it contributes to the overall beauty of Christian musical expression.

Variety in Christian music mirrors the many ways individuals connect with God. Upbeat gospel genres can spark jubilant expressions of praise, while contemplative hymns provide moments of reverence and reflection. Learning to celebrate and embrace each style of music broadens our understanding and appreciation for the diversity of the body of Christ.

Discussion Question: How can exposure to diverse Christian musical styles deepen our collective worship experience?

Responsible Choices

Our music choices as followers of Christ play a crucial role in fostering spiritual growth and maintaining a Christ-centered perspective. Romans 12:2 emphasizes the need to be intentional about what we allow to influence our minds: “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” Realizing that we often adopt certain music preferences from friends, we must be even more mindful of what we allow into our lives through what we listen to.



Lesson 1

Optional Activity: Ask students individually to create a set of criteria for evaluating the content of Christian (or secular) songs. Then ask them to compare lists with a partner, considering how responsible Christian music consumption aligns with biblical principles. Emphasize that responsible consumption involves not only enjoying melodies, but also ensuring lyrics align with Christian teachings.

Music has amazing power on the mind. Our brain releases a pleasure chemical called dopamine when we listen to music. It's the same chemical released when you open up a bag of potato chips, reach in, and take a bite. Your brain sends dopamine coursing throughout your body that says, "That's good stuff, you need more of that." Years ago, Lay's potato chips dared customers with their ad campaign: "Betcha can't eat just one." They dared us to open a bag of chips, eat one chip, close the bag, and walk away.

That's the same chemical our brain sends coursing through our body when we hear a song we like and it causes us to tap our foot or clap our hands or sway to the beat. Sometimes, it's the brain saying, "Hey, that's good stuff. You need to listen to more of that."

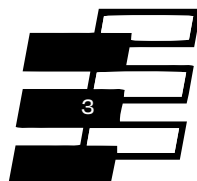
But what if it's not all good? What happens when the lyrics we hear and sing cross swords with the Word of God? Our brain loves music so much it will often sacrifice the purity of the lyrics for the pleasure of the song. And if we're not careful what we hear, we'll find ourselves singing songs we don't even believe just because we like the beat or it has a catchy tune.

Responsible Christian music consumption goes beyond enjoying pleasing melodies. It involves a thoughtful evaluation of lyrics, ensuring they align with biblical principles. Songs like "In Christ Alone" or "How Deep the Father's Love for Us" provide not only musical enjoyment, but also deepen our understanding of God's love and grace. But be careful because just a song is labeled Christian does not mean it truly is or the lyrics tell the truth about God.

Discussion Questions: What criteria is most important when evaluating Christian song content? Can you think of a "Christian" song that does not tell the truth about God or the Bible?

Closing

As we conclude our exploration of Christian music, let's remember that it's more than just a collection of songs; it's a conduit for worship, a channel for prayer, and a tapestry of faith woven with notes of praise. In the symphony of Christian lyrics, each word becomes a prayer, each melody a sermon, and each chord a proclamation of God's glory. Allow these divine compositions to linger in your hearts, echoing the eternal truths found in Scripture.



ENGAGE

Create a playlist incorporating a variety of Christian songs from different genres. Ensure each song aligns with the values mentioned in Philippians 4:8—true, noble, pure, just, lovely, of a good report, virtuous, and praiseworthy. That's a great set of criteria! Share the playlist with a classmate, explaining your Christian song selections and the positive impact they can have on creating a worshipful atmosphere.

