

Have you ever said something in the middle of teaching a lesson and all of a sudden one or two members of your group start singing song lyrics that continue off of what you just said?

I recently had a situation like that. That event sparked an interesting discussion on the topic of music. I asked, "Why do you listen to the music you listen to?" Some of the responses were along the lines of "It's got a good beat" or "I can dance to it" or "It's got a catchy tune." I was somewhat surprised when none of the reasons had anything to do with the lyrics. I pointed out that in the middle of this lesson, lyrics to a secular song were just strewn all over the room, but we didn't say anything at all about the lyrics in our reasons for listening to music. Why?

"I don't listen to the lyrics" was the unanimous response.

Whether we realize it or not, song lyrics are sinking into our youth's minds (and ours!) Music is used more than any time in the past to sell us something, to change our mood about something, or to entertain us. How many of us can recite the lyrics to the Free Credit Report dot com song? Lyrics catch our attention and sink into our minds. I used the "don't listen to the lyrics" excuse

when I was a teenager listening to Marilyn Manson and Snoop Dogg. I claimed that I listened to the "music," but not the "lyrics." But if you were to give me a tune, I could recite the lyrics. Even today, 15 years later, the lyrics will surface if I hear a familiar tune. They have a lasting effect.

That's why I really like what Interline is doing with Youth Leaders Only. YLO provides youth leaders with tools to change what is penetrating the minds of our youth. I like to find out what kids have on their iPod. Then I challenge them to replace their music with some music that I've received from YLO, just for a week. I allow them to pick bands from the comparison charts that are provided. I load the music on with the agreement that they will not delete it until a week has passed. More times than not they will come back to me in 3-4 days wanting information about the CD that the music came from.

I had a young man come to me with questions about a certain musical group. We went to YouTube and viewed one of that group's videos. As we talked about the music for a little bit, I discovered that he wanted to share this song with the congregation during worship. While it was a decent song and had a positive message, I told him that this does not make it a "Christian" song or even a worship song. We have to analyze the band along with the music. Many times a group will perform a song written by someone else, regardless if they support the lyrics or not. We have to make sure that the source of the song, not just the message of the song, is on the right track.

Music can either destroy the mind or build it up. Use the tools at hand through this publication to get the music into the minds of your young friends. Let's change the course from quoting secular songs with messages of sex, drugs, and rock and roll to quoting lyrics from Christian songs with messages of love, forgiveness, and most importantly, Scripture.

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MyTunes

"I Don't Listen To The Words!"