

I Dare You

Don't Forget the Lyrics – Overview

I have often wondered, oddly enough, what life would be like if it were a musical. What songs would be playing in the background as I go through my daily routines? What would be the soundtrack during my times of success, or my times of failure? What would be played to help express my joy, my sadness or my pain?

In some ways, our lives do have a soundtrack. It is the songs that we choose to play throughout our day to help us express our thoughts or feelings. Songs we use to pump us up, or to calm us down, or simply to pass the time as we travel from one place to another. Sometimes we take it for granted, whereas other times the music that fills our ears has a drastic impact on our mood and actions.

This connection to music is especially relevant for the “iPod generation”. Words (lyrics), rhythms, notes, and choruses are an ever-present part of their reality, and it would serve us, and them, well to pay attention to the lyrics that are swirling through their heads. Some are positive and helpful, others are negative and destructive, and still others exemplify complete nonsense.

The purpose of this module is to help students evaluate the lyrics of the music they listen to, and then apply those same criteria to the Psalms of David. Good lyrics are real and authentic; they touch on larger issues, or help bring a fresh perspective to a given situation. Some songs find their beauty in complex imagery and metaphor. Others are wonderfully simple and raw, expressing emotions honestly.

The first lesson, **I know this one...**, is intended to help students begin the conversation. They will be encouraged to bring in lyrics from one of their favourite songs and then evaluate them based on criteria that the students develop for themselves. At the end of the lesson, a Psalm will be introduced and critiqued, opening up discussion for the weeks to follow.

Lesson two, **Shiny Happy People**, is an exploration of the happy, positive expressions of David. Students look at a number of Psalms that express gratitude, thankfulness, and joy in who God is and what he has done. They are then challenged to develop their own expression of the same emotions.

The third lesson, **Bridge over Troubled Water**, looks at the Psalms that express sadness, grief, and frustration. The students examine how David dealt with these emotions and where he found his hope in times of trouble.

The focus of the final lesson, **Paint it Black**, is on the portions of the Psalms that are often overlooked because they are difficult to deal with. These are the passages where David expresses strong anger and sentiments of brutal violence for those around him. This type of expression will be evaluated, as students come to terms with why David is saying such things and how he ultimately deals with his thoughts.

An optional activity or exercise is also being included which could constitute an additional session, depending on how you think your group would respond. It could be done on a large scale, in small groups, or with a few students for whom you think it would be helpful. Essentially, students create and share their own psalm, expressing the emotions of their hearts and bringing them before God.