MUSIC

Program Target: To encourage youth to think carefully about their choices in music.

What to do: A week before the program, ask five of your young people to choose their favorite Christian song, and their favorite secular song. Ask them to bring a copy of each song on a CD to the meeting, and to also copy or type out the lyrics to each song and give them to you two days before the meeting.

60-70 minutes: Allow each person at least five minutes to talk about the two songs they've chosen and share the lyrics with the group. Encourage them to share why they like the songs and invite discussion from the group. As time permits (and depending on what you and your group will consider appropriate) play selections from some of the songs. After each song has been introduced, invite some discussion from the group with the following questions:

1. What is the message of this song?
2. Is there anything about this song that will help build your spiritual life?
3. Is there anything in this song that could damage your spiritual life?

It's quite possible that some of the secular songs chosen may have lyrics that even the youth are uncomfortable sharing in a church meeting! If this is the case, address that question directly: How can you be sure this is appropriate to listen to if you find some of the lyrics offensive? Is it really true that "no-one listens to the words anyway, it's just the beat"? Can "the beat" or the music itself be positive or negative, apart from the lyrics?

Preparation Time: This program requires you to contact members of your youth group at least a week in advance and to check back with them during the week to make sure they are ready. When they have given you their song lyrics, you will need to make copies of them for everyone in the group to read. If the young people have trouble getting a copy of the song lyrics to you, have them tell you the names of the songs they have chosen and the artists that perform the songs. If you have access to the Internet, you can find the lyrics to almost any song online.

Bible Text:
"When you meet together, sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, as you praise the Lord with all your heart." (Ephesians 5:19, CEV)

Song Service:
"Sing Hallelujah to the Lord"
"Shout to the Lord"

Vesper or Closing Thought:
As human beings, we are designed to love and enjoy music. Music can lift us up to God–or it can drag us down into the gutter. As you close today's program, remind young people that our brains record everything we see and everything we hear. The music we listen to *does* affect us. Encourage them to make positive choices in music as in everything else.