

TOP MUSIC COUNTDOWN.

Special Edition:

Discussing the Issues Surrounding the Virginia Tech Tragedy

Introduction: For those of us who serve and love young people, the recent tragedy at Virginia Tech is frightening and discouraging. There are many important issues surrounding this tragedy that we can discuss with our young people: the fear of violence, dealing with loss, maintaining a positive outlook on life, and working together to build a better world, just to name a few. While these issues are undoubtedly important, sometimes it can be tough to get these important conversations started.

In the recent months, there have been several songs on the popular music charts that communicate positive messages and values surrounding these important issues. Below you will find 7 suggested songs. For each song, you will find information about the song's message, discussion questions and activities. We hope that this resource will help you start some great conversations!

Song Suggestions: For each song listed on our review, you will find some helpful suggestions so that you can get the most out of each song in your work with young people. Here is a key to help you interpret the listed suggestions:

G – Ideal for **Group Discussion**

P – Ideal for **Prayer**

H – **Hot Topic**

Anyway / Martina McBride

Values: Positive **Pace:** Slow **Clarity:** Clear **Suggestions:** P, G

Issues: "You can spend your whole life buildin' something from nothing. One storm could come and blow it all away." Negative thoughts and cynicism can creep into our mindsets. We may start thinking that our efforts will be meaningless, or that no one will care, or that it won't make a difference, or that the potential pain and suffering is too great. These ideas can keep us from acting on our desires. "Build it anyway." We are encouraged to take chances, follow our dreams, and believe in what is possible. "God is great but sometimes life ain't good. And when I pray it doesn't always turn out like I think it should. But I do it anyway." Perseverance, commitment and faith are all rewards in themselves.

Questions: How do you react to negative responses to your thoughts, ideas, and actions? How do you gain confidence, strength and courage to persevere in spite of these negative responses?

Actions: Just do it!

If Everyone Cared / Nickelback

Values: Positive **Pace:** Slow **Clarity:** Clear **Suggestions:** G, H

Issues: "If everyone cared and nobody cried. If everyone loved and nobody lied. If everyone shared and swallowed their pride." This song poses a serious question. What would happen? We capture small moments of this sort of peace and happiness in our lives and through out relationships. "As we lie beneath the stars we realize how small we are. If they could love like you and me, imagine what the world could be." How would the world be different if everyone in the world lived with the unselfish sense of freedom and peace? "Then we'd see the day when nobody died. When nobody died..."

Questions: What examples-people or events-can you think of that promoted and worked toward this image of the world. What roadblocks are in the way for everyone (particularly you) from living in this manner?

Actions: Start by making everyday decisions that promote peace, justice, and equality.

World / Five For Fighting

Values: Positive **Pace:** Slow **Clarity:** Clear **Suggestions:** P, G

Issues: If you were given the chance to create the most perfect world, what would it look like? This song gives you the permission to dream your ideal vision of the world. "What kind of world do you want? Think Anything. Let's start at the start. Build a masterpiece." Would there be different races and cultures? Military? Religion? The new rules are up to you. The challenge of envisioning the perfect world goes a step farther and calls for action to help make this perfect world a reality. "History Starts Now. Be careful what you wish for. Start Now."

Questions: How would your ideal world be similar to what you live in now? What would be different? Who has the power and influence to make that dream become a reality?

Actions: Take pictures of the beauty of God's creation that reflect the images of your ideal world.

My Wish / Rascal Flatts

Values: Positive **Pace:** Slow **Clarity:** Clear **Suggestions:** G, P

Issues: Words of hope and inspiration are always welcome in our lives. During a dark day, listen to this song. "My wish for you is that life becomes all that you want it to." Just how do we accomplish greatness in life? "And if you're faced with the choice and you have to choose, I hope you choose the one that means the most to you." The possibilities are endless in life when it comes to making a positive difference. "Help somebody every chance you get. Oh, you find God's grace in every mistake." These are comforting words for all ears and hearts to hear.

Questions: Who has shown you encouragement when you needed it most? What is your life's wish?

Actions: Print the lyrics to this song and send to those in your life who mean the most to you.

Keep Holding On / Avril Lavigne

Values: Positive **Pace:** Slow **Clarity:** Clear **Suggestions:** P

Issues: "Keep holding on 'cause you know we'll make it through. Just stay strong cause you know I'm here for you." These words are exactly what we need to here when we have lost motivation and want to give up and give in. But there are those people that surround us, encourage us, and remind us of the reasons to hold on to hope. "I'll be by your side, you know I'll take your hand when it gets cold and it feels like the end." We have to remember to hold on and not be afraid to rely on our friends, family and our networks of support. "Hear me when I say I believe nothing's going to change destiny. What's meant to be will work out perfectly."

Questions: When hope is dwindling, where do you find your motivation to hold on?

Actions: Dedicate this song to those someone you know who needs encouragement.

Hurt / Christina Aguilera

Values: Positive **Pace:** Slow **Clarity:** Clear **Suggestions:** G, H

Issues: Sometimes when we look back, we are better able to see situations from a proper perspective. As it is said, "Hindsight is 20/20." In dealing with feelings pain, regret, and missed opportunities, we seek forgiveness and healing. "I'm sorry for blaming you for everything I just couldn't do and I've hurt myself, by hurting you." We aren't able to turn back time and make things right or change our actions. "I would hold you in my arms. I would take the pain away. Thank you for all you've done. Forgive all your mistakes." Even though we can't change the past, we must learn from it and heal ourselves for a healthier future.

Questions: When are the times in your life you have been hurt by someone? How ave you been able to heal from these occurrences?

Actions: Reflect on the areas of your life in which you are hurt. Write down one thing you can do to heal from these pains.

You Are Loved (Don't Give Up) / Josh Groban

Values: Positive **Pace:** Slow **Clarity:** Clear **Suggestions:** G, P

Issues: We all desire and need encouragement and want to be supported in the endeavors we undertake. "Don't give up because you want to burn bright. If darkness blinds you, I will shine to guide you." In whatever life circumstances we find ourselves that hold us back - when your heart is heavy, when you want to be understood, when you are lost inside, when you want to be heard - it is good to have someone along the way to help us along and share some of the burdens. They can give us that extra boost we need to succeed. "You are loved. Don't give up. It's just the weight of the world."

Questions: What things are holding you back in your life right now? What encouragement and support do you need to overcome these obstacles?

Actions: Post the lyrics to this song in a prominent place for you to see everyday and remember that you are loved. Don't give up!

When I Get Where I'm Going / Brad Paisley featuring Dolly Parton

Values: Positive **Pace:** Slow **Clarity:** Clear **Suggestions:** G, P

Issues: When a loved one dies, the sense of loss and emptiness can be difficult to deal with. Looking at death through the eyes of the one who has gone to a better place can provide great comfort to those here on earth. "When I get where I'm going, on the far side of the sky, the first thing that I'm gonna do is spread my wings and fly." The end of this journey here on earth promises a greater glory in heaven where love reigns and fear disappears, God is waiting for us with open arms. "When I get where I'm going and I see my maker's face, I'll stand in the light of his amazing grace."

Questions: What is your vision of heaven? How does this provide comfort when remembering those who have gone before you?

Actions: Plan a prayer service in honor and memory of those who are sharing the ultimate glories of God's kingdom.

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