



Exploring Baptism through Contemporary Christian Songs

A listing of contemporary Christian songs and related questions to introduce and explore the theme of “Living Our Baptism: Five Gifts of Discipleship”

Objectives:

- To explore the theme of Baptism and/or individual gifts of discipleship through the medium of contemporary music
- To engage students with different learning styles
- To help students make connections between their baptism and the culture they live in

Audience: Any age but particularly youth and young adults

Duration: 10-15 minute opening or longer depending on how many songs are used

Materials/Preparation Needed:

- Bibles
- Printouts of the lyrics for the chosen songs
- Downloads or links to song files either in audio or video format to play in class

Lesson/Event:

The following list of songs is meant as a jumping off point. These can be used to begin a class, allow for a change of pace, encourage students to explore the topic on their own, or in other creative ways. They have been divided into categories of General Baptism and each of the Five Gifts. Use the suggested questions or come up with your own!

To extend the learning, ask students to bring in other songs and relate them to baptism and the five gifts. (Note: You may decide to widen the range of musical selections, but make sure they are appropriate material for the age group involved.)

General Baptism:

1. “Changed” by Jordan Feliz

- What emotions do you think the artist is expressing?
- What do you know about your baptism? How does it make you feel knowing you are a part of God’s family?
- In Luther’s Small Catechism, Luther writes that “daily a new person is to come forth and rise up to live before God in righteousness and purity forever.” ELW, p. 1165 How does this compare to the song lyrics?

- In the Affirmation of Baptism, we are asked if we intend to continue in the covenant God made with us in baptism. That covenant includes:

*to live among God's faithful people,
to hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper,
to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,
to serve all people, following the example of Jesus,
to strive for justice and peace in all the earth.*

These five gifts can be used as guides to help us walk in the newness of life in Christ. Which of these do you find the easiest to follow? The most difficult?

2. "Resurrection Power" by Chris Tomlin

- What benefits does baptism bring to us through the grace of God, according to the song? Compare this to Romans 6:4-8.
- What gifts of baptism does Luther list in the Small Catechism? (ELW, p. 1165)

First Gift of Discipleship—To Live Among God's Faithful People

1. "Hold Us Together" by Matt Maher

- Maher's lyrics talk about "Love holding us together." How is that stanza related to the first gift of discipleship?
- Read Ephesians 4:2-6. We are united in "one Lord, one faith, one baptism." How does that make you feel?
- What are the benefits of being a part of a Christian community? How might being part of a Christian community be hard sometimes?

2. "I'll Find You" by Lecrae with Tori Kelly

- Lecrae sings about "hanging on by a thread." Kelly, in the refrain, answers "Just hold on, and I'll find you." It was inspired by an episode in the artist's life, when several close friends were very sick. Read Romans 12:15. How is this verse related to this song?
- Have you ever been in a situation where you needed support? Who or what give you the support you needed?
- "To live among God's faithful people" gives us strength but also requires us to be responsible to others. Explain. See Ephesians 4:15-16.

Second Gift of Discipleship—To Hear the Word of God and Share in the Lord's Supper

1. "Come to the Table" by Sidewalk Prophets

- Describe your experience with communion. What was your first communion like? Have you ever assisted in giving communion to others? What was that like?

- In Matthew 14:22-25, Jesus institutes the Lord's Supper. How do the sacraments of both baptism and communion connect us to God and each other?
- Find the Parable of the Great Dinner in Luke 15:24. How is this parable similar to the message in the song by Sidewalk Prophets? Who receives God's grace?

2. "Your Words" by Third Day

- According to the song, what blessings do we receive by listening to the word of God?
- What is one of your favorite bible stories or verses? Why?
- What are ways that you can "hear" God's word other than reading it in the bible?
- Did you know that Jesus is also referred to as the Word of God? Read John 1:1-3. Replace "your words" in the song with "Jesus." How does that change your response to the song?

Third Gift of Discipleship—To Proclaim the Good News of God in Word and Deed

1. "My Story" by Big Daddy Weave

- How is this song related to the third gift of discipleship? Read Romans 10:9-15. What do these verses encourage us to do?
- Big Daddy Weave says that his story would be about Hope, Love, and Life and that his story is really the story of Jesus. What does he mean by that?
- Where can you point to Jesus in your life journey?

2. "The Words I Would Say" by Sidewalk Prophets

- Imagine the backstory to this song. Describe to someone else what you think has happened to make the singer pick up pen and paper.
- Have you ever been in a situation where a friend needed encouragement? What did you do?
- Is it easy or hard for you to share the story of God's grace? What helps you or what gets in the way?
- What are some examples of how you can share the Good News of God in both word and deed?

Fourth Gift of Discipleship—To Serve all People, Following the Example of Jesus

1. "Dream Small" by Josh Wilson

- What is an image that speaks to you in this song? Compare this to Jesus' washing of his disciples' feet in Luke 13. How do we serve like Jesus?
- Read 1 Peter 4:10. Share with others a gift/ talent that God has given you. How can you use it to serve others? How is that being a good steward of God's grace?

- In this song, Wilson encourages people to concentrate on the small things they can do. Why is this an important point to remember in our daily lives?

2. “Only Jesus” by Casting Crowns

- How is this song related to the fourth gift of discipleship?
- Look at Colossians 3:17, 23 and Romans 12:1-2. What is Paul advising in these verses? How is this different than what the world values? Why should we follow Paul’s advice and not the world’s?
- What makes it hard to follow our baptismal call? What can help us follow God’s will?

Fifth Gift of Discipleship—To Strive for Justice and Peace in all the Earth

1. “Do Something” by Matthew West

- How is this song related to the fifth gift of discipleship?
- Read Micah 6: 8. In the song, West initially sits back and blames God for the mess on earth. What does West realize in the song? How is that related to this verse?
- What is a trouble in the world that you see? How can you be God’s hands and do something about it?

2. “I Refuse” by Josh Wilson

- Wilson talks about how we sometimes close our eyes to the pain around us and move on. Have you ever been in a situation like that? Why do you think we do that?
- The singer talks about empty prayers and sitting around and waiting for someone else to do something. Contrast this with what Paul writes in Romans 12:9-11. What does God call us to do?
- What are you passionate about? How can you use that passion and the gifts God has given you to help others?