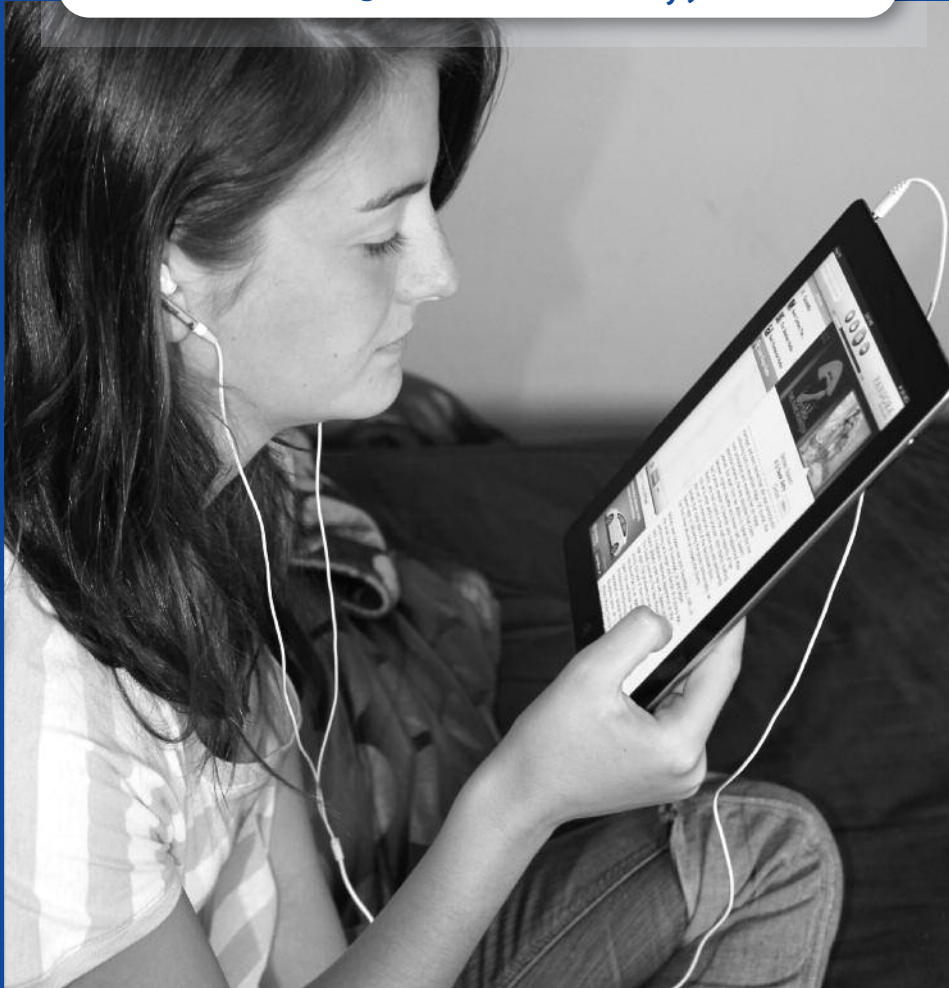


2011-2012

# SPiRiT XTRa

Part I: October through Advent 2011

by Johanna Hatch



**Connecting Popular Music  
and Gospel Themes**

**“Firework,” Katy Perry, *Teenage Dream*, Capitol Records**

Jesus says in this Sunday’s gospel those who yield a rich harvest will receive the kingdom of God. Jesus reminds us that the people given the kingdom may not be who we expect, but instead those the world rejects. “Firework” is a song about letting your true self shine through, in spite of the judgment of others.

**Key lines:** *Cause baby you’re a firework / Come on show ‘em what you’re worth / Make ‘em go “Oh, oh, oh!” / As you shoot across the sky*

**Questions:** What leaders inspire you? What qualities do you think a good leader possesses? What is something about yourself that you are proud of but don’t often share with others? How do you use your gifts to strengthen your family or community?

**“Who Says?” Selena Gomez and the Scene, *Who Says?*****Hollywood Records**

Jesus uses a parable in this Sunday’s gospel to show that he calls all people, not only the perfect or powerful. He invites all to his banquet. In contrast, we often see people being excluded in our schools and communities. “Who Says?” is an anthem celebrating everyone, regardless of imperfections.

**Key lines:** *Who says / Who says you’re not perfect / Who says you’re not worth it / Who says you’re the only one that’s hurting / Trust me / That’s the price of beauty / Who says you’re not pretty / Who says you’re not beautiful*

**Questions:** Who in your school or community feels excluded? What steps can you take to make your school or church more welcoming? What invitations does your church offer that you don’t respond to? Why? What is an example of a time when someone reached out and made sure you weren’t excluded?

**W**ell-chosen popular music can connect teens with the gospel themes and values *SPIRIT* features in its issues. Words, melodies, rhythms can open teens’ minds to the holy in their lives and their hearts to the challenges of the gospel.

*SPIRIT MUSIC XTRA* suggests a piece of popular or Christian piece of music to use as an icebreaker with each issue of *SPIRIT*. Each suggestion describes the theme of the song, provides key lyrics, and includes questions for group reflection.

Your teens can help have the music ready for *SPIRIT* groups. They are your first and best source for bringing the music to your sessions. If no one in your group has the song for the week, download it in MP3 format from one of the legal downloading programs on the Internet. These programs include:

- itunes.com
- MP3.com
- Napster.com
- Rhapsody.com (not compatible with iPods)
- Yahoo!music.com (not compatible with iPods)

You can play the song through a computer or through the MP3 player with speakers. Most downloads cost about a dollar. Listen to the songs before you use them.

*SPIRIT XTRA* invites your teens to reflect on popular music critically and spiritually. If a song does not fit your group, the *XTRA* may spark ideas for songs with similar themes.

To keep music icebreakers current, *SPIRIT MUSIC XTRA* will publish its song suggestions for the Sundays of 2011 online. If you request, *SPIRIT* will send you a printed copy like this one. Otherwise, download the music suggestions from our website: [goodgroundpress.com](http://goodgroundpress.com). Use the music as the Icebreaker in each lesson plan.

Enjoy the songs?  
Watch the videos at  
**Spirit4teens.com**

**3**

October 16, 2011

29th Sunday in Ordinary Time

**“You, Me, and the Bourgeoisie,”** The Submarines, *Honeysuckle Weeks*, Nettwerk Productions

Jesus sums up the struggle to live authentically in faith in a secular world when he says, “Then give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, but give to God what is God’s.” “You, Me, and the Bourgeoisie” expresses the desire to live a spiritual life in a world of material distraction.

**Key Lines:** *And here we are with the pleasures of the first world / It’s laid out before us, who are we to break down? / Every day we wake up / We choose love / We choose light / And we try, it’s too easy just to fall apart*

**Questions:** When have you disagreed with government laws? How do you balance following the law with following your faith? How do you choose to live as a Christian in a secular world? What problems do you encounter?

**4**

October 23, 2011,

30th Sunday in Ordinary Time

**“Dixon’s Girl,”** Dessa, *A Badly Broken Code*, Doomtree

Jesus teaches that God’s most basic laws are laws of love. In our lives we often encounter people and situations that call us to be instruments of God’s love. In “Dixon’s Girl,” hip-hop artist Dessa encounters such a situation and expresses her care for and concern for a woman in an abusive relationship with hope that she can get out of it.

**Key Lines:** *Even that night, I learned the truth about your man / You’ve gotta be big to treat pretty girls bad / And it’s not much, but my money’s on you / It’s not much, but my money’s on you*

**Questions:** Who are your neighbors? How is it difficult to love your neighbor as yourself? What risks are there to showing this love? How do you welcome neighbors of differing faith backgrounds? What does it mean to love neighbors who act unlovable, such as Dixon in this song? What does it mean to love those who are against you?

**5**

October 30, 2011

31st Sunday in Ordinary Time

**“The Cave,”** Mumford and Sons, *Sigh No More*, Glassnote

Jesus calls us to service and humility in this Sunday’s gospel, neither of which is easy. He criticized religious leaders who seek honor and power over others. Jesus wants us to reach out to those around us, lifting them up and sharing their burden, as Mumford and Sons describe in “The Cave.”

**Key Lines:** *I know my call despite my faults / And despite my growing fears / But I will hold on to hope / And I won’t let you choke / On the noose around your neck / And I’ll find strength in pain / And I will change my ways / I’ll know my name as it’s called again*

**Questions:** Outside of church and school, who are some of your favorite teachers? Who do you see helping others in your community? What does humility mean to you? In what ways do you struggle with the call to be humble? How do you lift up those around you?

**6**

November 6, 2011

32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

**“Sandcastles,”** Kate Voegele, *Gravity Happens*, Communikate, Inc.

Sunday’s gospel shows us the wisdom of being prepared not only for the return of Jesus but for our day-to-day responsibilities as well. “Sandcastles” is a song about the struggle to make wise choices for one’s life.

**Key Lines:** *I got these wornout red boots on / And I got a brand new favorite song / And I can name some people who’d say that I got it all wrong / But I know plenty more who’ve been there all along / I’d rather make sandcastles / Instead of these wide-world decisions*

**Questions:** Name someone you consider wise. What qualities make this person wise? What parts of your life do you need to pay more attention to? What do you think it means to “be prepared?” As you move towards adulthood, what kind of life do you see yourself having? What steps are you taking to prepare for that life? What choices are wise in the eyes of God, but might seem foolish to family or friends?

**“Save the World,” Swedish House Mafia, *Save the World*, EMI Records**

Sunday’s gospel challenges us to use our gifts and talents. Our gifts are not just for our own good but should enrich our communities. “Save the World” is a song about celebrating these gifts in community.

**Key Lines:** *Turn up the love now, listen up now / Who’s gonna save the world tonight? / Who’s gonna bring you back to life? / We’re gonna make it, you and I / We’re gonna save the world tonight*

**Questions:** What differences are there between a talent and a gift? How has using your talents had a positive impact on your family, school, or community? How can you encourage others to use their talents? How do the actions and the choices you make affect others’ actions and choices?

**“Sing,” My Chemical Romance, *Sing – the Deluxe Single*, Reprise Records**

In this Sunday’s gospel Jesus reveals that we will find him when we care for those in need, the ones he calls “the least of these.” He challenges us to live out our faith through helping others. “Sing” encourages us to use our voices for service to others.

**Key Lines:** *Sing it from the heart / Sing it till you’re nuts / Singing out for the ones that’ll hate your guts / Sing it for the deaf / Sing it for the blind / Sing about everyone that you left behind / Sing it for the world, sing it for the world*

**Questions:** How can you use your voice for “the least of these?” What risks do you take when you speak out? Where do you see Jesus present in your community? How is doing an act of charity an expression of faith? What opportunities for service does your church or school provide? How can you get more involved?

**“Wake Up,” Arcade Fire, *Funeral*, Merge Records**

Jesus warns his disciples to stay awake and aware for his return. This takes reflection and action keeping us doing what needs to be done. Arcade Fire’s “Wake Up” is a song about living life aware, changing and growing, instead of “falling asleep.”

**Key Lines:** *Somethin’ filled up / My heart with nothin’ / Someone told me not to cry / But now that I’m older / My heart’s colder / And I can see that it’s a lie / Children wake up / Hold your mistake up / Before they turn the summer into dust*

**Questions:** How do you focus on what is important every day when you are faced with many distractions? What do you watch for? What good things do you watch for? About what dangerous things are you vigilant? How does your access to technology distract you? How are connections you have through technology the same as connections you have in person? How are they different? How are the conversations different?

**“Something So,” Atmosphere, *The Family Sign*, Rhymesayers**

As John the Baptist comes to prepare the way for Jesus, he lets those who follow him know that he is not the Messiah but simply a person like they are. As followers of Jesus, we may struggle with fears of our human imperfection. But as the hip-hop group Atmosphere shows us, even if we don’t feel qualified, we need to sing on anyway.

**Key Lines:** *Clear the path, these tears I have are ‘cause I can’t wait to hear you laugh / They tell me that, I’m not qualified / To lend my voice to something so beautiful / They tell me that, I’m not qualified / To lend my voice, to something so beautiful*

**Questions:** When you have felt inadequate? Who can you ask for help? How easy or difficult is it for you to ask for help? Why? What kind of message do you want your life to send? What do you need to clear out of your life to make a path for God?

**“Light up the World,”** Glee Cast, *Glee: The Music, Volume 6*, Twentieth Century Fox

John the Baptist comes in this Sunday’s gospel to point the way to Jesus, the Messiah. John knows who he is and uses his life to “give witness to the light.” We are called as well to use our lives to point the way to Jesus. “Light up the World” is a song that celebrates how being our authentic selves can be a gift to the world.

**Key Lines:** *Let’s light up the world tonight / You gotta give up the bark and bite / I know that we got the love alright / Come on and light it up, light it up tonight*

**Questions:** How do you light up the world? How does your life point others to Jesus? Who do you consider a prophet in your community? How do you show others you are a follower of Jesus? How do you share your faith with others?

**“Human,”** The Killers, *Day & Age*, Island Def Jam Music Group

God finds surprising ways into our world, such as Mary’s choice to become Jesus’ mother and birth him into our world. While God’s call confuses Mary, she takes a risk and chooses to participate in God’s plan. The song “Human” by The Killers deals with questions of fear, faith, confusion, and risk.

**Key Lines:** *And sometimes I get nervous / When I see an open door / Close your eyes, clear your heart / Cut the cord / Are we human or are we dancer? / My sign is vital, my hands are cold / And I’m on my knees looking for the answer / Are we human or are we dancer?*

**Questions:** What makes you feel connected to God? What musicians or artists help make you aware of God’s presence? Have you ever been surprised by God’s work in your life? What risks do you take when you welcome Jesus into your life, as Mary did?

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