

## Music

**Note:** any activities involving photographing pupils must have parental permission.

### Introduction

Discuss what we can do with words: we can speak them, write them, sing them, act them, sign them, etc. Christians do all of these with the words of the Bible. Music has always been a popular way of expressing the words of the Bible. The Bible has been very influential on lyrics, particularly the King James Bible.

### Core material

Select from the following activities. Details of where the music can be found are at the end of this section under 'music based on the Bible'.

### Words and music: styles and times

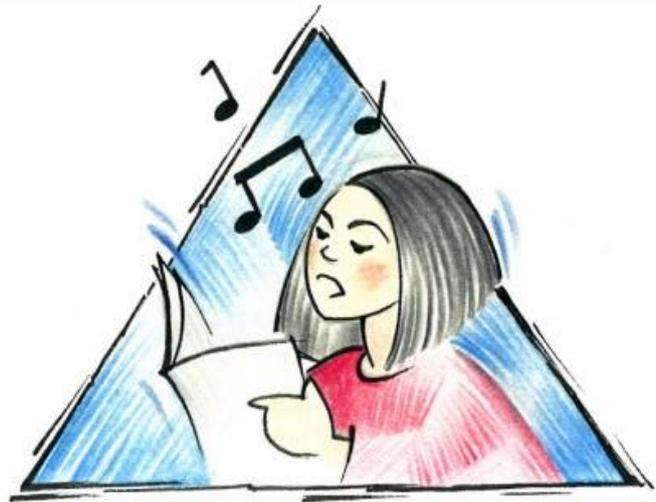
#### 1. Lyrics and text

Explore the relationship of lyrics and the biblical text in some of the music that follows. How closely do the lyrics reflect the Bible? See ***The Bible behind the music.***

#### 2. Mood and meaning

How well does the music reflect the mood and meaning of the lyrics? For example compare and contrast the way the music reflects the words in Boney M's *By the rivers of Babylon* with *Every valley* from Handel's *Messiah*.

Psalm 137 which is the basis for Boney M's song is a psalm of grief felt by exiles who had lost everything, yet the music is very up-beat. The song can be found in *Alleluya!* (A and C Black).



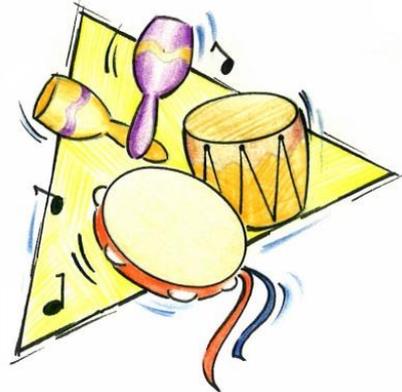
#### 3. Singing

Use *Turn, turn, turn* as a singing piece. Encourage pupils to express the words in the way they sing, for example how they use tempo and volume. This music can be purchased online and is found in the book *The Complete Come and Praise* (BBC) and *Alleluya!* (A and C Black).

**Note:** This song is not advocating hatred, war and killing. Many scholars think it is a reflection on life's varied experiences – we face many different times in our lives. See also **English pupil activities 9-11**

**4. Styles and periods of time**

Explore the different styles and periods with pupils and create an interactive biblical music timeline. Recordings can be placed at intervals along the timeline for people to play, with the words from the Bible displayed.



**Music based on the Bible**

**5. Compose**

Pupils can take a suitable verse from the King James Bible and write their own tune or slightly adapt the biblical words to fit a well known tune.

**All people that on earth do dwell**

Psalm 100 by William Kethe, 1561. Tune 'The Old Hundredth' Louis Berger 1551.

**6. Expression**

Encourage pupils to express their own ideas and feelings about the music they have heard in words, dance and signing. Pupils can learn signs for a chosen song and use them as part of a signing choir where the signs are used to music but without spoken words.

This version of Psalm 100 is one of the sung psalms, a popular tradition in Scotland. The early Psalters (collections of psalms) rhymed the words of the Bible to make them easier to sing and remember. This was composed before the King James Bible was written.

**7. iPod list**

Create an iPod list of music inspired by the Bible. It can be in a range of styles. Note: teachers can download lists of music inspired by the Bible from the web. Choose suitable songs.

Psalm 100:1-2 King James Bible

Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. Serve the LORD with gladness: Come before his presence with singing.

[www.songfacts.com/category:songs\\_inspired\\_by\\_the\\_bible.php](http://www.songfacts.com/category:songs_inspired_by_the_bible.php) List of songs inspired by the Bible

Verse 1 of the sung version

All people that on earth do dwell,  
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice.  
Him serve with fear, His praise forth tell;  
Come ye before Him and rejoice.

**Reflection**

**Note:** fear means respect here

Ask pupils to choose a piece of biblical music to listen to quietly.

[www.cyberhymnal.org/htm/a/allpeople.htm](http://www.cyberhymnal.org/htm/a/allpeople.htm) Lyrics and tune for *All people that on earth do dwell*.

## The Lord is my Shepherd

Psalm 23. Scottish sung psalm, 1650. Sung to the tune Crimond by Jesse Irvine 1872.

This version of Psalm 23 – the one most people know – comes from the Scottish Psalter which rhymes the words of the Bible to make them easier to sing and remember. How does this differ from the King James Bible?

### Psalm 23:1-2 King James Bible

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.  
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: He leadeth me beside the still waters.

### Verse 1 of the sung version

The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want.  
He makes me down to lie  
In pastures green; He leadeth me  
The quiet waters by.

[www.psalmsinging.org/](http://www.psalmsinging.org/)

Highland choir singing this version

<http://nethymnal.org/html/m/lmysheph.htm>

Lyrics and tune

The modern version by 'The Choirboys' (Theme to the Vicar of Dibley) uses the King James Bible.

## Handel's Messiah

Mid 18<sup>th</sup> century, oratorio. *The Messiah* uses the King James Bible. Sound files can be found on <http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Messiah>

- Every Valley

### Isaiah 40:4 King James Bible

Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain.

- Glory to God

### Luke 2:14 King James Bible

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

- Hallelujah

### Revelation 19:6; Revelation 11:15, Revelation 19:16 King James Bible

Hallelujah! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth . . . the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ: and He shall reign for ever and ever. King of Kings and Lord of Lords.



**Turn, turn, turn**

(For everything there is a season) by the Pete Seeger/Byrds

1965 folk song. The King James version of Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 set to music.

This song is also in the children's songbook *Alleluya!* (A and C Black) and *The Complete and Come Praise* (BBC).

Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 King James Bible

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:

A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;

A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;

A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;

A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

A time to gain, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;

A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;

A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.

**Note:** This song is not advocating hatred war and killing. Many scholars think it is a reflection on life's varied experiences – we face many different times in our lives. See also **English pupil activities 9-11**.

**You shall go out with joy**

by Stuart Dauermann & Steffi Geiser Rubins  
1975 Christian worship song.

Isaiah 55:12 King James Bible

For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.

[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:HWW\\_You\\_shall\\_go\\_out\\_with\\_joy.ogg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:HWW_You_shall_go_out_with_joy.ogg)





## By the rivers of Babylon

by Boney M  
1978 Popular song.

Psalm 137:1-4 set to music. The words are from the King James Bible but slightly adapted. A song based on this psalm is also found in the children's songbook *Alleluia!* (A and C Black).

### Psalm 137:1-4 King James Bible

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down,  
yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.

We hanged our harps upon the willows in the  
midst thereof.

For there they that carried us away captive  
required of us a song; and they that wasted  
us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one  
of the songs of Zion.

How shall we sing the LORD's song in a  
strange land?

## Millennium prayer

(Lord's Prayer)  
sung by Cliff Richard  
1999, popular song.

This is the Lord's Prayer sung to *Auld Lang Syne* and follows the text of Matthew 6:9-13 with some adaptation from the King James Bible version of this prayer.

### Matthew 6:9-13 King James Bible

. . . Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For

thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen

