



Interlinc-online.com | 800.725.3300
Maximizing music and media in youth ministry

Music Tasting Party

By Mark Pittman | mpittman@interlinc-online.com

Everyone loves a buffet. There's something cool about having a huge selection of food to choose from. It's also a great way to try something new, since you can take just a little portion of food to taste. When it comes to getting your students into Christian music, a buffet might be just the thing.

Try hosting a "Music Tasting Party." Create/decorate your room so that kids can go from station to station listening to as much new music as they can handle. We would recommend that you encourage your students bring their own set of head-phones.

The How To

There are a few different ways that you can set up the listening aspect of your party.

1. Get a ton of portable CD players. Beg, borrow, but find a ton of CD players then organize your CDs by styles on different tables. Spread a few CD players on each table and let your kids go nuts.
2. Go Digital. If you can round up 5-6 laptops, you can have a music player program (like iTunes) loaded with different styles ... or load each up with your entire library and let them really explore. You'll probably need to have a leader with each laptop to help make sure that everyone at the station gets a chance to browse and listen to what they want. If your staff is savvy with music styles, you might even have them suggest Christian bands for each student to check out based on who the students say their favorite mainstream artists are (if you need some help with this, the interlinc Music Comparison Chart is a great place to start – interlinc-online.com/free)
3. Taste the Video. If you're an interlinc Youth Leaders Only (YLO) member, you probably have a few Music Video Loops lying around. Set up a tv and DVD player so that kids can watch/taste any video they want from your stash.
4. See it. Hear it .Read it. If you have a smaller group or just want to make things simple, you can use our Echoes website for your tasting party (echoessms.com). On Echoes, your students can hear song samples from the entire CD, see music video, and even read bios about each artist or

band. If all your computers have access to the internet, point your browser to echoessms.com

Send It Home

Once the kids have had 45-60 minutes or so to listen to as many CDs/music as possible, play an elimination-type game to see who gets to be first to pick their favorite CD to keep. This sends your students home with a selection of great Christian music CDs of their choice. Some youth leaders like to do a swap system ... "I'll send you home with a Christian CD if you bring (and leave) one of your mainstream CDs."

Resources

So where can you get the CDs for your very own Music Tasting Party? Here are some ideas:

1. Start with CDs in your own ministry library that you're ready to give away.
2. Single boxes of Youth Leaders Only are a great source (breaks down to less than \$6/CD)
3. The interlinc "grab-bag" will get you a random selection of CDs (at less than \$3/CD) the grab-bag come in two sizes, Grande (30 CDs+) and Super-Grande (70 CDs+)
4. For some of those "weird" music styles that you may need, go to echoessms.com

More Ideas

1. Print up ½ page "CDs That I Liked" forms for students to write down their favorite bands (you might want to include the link "echoessms.com" on the form, so that they can go back later and listen again to their new favorite bands.
2. Go to interlinc-online.com/artists to access and print artist bios for students to read while they listen to the music.
3. Download and print the interlinc Music Comparison Chart (interlinc-online.com/free) to have as a reference or starting point for students
4. Put up some poster board and let students write graffiti about which bands they like. You might want to encourage them to write which mainstream band they think their new Christian band sounds like.
5. Start a music listening library where students can taste new music on a weekly basis (go to interlinc-online.com/ylo/howtos to get the "How To Set Up A Music Library" article)