Topics of Social Science—Freshman Religion

Respecting Creative Work

Lesson 01.b “A Creator’s Rights”

Name: Hour:

**The Truth About “Happy Birthday”**

**Directions**

*“Happy Birthday to you, Happy Birthday to you ...”*

Did you know the song “Happy Birthday” is copyrighted? That’s right! Two schoolteachers published the song in 1893, which was originally called “Good Morning To All” and had different lyrics. Later, the lyrics were changed to the song we all know. Over the years, the copyright of this song has been extended. Today, believe it or not, people who want to use the song in a movie or perform it in public are supposed to pay a license fee. This can present a problem. Say you’re a filmmaker with barely any money to make your film. But you want to use the “Happy Birthday” song. You might have to pay thousands of dollars in license fees just to

use the song in your movie! **(If you notice that in many restaurants they no longer sing the Happy Birthday Song because of this licensing fee.)** Another option is to make a unique happy birthday song of your own.

**Step 1:** You are an independent movie producers who want to avoid paying thousands of dollars in fees to have a happy birthday song in one of your movies. You tried to negotiate with the owners of the traditional “Happy Birthday Song” but the just want too much money. One of your fellow producers suggest that you write your own birthday song. At first you all laugh but as you talk further it begins to make sense. So you agree to give it a try.

a. In your computer table groups, come up with original lyrics and use any one of the following melodies:

1) “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star”.

2) “Row, Row, Row Your Boat”.

3) “Old MacDonald Had a Farm”.

4) “Take Me Out to the Ball Game”.

5) “Silent Night”.

b. Write your song lyrics below and write at least two stanzas and for extra credit you

may do three.

c. Find a website from which you can download the audio of the melody that you are

using.

d. Use the website [“Sliderocket”](http://www.sliderocket.com/) to make your presentation of your new song.

e. Have a title slide, a slide for each of your verses, insert the audio for each slide, and put

a picture or image on the slides.

f. You will show your presentation to the entire class.

g. Remember, if your song is too close to the original, it could be considered plagiarism,

and that’s against the law. So be original!

Song Title \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Authors\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Lyrics—Stanza 1

Lyrics—Stanza 2

Lyrics—Stanza 3

**Step 2:** Congratulations! Now that you have put your song into recorded form, it’s copyrighted. Have you thought about how you want other people to be able to use it? If you stick with a regular copyright license, people will have to get your permission before they can copy, share, or perform your song. If you choose a Creative Commons license, people can copy, share, and even change your song or make money from it, depending on your conditions. Look at this list and decide what you will allow others to do with your song.

**Copy Share Perform Change/Alter Sell**

**Use Common Sense!**

Take it one step further and commit to what kind of copyright license you will use for your song.

If you want to use a Creative Commons copyright, you can create a license online for your song.

Visit the Creative Commons website (<http://creativecommons.org/choose/>) and answer the questions, and it will automatically create the right Creative Commons license for your song.