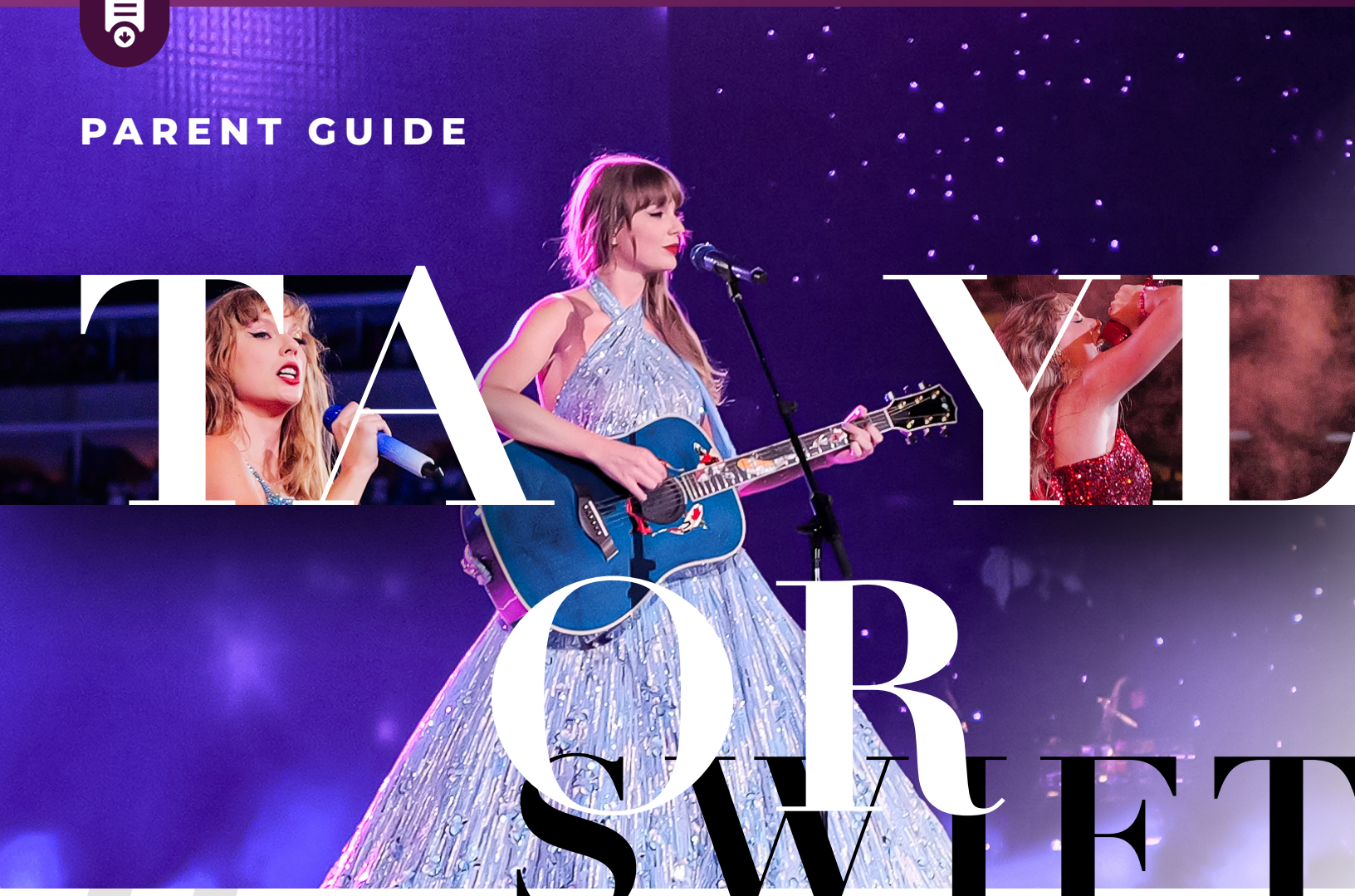
PARENT GUIDE



# TAYLOR SWIFT

> “I’m very aware and very conscious of the path I chose in life, and very aware of the path I didn’t choose.”
>
> TAYLOR SWIFT

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## This guide will help you answer and discuss the following questions:

**Why is Taylor Swift so popular?**

**What is Taylor Swift's worldview?**

**How has Taylor Swift's music changed throughout her career?**

**What does it mean to be a good role model?**

# Taylor's Version

On an episode of *Saturday Night Live*, actress Dakota Johnson reflected on how it felt to attend the show's 40th anniversary special in 2015. The screen flashed an image of Johnson surrounded by other celebrities, and she remarked, "Crazy to be standing so close to someone who would become the most powerful person in America."

The image then zoomed in, not to the man behind Dakota—soon-to-be 45th president of the United States, Donald Trump—but to the smiling blonde a few rows down, the pop star, Taylor Swift.

The joke carried more than a hint of truth. Swift's musical career spans 20 years, and during that time, **she has won** 14 Grammy Awards, a Primetime Emmy Award, 40 American Music Awards, 49 *Billboard* Music Awards, and 30 MTV Video Music Awards. Every single one of her albums **has gone platinum** (including re-recordings of previous albums). Her "Eras" tour is the **first tour in history** to gross over $1 billion, and her most recent album, *The Life of a Showgirl,* was a slam dunk, with every single one of its 12 tracks **landing in the top 12** of the **Billboard Hot 100**, something no other artist has ever achieved.

Taylor Swift's cultural dominance is a perfect case study for why parents need to have conversations with their kids about faith and culture. Even if you ban Taylor's music from your home, the culture is saturated with her. Listening (or not listening) to Taylor Swift used to be just a matter of personal taste—but not anymore.

Most of Taylor's music was (and is) autobiographical. **Many** credit her success to her ability to tell a compelling story through her songwriting. Like being able to speak to the universal pain of a breakup through the specific detail of a **red scarf**.

More explicit themes show up in her later albums—more than halfway through her 30s now, she isn't writing songs like "Fifteen" anymore. As each album progresses, more adult themes emerge. She started her career singing about the joys and frustrations of girlhood, and as she navigated her 20s and 30s, she sings about the complexity of womanhood, too (expletives included).

# Taylor 101

For most fans, Taylor Swift, the musician, and Taylor Swift, the celebrity, are one and the same. A baseline understanding of her artistic development helps us understand a lot of reference points teens see as essential.

Taylor Swift was born in 1989 and spent much of her childhood on a Christmas tree farm. She was something of a musical prodigy. Her family helped her start looking for a record contract when she was only 11.

When she was 15, Taylor signed with Big Machine Records. Her first album was a country record called *Taylor Swift*. Teen and tween girls were especially fond of this release. Her second record, *Fearless,* followed in 2008, and rocketed Taylor to household name status. This record garnered attention from both the country and pop music scenes.

In 2010, Taylor released *Speak Now*, the first album to feature only her own original songwriting, and it was an enormous success. *Red* was released in 2012 and, while still deemed "country," had massive crossover appeal. Songs on *Red* alluded to multiple high-profile romantic relationships.

In 2014, Taylor moved to New York City and released *1989*, which marked her *official* crossover into pop. *1989* was produced with several well-known creatives, including Jack Antonoff, who would become a frequent collaborator.

Taylor's first massively publicized *personal* controversy spawned her 2017 album, *reputation*. That album addressed an ongoing feud between Swift, Kanye West, and his then-wife, Kim Kardashian. At the close of 2017, Taylor began dating British actor Joe Alwyn.

In 2018, Taylor entered a bitter legal battle with Big Machine Records and producer Scooter Braun over the ownership of the masters for all her previous albums. She signed with Universal Music Group, which has released all of her subsequent studio **albums**.

In 2019, Taylor released the pop album *Lover*, a distinct departure from her edgier *reputation*. The *Lover* tour was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Taylor released two albums in 2020, the sister albums *folklore* and *evermore*, co-written with Jack Antonoff and The National band member Aaron Dessner. These 2020 albums garnered her a new demographic of fans with their indie-folk sound and imaginative, less autobiographical lyrics.

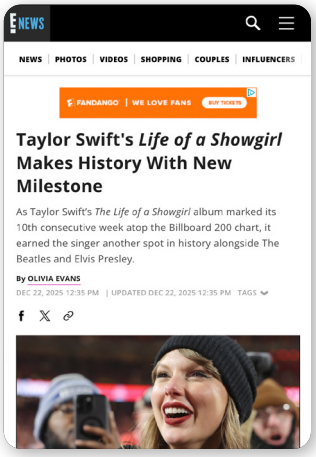
When Taylor officially lost the rights to the masters she recorded with Big Machine, she announced she would re-record all her earlier albums under her new contract with Universal Music Group. The re-recorded albums would feature previously unreleased material (called "Vault" tracks) and new song arrangements. These re-recorded albums were dubbed "Taylor's Versions." The re-release project began in 2021.

At the end of 2022, Taylor released *Midnights*. She also announced the "Eras Tour." The mammoth setlist included selections from all of her previous albums. The tour has been the highest-grossing music tour ever, earning over $1 billion.

At the beginning of 2023, Taylor's six-year relationship with Joe Alwyn ended. Swift controversially moved on with Matty Healy, the lead singer from indie band The 1975. That relationship was short-lived, and only a few months later, Taylor began a very public relationship with Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce.

In April of 2024, Taylor released *The Tortured Poets Department*. *Tortured Poets* was a surprise "double album," clocking in at a lengthy 31 songs and 2+ hours.

At the end of summer 2025, Taylor appeared on Kelce's podcast, *New Heights*, where she announced her new album, *The Life of a Showgirl,* and that she had successfully bought back the masters of her first six albums, bringing that saga to a close.




Just a few weeks later, Travis proposed to Taylor and it broke the internet.

In the fall of 2025, *The Life of a Showgirl* was released. Despite mixed opinions on the album, it had the **largest** first-day and first-week sales of any album in the modern era.

That's the abridged version of the life and career of Taylor Swift. This context will be helpful as we go album by album to discuss the themes and content that have evolved along with Taylor herself.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

**How do you feel about Taylor Swift? How do you hear her talked about?**

# Discography and content warnings

Taylor's intended audience tends to be her peers, so we added her age beside each album below to show her audience at the time of each era. Note that even in the tracks that contain profanity, a "clean" version is almost always available—and many Christian Swifties choose to enjoy Taylor's music by seeking those out.

## *Taylor Swift* – 16 years old

Even after 20 years, tracks from Taylor's debut album like "Teardrops on My Guitar," "Picture to Burn," and "Our Song" all hold special places in many fans' hearts. *Billboard* magazine **says**, "Her 2006 self-titled debut, released a few weeks before her seventeenth birthday, is Swift's foundational document."

The themes on *Taylor Swift* resonated deeply with listeners. It was reflective of where Taylor was in life: sixteen, in the throes of high school and teenage heartbreak. Those were things her audience was thinking and feeling, too.

The unique sweetness of having a crush, the thrill of a first boyfriend, and the particular horror of watching the boy you like go out with someone else wasn't the subject of most music on the radio. But it's exactly what teen girls wanted to hear.

The tastes of teenage girls—along with their emotions and way of speaking—are often dismissed as silly or petty. In reality, teenage girls are a cultural force to be reckoned with. When teenage girls decided they liked Taylor Swift's debut, her career began to blossom.

### Parents should know...

Taylor Swift's debut album is her most tame in terms of content. There's no objectionable language and just the occasional mention of a kiss.

Thematically, the album is equally innocent. Taylor was raised in a family that was at least nominally Christian, and this album came on the heels of the end of her Catholic school education.

*Taylor Swift* has the culturally Christian trappings of country music, like praying for a boy to like her (or praying for him to get what's coming to him), but blue jeans and pickup trucks get mentioned more than God.

## *Fearless* – 18 years old

This album secured Taylor's first mainstream chart-toppers, "Love Story" and "You Belong With Me." It earned her the Grammy for Album of the Year.

At the 2009 MTV Awards, Taylor won Best Female Music Video for "**You Belong With Me**." As she was giving her acceptance speech, Kanye West **charged the stage** and took Taylor's microphone to say that Beyoncé should have won. The consequences of this moment would echo for years.

### Parents should know...

*Fearless* is similar to *Taylor Swift* in terms of content. It features songs about high school awkwardness, falling in love with your best friend, and how much **she loves her mom**. There is no explicit language, and mentions of sexuality are tame. (A girl who wears "short skirts" is mentioned, as well as kissing.)

## *Speak Now* – 20 years old

*Speak Now* marked something of a new era for Taylor. The album featured "Back to December" and "Dear John," songs about two **high-profile celebrity exes**.

Unlike other young female artists like **Miley Cyrus**, Taylor's image was *not* sexy. *Speak Now* was all about yearning for fairy-tale love and the kind of heartbreak that leaves you crying with a pint of ice cream in your room.

On *Speak Now,* she addressed negative press with lightheartedness and even kindness. In "Mean," she expressed compassion and encouragement for someone whose unkindness was born from personal pain.

### Parents should know...

The original release of *Speak Now* was more daring than Taylor's previous albums—but only slightly. The spiciest the album gets is the song **"Mine,"** with the lyric, "And there's a drawer of my things at your place."

The "Taylor's Version" rerecording **adjusts one edgier lyric** in "Better Than Revenge" to be tamer—and less unkind—than the original.

*Speak Now (Taylor's Version)* does include one song that's more mature, content-wise, than the original album. "**I Can See You**" was written at the same time as the original album, but was not released until 2023. It includes lyrics of her daydreaming about hooking up with a guy she liked.

## *Red* – 22 years old

*Red* was defined by crossover hits that expanded Taylor's listening base. Songs including "We Are Never Ever Getting Back Together," "I Knew You Were Trouble," "22," and "Red" dominated the airwaves, the charts, and nearly every major music award.

The music on the album was even more personal, and the general positivity that had permeated her previous albums was replaced by **poppy dance tracks** about movie stars and **breakup anthems** about them, too.

Parents should know...

*Red (Taylor's Version)* is the first re-recorded album, chronologically, to have songs with an explicit rating. The original version has no language, but the re-release includes the song "**I Bet You Think About Me**" and a 10-minute extended version of "**All Too Well**," both of which include profanity.

Some of the *high school crush* tone of her debut album is recaptured in "**Begin Again**." "**Girl At Home**" involves Taylor chastising a man for trying to pick her up while his girlfriend is at home, and "**Ronan**" is a tribute to a little boy who passed away from cancer in 2011.

## *1989* – 24 years old

Her first official pop album *1989* brought a new level of global Taylor Swift saturation.

You'll notice that Taylor loves to hop around genres, but most of her music is about exploring relationships and fame.

Her **breakup** with One Direction member Harry Styles led to songs like "Out Of The Woods" and "All You Had To Do Was Stay," finding the sweet spot between personal revelation and relatability. Even when she was singing about a pop star the average Swiftie could belt the same lyrics about their crush.

"Blank Space" set the standard for what would become a reliable Taylor Swift posture when responding to criticism: playing into the character of a crazy, obsessive, relationship-addicted manipulator... only to then scoff at the stereotype. In **the "Blank Space" music video**, Taylor played an unhinged ex-lover (as a joke) but the suggestion was that she was smarter than anyone would guess.

### Parents should know...

In "**Style**," Taylor gave the world a picture of who she was now, someone with "good girl faith and a tight little skirt." She claimed both the high ground and a darker, sexier version of herself that was still emerging.

*1989 (Taylor's Version)* also contains a Vault song called ""**Slut!**"" (The double quote marks aren't a typo; they are a statement itself.) Taylor is reflecting on the backlash she received for dating a popular man, the comments she got, and how she's willing to go through it to be with him.

In "**Is It Over Now? (From the Vault)**," she sings about sex, suicidal ideation, and people's perception of her body and sexuality.

## *reputation* – 27 years old

Though the album does have some love songs, *reputation* is remembered more for its commentary on fame, public image and revenge.

The album was released following the massively publicized feud between Taylor and Kanye West. Seven years after an incident at the MTV Movie Awards, West had **taken more shots at Taylor** after taking credit for her fame and claiming sexual influence over her in his song "Famous."

Taylor **spoke out** against the song, which resulted in **an edited video getting released** of West reading the lyrics of "Famous" to her over the phone, making it look like she endorsed them. The original video was released later, revealing that Taylor had actually approved of a different lyric. In the follow-up to the video, Kim Kardashian (West's then-wife) **vaguely tweeted** about Taylor, using the snake emoji.

After that incident, she retreated from the public eye, keeping her relationship with actor **Joe Alwyn** mostly private.

In many ways, *reputation* was the fiery explosion of the Taylor Swift that the world first knew. No more forgiveness, no more "shaking things off," no more innocence and no more high school crushes. *reputation* was angry, sultry, and provocative. It wasn't about tweenage love. The old Taylor, the friend of the 15-year-old, was gone.

### Parents should know...

*reputation* is the first album that warrants a strong content warning for parents. Taylor sings about nights spent with her lover, and **confidently declares**, "My drug is my baby / I'll be usin' for the rest of my life." "**Dress**" is one of her most sexually explicit songs to date.

Taylor's embrace of the villain persona also suggests that this vindictive, rule-bucking "bad girl" image is freeing and fun. **She wonders**, "They say I did somethin' bad / But why's it feel so good?" *reputation*-era Taylor Swift makes revenge look empowering, firmly asserts that all her troubles are someone else's fault and that she's earned the right to misbehave.

## *Lover* – 29 years old

Between the release of *reputation* and *Lover*, Taylor had the biggest public battle of her career. She was caught in a public controversy with the label that had produced all of her albums, Big Machine Records.

She lost control of her masters to producer Scooter Braun—which meant losing the full rights to her music. Taylor then ended her contract with Big Machine Records and signed with Universal Music Group. After *Lover* was released, she began the process of re-recording all of her previous albums, beginning with *Fearless (Taylor's Version)*.

*Lover* was *reputation*'s opposite in every way. From the glitter heart drawn around Taylor's eye on the album cover to the **lyrics of "ME!**," *Lover* was pink, happy, and lighthearted. Many of the songs on *Lover*, including "Paper Rings," "Cornelia Street," "London Boy," and, of course, "Lover," were odes to her British beau, Joe Alwyn.

"Lover" and its wild oscillation between glittery party girl and vulnerable poet put Taylor's career into something of a coast. She proved, again, that she can not be put in a box.

## Parents should know...

*Lover* is a grown-up version of *1989*. In the same daydreamy language, she mentions a crush who makes her feel "like I'm 17" but also refers to wanting to "know that body like it's mine." Throughout the album, she brings up themes of marriage and weddings, though she and Alwyn never married.

Taylor made **political statements** on this record. In "**You Need To Calm Down**," she said, "Why are you mad when you could be GLAAD?" (a reference to the **Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation**), and "Shade never made anybody less gay... like can you just not step on his gown? / You need to calm down."

In "**The Man**," she argues that if she'd been a man, she would be more successful and receive less criticism. The line "When everyone believes ya, what's that like?" came from Taylor's **personal experience** with sexual harassment.

# *folklore/evermore* – 30 years old

The *Lover* era was truncated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Which meant no tour, award shows, parties, remixes, or covers. Then, in July of 2020, *folklore* was released, followed by the surprise drop of its sister album *evermore,* in December. Of all her albums, *folklore* and *evermore* were the most stylistically exploratory; both albums stepped away from pop and dove into indie-folk.

One thing Taylor had never been was indie. The quiet and privacy afforded by the pandemic gave her space to explore a creative side that previous albums hadn't. The albums were also a departure, content-wise. While a few of the songs were still about Taylor's life, she **experimented with storytelling** in a way that she hadn't before. The "**folklore triangle**" explored the relationship between three imaginary teenagers in various songs, "james" in "**betty**," "betty" in "**cardigan**," and "august" in "**august**."

## Parents should know...

Both *folklore* and *evermore* earned explicit ratings, using a swath of explicit language. The more sexual overtones of *reputation* and even *Lover* are less frequent here. Some songs do have the loosely suggestive language Taylor employs elsewhere, such as "**august**" and "**happiness**."

Taylor also embraced the "**witchy**" aesthetic often associated with the broader "**cottagecore**" aesthetic that *folklore* and *evermore* appealed to. Both albums explore the theme of infidelity from the perspective of those participating in it, with tracks like "**illicit affairs**," "**august**" and "**betty**" on *Folklore* and "**ivy**," on *Evermore*. She doesn't make a moral judgment on cheating on these tracks, but merely sees it as writing fodder—a popular theme in her work.

## *Midnights* – 32 years old

*Midnights* was less a singular album as it was a "best of" retrospective. **She described** the album as "the stories of 13 sleepless nights scattered throughout my life."

If *folklore* and *evermore* were departures, *Midnights* was a return to glitter, pop and self-revelation.

The release of *Midnights* coincided with the announcement of Taylor's first tour since the cancellation of the *Lover* tour: **The Eras Tour.** *Eras*, which wrapped the globe multiple times, would go on to be the **highest-grossing** tour of all time. The setlist was a staggering three hours long—a recollection of Taylor's career, album by album, era by era.

Near the beginning of the tour, Taylor's relationship with Joe Alwyn **ended**, which casts songs on *Midnights* into a new light. Taylor spoke to the way she felt refreshingly unfamous in their relationship in "**Lavender Haze**," "**Mastermind**," and "**Sweet Nothing**." But as *Eras* rolled on, it seemed that the image couldn't be kept up.

Because at this point, Taylor Swift wasn't just a famous person; she was *the* famous person.

### Parents should know...

*Midnights* was Taylor's most mature album when it was released, with six out of 13 songs receiving the explicit rating (the *Midnights: 3am Edition*, a surprise release hours after the original album drop, added seven more songs, none of which were explicit).

The theme of infidelity returned in "**High Infidelity**." There's also a song called "**Karma**," in which Taylor seems to celebrate the way she predicted her comeback. It also brings up some potentially problematic worldviews. She says that because she did the right thing, karma favors her (like "a cat purring in my lap 'cuz it loves me"). She also declares that "karma is a god."

## *The Tortured Poets Department* – 34 years old

If *TTPD* could be described as anything, it is *unhinged*. **In the opening track**, Taylor expressed a desire to kill her ex's wife. She conjured images of **mental asylums**, **avenging spirits**, and **alien abductions**. Despite her relationship with Joe Alwyn lasting six years, most of the songs seemed to be either about her **brief and ill-received fling** with The 1975 frontman **Matty Healy**, or her **all-American love affair** with Kansas City Chiefs tight end **Travis Kelce**.

The album, initially released as **16 songs**, had a surprise second half which brought the total tracklist to 31—over two hours. It had **more explicit language** and themes than any before it.

No one was innocent, not her exes ("**My Boy Only Breaks His Favorite Toys**"), her critics ("**But Daddy I Love Him**"), her haters ("**Who's Afraid Of Little Old Me?**"), Kim Kardashian ("**thanK you aIMee**"), her fans ("**I Can Do It With A Broken Heart**"), or even Taylor herself ("**My Boy Only Breaks His Favorite Toys.**"). Throughout *TTPD,* **Taylor confidently asserted** that she knew she was making bad decisions, but she was making them on purpose—and that she didn't care what anyone said about it.

Fans were split on their opinions. Some found its chaos **raw and artistic**; others found it **overwhelming and unnecessarily convoluted**. But in a way, the reviews didn't matter: by this point, she had become too big to fail.

## Parents should know...

A good number of the songs are explicit, and those that are go full send; "**Down Bad,**" for example, uses f*** and its variations 18 times. Amidst the vulgar language is a leap into sexuality ("**So High School**" and "**Guilty as Sin?**").

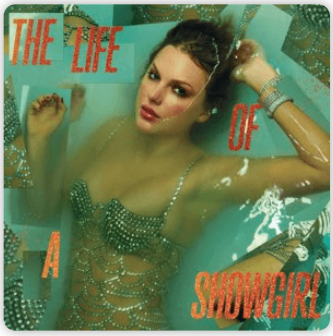
References to drinking ("**Fortnight**"), drug use ("**The Smallest Man Who Ever Lived**"), and violence find their way into the record ("**imgonnagetyouback**" and "**Fortnight**").

After Taylor's relationship with Joe Alwyn ended, she began dating **Matty Healy**. Healy's music runs the gamut of **peppy songs about cocaine** to suggesting that **God made him an atheist**. His lyrics are alleged to be **racist**, **predatory**, and borderline **antisemitic**.

The most concerning aspect of *TTPD* is arguably the way that Taylor uses the themes of religion and love. Religious imagery in pop music—and love songs specifically—is far from new for Taylor. Songs like "**Holy Ground**" from *Red* and "**Would've, Could've, Should've**" from *Midnights* carry a religious theme. But here, she isn't as subtle, and assumes a christological stance specifically in the songs "**The Smallest Man Who Ever Lived**" and "**Guilty As Sin?**" In the former, she bemoans that she "would've died for your sins, instead [she] just died inside," and in the latter she pushes the imagery further, arguing that she could "roll the stone away" and saying, "They're gonna crucify me anyway / What if the way you hold me is actually what's holy?"

While pop artists commonly use religious language, there is something deeply unsettling about someone as influential as Taylor Swift co-opting the sacrifice of Christ to talk about her fling.

# *The Life of a Showgirl* – 35 years old




"I have something to show you," Taylor said, sitting beside her boyfriend (and soon-to-be fiancé) on his podcast, *New Heights*. She began pulling something out of a briefcase, and his brother and co-host, Jason, narrated, "What's in the briefcase?" and then his eyes popped open, "This is my brand new album," she said, pulling out the blue and orange record. The cheering from both brothers was thunderous.

After two years touring, Taylor Swift had become something of a showgirl—strutting on stages, performing three-hour shows, and traveling the globe. She fully leaned into the showgirl aesthetic for the album, with feathery hats, sparkly dresses, and (in one video) **Marilyn Monroe-style curls**.

Taylor **said** some lines in "The Life of a Showgirl" were a "manifesto of how I've had to operate within the industry." Then, a few weeks after her announcement, Travis proposed to Taylor, and **the post** got over 1 million reposts on Instagram, more reposts than any other photo has ever received on the platform, according to **Billboard**, and it happened in under six hours.

## Parents should know...

*The Life of a Showgirl* is refreshingly short, with just 12 tracks that you can listen to in less than 45 minutes. This album, similar to *The Tortured Poets Department*, is not for kids. Only four of the songs on the record are *not* marked explicit.

As Taylor gets older, she has gotten more comfortable with more vulgar lyrics. She used to write tracks like "Fifteen" for, well, fifteen-year-olds. Now, with *The Life of a Showgirl,* despite still having an audience of young women and girls, she put out her most sexually explicit record yet.

The most explicit track in her discography, "**Wood**," compares her fiancé's phallus to a redwood tree, claiming that, "His love was the key that opened my thighs." A few tracks earlier, she explored her relationship with her haters and even alludes to being sexually aroused by them ("**Actually Romantic**").

Not all of the songs are inappropriate, though. "**Ruin The Friendship**" beckons to Taylor's early days in both melody and theme. Driving around rural Tennessee, she expresses remorse for not sharing her feelings with a guy she liked (as the title suggests, out of fear of ruining the friendship). This felt like a return to the sweetness and innocence of her earlier albums.

"Honey" pulls us back to the lovely dovey feelings of *Lover,* "Elizabeth Taylor" returns to the angst of *reputation,* and "Opalite" has the poppy-dance track vibes reminiscent of *Red* and *1989*. As a whole, *Life of a Showgirl* is far more explicit than any previous releases.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

**What do you make of the arc of Taylor Swift's music over the years?**

**What songs/albums were you familiar with, and what was new?**

**How has your opinion of her life/music changed after reading this?**

## CONVERSATION STARTERS

**What do you think about Taylor Swift's career and influence on the culture?**

**Do you think you've been influenced by Taylor Swift? If so, how?**

**Do you think some Taylor Swift songs aren't appropriate for some of her listeners?**

**What does it mean for an artist to "grow up," and how might that affect their fans?**

**What are some things you like about Taylor Swift? What are some things you don't like?**

# FAQ

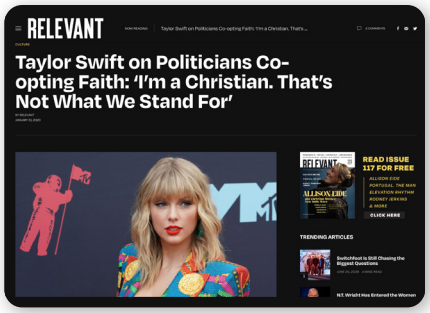
## Does Taylor Swift practice witchcraft?

There is no credible evidence that Taylor Swift practices witchcraft. But she isn't afraid to use witch-themed imagery and aesthetics in her music and performances.

In her song, "Willow," Taylor and her dancers are dressed as a coven of witches in a forest wearing black robes and carrying golden orbs. The different remixes like "**dancing witch**" and "**moonlit witch**" are alarming enough to give some listeners pause.

So, it might look like she is promoting witchcraft, but her usage of it is similar to how she uses religious language in her music. Whether it feels problematic or insensitive, Taylor might argue that it is simply fodder for her art.

## Is Taylor Swift a Christian?




**Taylor professes** to be a Christian in the documentary, *Miss Americana*, but, as this guide points out, that doesn't mean her music is. Her public positions and lyrics show us that she might believe in God, but that she is unconcerned with Christian tradition, and that she doesn't seem to pattern her choices on the life of Jesus.

## Should parents be worried about Taylor Swift?

In terms of what is appropriate, Taylor's music can be rated and ranked by album: *Fearless* has no bad language in it; *folklore* does. *Taylor Swift* stays away from sexuality; *The Life of a Showgirl* leans into it.

Maybe a more useful question, then, is this: Is Taylor Swift a good role model?

And here's the short answer: No. Absolutely not.

Looking up to Taylor Swift could create unique difficulties. In her lyrics, she often blames others for her own behavior. Her worldview is secular, if not in articulation, then in practice. She seems fixated on karma and revenge. She swears and dances provocatively—and she is just as broken as every other human on this planet.

When we get down to it, no human being is a perfect role model. The purpose of a role model is to set a pattern for a life that, when followed, promotes flourishing. There are, of course, healthier role models we could choose, but the only truly good role model who has ever lived, the only person who has ever offered real truth, a life that can be elevated with no sin, a man truly worthy of worship, is Jesus Christ. He is the only human we can safely look at to model our life after, because He is the only one who lived a perfect life.

Following celebrities like Taylor Swift can feel fun, exciting, and sometimes relatable—but more than anything else, it is following Jesus, being influenced by Him, and being shaped by Him, that helps us become who we were ultimately meant to be.

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