

# Music Video: Conversation Starter

## Hozier: Take Me to Church (2013)

WARNING: Video contains explicit images <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PVjiKRfKpPI>

### What's the song about?

Irish singer Hozier (Andrew Hozier Byrne) wrote a song after a breakup in which religious words are used to describe a love relationship. In doing so, he claims he will ‘worship’ at the ‘shrine’ of his lover and the only ‘heaven’ is when he is alone with her. He also quotes from a 16<sup>th</sup> century dramatist ‘I was born sick; commanded to be sound’, but claims the sickness as a way of repudiating repressive religion. The ‘church’ then, is human relationships, love and sex, the place of ‘gentle sins’.



*Photo by Marius Muscalu*

### What's the video about?

Written at the time of news items about gay repression in Russia, the video, shot in greyscale, shows two men in a homosexual relationship. When their relationship is discovered, a group of other young men come after them, firebomb their home, drag one of them away, burn a box wrapped in chains and brutalise the man while the other watches in horror.

## **Some questions:**

- The song uses the following words in the lyrics – what do you think they mean in the context of the song?

Church, worship, heavens, Amen, shrine, sins, God, Goddess, pagan, sacrifice, faithful, ritual, innocence, human, clean.

- The song contrasts earthly and heavenly things; dirt and cleanliness, poison and purity. Hozier said that, ‘An act of sex is one of the most human things. But an organization like the church, say, through its doctrine, would undermine humanity by successfully teaching shame about sexual orientation - that it is sinful, or that it offends God. The song is about asserting yourself and reclaiming your humanity through an act of love’. How do you feel about the points the singer is making?
- Do you think Hozier captures the essence of love relationships through using ‘spiritual’ language?