



Wesleyan Roots

What Makes United Methodism Distinct

FACILITATOR GUIDE



Unit 3: The Way of Christ

Session 11: Teaching and Learning in the United Methodist Spirit

Gathering, Introductions and Prayer

(5 Minutes)

- Check to be sure everyone in the group brought a copy of the Session 11 Participants' Guide with them. Provide a copy for any participants who did not bring their own.
- Words for the closing liturgy of this session are printed in the Participants' Guide for Session 11. These words are usually set to the tune of "Ode to Joy" or "Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee" and may be sung rather or read.
- Lead the group in an opening prayer of your own, or you can use this prayer adapted from the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME).¹

Good and Gracious God, You have called us to the teaching ministry of the church. We pray for all ministries of Christian education, and for churches and denominations around the world. We pray for those who study, and we lift before you those who give of their time, talent, and treasure to help themselves and others grow in discipleship. Lord God, we recommit ourselves to this common ministry. We thank you for vacation Bible schools, Bible studies, Sunday school classes, small groups, and other means that afford your people opportunity to pause and learn more of you. Lord, we confess that we have not always focused ourselves on your word and your way as you have called us to. Refocus us when we become unfocused, cause us to pause and consider the calling that you have placed on us, and remind us that you have equipped us for the work you have assigned to us. Empower and inspire us by your Holy Spirit. With our hearts, souls, and minds, we seek to serve you. We pray this prayer in the name of the master teacher, Jesus Christ, Amen.

Session 11 Introduction and Video

(15 minutes)

In these words, or in your own words, say:

- "In these words, or in your own words, say: "Today's presenter on our video is Rev. Deniece Mason. She will talk about the importance of what we teach in our congregations."

- Show the video
- Ask, "What did this video bring to mind for you?" Be prepared to share something yourself if needed to get the group started.
- Give a few moments for the group to respond.

Scriptures of the Day: 1 Timothy 2:8-15

(15 Minutes)

- Say, "Our first scripture for Session 11 is 1 Timothy 2:8-15. Listen for God's word to you."
- Read the passage.

I desire, then, that in every place the men should pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or argument; 9also that the women should dress themselves modestly and decently in suitable clothing, not with their hair braided, or with gold, pearls, or expensive clothes, but with good works, as is proper for women who profess reverence for God. Let a woman learn in silence with full submission. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; and Adam was not deceived, but the woman was deceived and became a transgressor. Yet she will be saved through childbearing, provided they continue in faith and love and holiness, with modesty.

- Say: "In this passage from 1 Timothy, Rev. Mason pointed out that the text puts strict limitations on what a woman can say, particularly to men (or to their 'husbands,' depending upon the translation). There are other instructions here as well. Perhaps the most difficult part of this passage is where the author states that women will be saved through bearing children. Clearly, this portion of scripture is a point of pain to many women and couples who long for children."
- In Session 5, the author states that the "Bible is our primary source of revelation insofar as it is read as a whole, in context, by a thinking adult. She also warns against the temptation of "proof texting" – that is, the tendency to pull a single verse or two from scripture to prove a point one is trying to make, regardless of the context of those verses.

¹ <https://ameced.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/2017-Prayer-for-Christian-Education.pdf>

Wesleyan Roots Session 11: Teaching and Learning in the United Methodist Spirit

- Which of the following portions of the text (if any) do you think, are contextual to the author's place and time in history? Which portions (if any) apply to us directly today in our place and time?
 - Men should lift their hands when they pray
 - Men should not be angry or argumentative when they pray
 - Women should dress modestly and decently in suitable clothing
 - Women should not braid their hair
 - Women should not wear gold or pearls
 - Women should learn in silence in full submission
 - Women are not to teach or have authority over men
 - Women are to keep silent
 - Women experience salvation through having children
- Ask: "Are you aware of Christian traditions or denominations that teach a part of the rules in the list from 1 Timothy, but not all of them? If so, which rules do they tend to emphasize? Which rules do they tend to dismiss? Why do you think some are emphasized and some are dismissed?"
- Say "In other Pauline writings, Paul lifts up the names of women as well as men who have served alongside him. At least one of these women is referred to as a "deacon" or "minister" (Romans 16: 1 - 16), and presumably these women would speak in carrying out their ministry with others. In Galatians 3: 27-28, Paul states, 'As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.'"
- Ask: "When pieces of scripture from the same author, or reflecting the same author's understanding, contradict each other, how can Christians understand their meaning? How might the "Wesleyan Quadrilateral" explained in Session 5 be helpful in this instance?"
- Say: "In all four Gospel accounts, the resurrection of Jesus Christ was discovered by women at the tomb. Either an angel meeting them (in Matthew, Mark, and Luke), or the resurrected Jesus himself (in John), instructed the women to 'go and tell' others about the resurrection."
- Ask: "Why might God have entrusted women to share the 'gospel' or good news of the resurrected Jesus? How do these passages align, or fail to align, with the passage in 1 Timothy?"

Questions for Prayerful and Thoughtful Discussion (15 Minutes)

- How might you handle a sharp difference of opinion on a point of Christian faith? Are you comfortable having conversations with others with whom you disagree? Do you think discussing differences in our perspectives of faith is a good thing or not? Why?
- In what ways do you think God might be calling your local congregation to return to its Wesleyan roots? What is a first step you can take to help bring this about?
- Does your congregation make use of United Methodist Sunday School curriculum, youth materials, Bible studies, and the like? Why or why not?
- Do you think it is worth the effort to locate Wesleyan-oriented materials for your local congregation? Why or why not?

United Methodist Identity Points and Closing Liturgy (5 Minutes)

- In these or similar words say, "Session 12 is about how we can live our lives and lead our congregations with hope rather than despair. I encourage you to read the session guide prior to us getting together next week. Let us review the United Methodist Identity Points from Session 11 in the box at the bottom of your session guide. This session has five identity points. Let's read these out loud together.
- Say, "Please turn your session 11 participants' guide to the last page, and let us read/sing together the words of the hymn, "God of Wisdom, Truth, and Beauty" written by Presbyterian hymn writer Jane Parker Huber (These words are usually set to the tune of "Ode to Joy" or "Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee" and may be sung or read).

Marsha Engle Middleton

United Methodist Identity Points:

- Different Christian traditions emphasize different points of view on a variety of Christian beliefs and practices. Generally, United Methodist Churches bless their communities with rich Wesleyan roots by focusing their Christian education efforts on Wesleyan material.
- Seekers, newer Christians, children, and youth may not realize there are varying perspectives when it comes to Christian education.
- Christians are called to read the Bible for themselves and to learn as much as they can about the Christian faith. It is good for Christians, especially mature Christians, to learn about other faith traditions and varying points of view.
- Even though we may differ from other faith traditions, United Methodists treat others with respect and honor the rights of others to believe differently than we do.
- We help pass on the legacy of our Wesleyan Roots when our congregations use curriculum and other materials that come from a Wesleyan perspective.

Closing Liturgy

"God of Wisdom, Truth, and Beauty," Hymn lyrics by Jane Parker Huber ²

God of wisdom, truth, and beauty, God of spirit, fire, and soul;
God of order, love, and duty, God of purpose, plan, and goal
Grant us visions ever growing, Breath of life, eternal strength;
Mystic spirit, moving, flowing, Filling height and depth and length.
God of drama, music, dancing, God of story, sculpture, art;
God of wit, all life enhancing, God of every yearning heart;
Challenge us with quests of spirit, Truth revealed in myriad ways'
Word or song for hearts that hear it, Sketch and model forms of praise.
God of atom's smallest feature, God of galaxies in space;
God of every living creature, God of all the human race;
May our knowledge be extended for the whole creation's good.
Hunger banished, warfare ended, All the earth a neighborhood.
God of science, history, teaching, God of futures yet unknown;
God of holding, God of reaching, God of power beyond each throne;
Take the fragments of our living, fit us to your finest scheme.
Now forgiven and forgiving, Make us free to dare and dream.

2 Huber, Jane Parker. A Singing Faith. Nashville: Westminster John Knox Press, Illustrated Edition 1987).