



Wesleyan Roots

What Makes United Methodism Distinct

FACILITATOR GUIDE



Unit 2: Understanding the Nature and Action of God Session 7: Diverse by Design

Gathering, Introductions and Prayer (5 Minutes)

- Check to be sure everyone in the group brought a copy of the Session 7 Participants' Guide with them. Provide a copy for any participants who did not bring their own.
- Also provide a copy of *The United Methodist Hymnal* for each participant to use during the closing liturgy.
- Lead the group in an opening prayer of your own, or you can use this prayer published by Prayerist.com¹

Almighty God, through your Holy Spirit you created unity in the midst of diversity;

We acknowledge that human diversity is an expression of your manifold love for your creation; We confess that in our brokenness as human beings we turn diversity into a source of alienation, injustice, oppression, and wounding. Empower us to recognize and celebrate differences as your great gift to the human family. Enable us to be the architects of understanding, of respect and love;

Through the Lord, the ground of all unity, we pray. Amen

Session 7 Introduction and Video (15 minutes)

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

- "Today's presenters on our video are Revs. Danielle Kim and Abbey Echols. They will talk about how the church is diverse by intent, not default.
- 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: Genesis 1:26-28, Galatians 3:27-29 (15 Minutes)

- Say, "Our first scripture for Session 7 is Genesis 1:26-28. Listen for God's word to you."
- Read the passage below.

Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the

cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. 28 God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth."

- In these, or your own words, say: "In the poetic version of the creation account, we read about God creating humanity in God's own image. From this passage, we can perceive that humans were intentionally created, that we were made in the image and likeness of God, and that we are to have dominion over other living creatures."
- Ask: "What do you think it means to be made in the image of God? How might this impact the way you treat yourself? How might it change the way you treat others?"
- Do you think this passage of scripture helps us understand why racism is sinful? Why or why not?
- Do you think having dominion over living things and "subduing" the earth gives us any ecological responsibilities? Why or why not?
- Say: "Now let's look at our second scripture, Galatians 3:27-29. Hear God's word to us today."

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. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

- Say "Paul is writing to Christians who are arguing that it is necessary for male Gentiles to be circumcised to become Christian. He is arguing that with the coming of Christ the necessity of things like circumcision went away. Circumcision had been a mark of identity for Jewish men and a significant part of the Jewish culture

¹ <https://prayerist.com/prayer/diversity/>

Wesleyan Roots Session 7: More Than a Memory—Meeting God at the Table

for many generations. Note that with the coming of Christ, baptism is the identifying mark of the Christian.”

- Ask: “In Paul’s time, how would a statement about a person’s national origin or ethnic identity, a person’s status as a freed or indentured individual, and a person’s gender be heard by the church at Galatia? What changes might they need to make to live into Paul’s words? How difficult do you think this would have been for them?”
- Ask: “How do you think the church might be different if we listened to the spirit of Paul’s words? What might we be required to change? How difficult would it be?”

Questions for Prayerful and Thoughtful Discussion (15 Minutes)

- What are some ways that you see United Methodists working towards diversity? Do you think this is important? Why or why not?
- What are some ways in which we are not doing well enough in our inclusion and acceptance of others?
- Given our belief that all people are created in the image of God, how does that make you consider the sin of racism? How is acting to minimize racism connected to your Christian faith?

United Methodist Identity Points and Closing Liturgy (5 Minutes)

- In these or similar words say, “Session 8 is about how we meet Jesus Christ in the Lord’s Supper, and how Wesleyan Christians understand that we encounter Christ’s real presence during that time. 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 7 in the box at the bottom of your session guide. This session has three identity points. Let’s read these out loud together.”
- Say, “Please turn in your hymnals to number 148 and let us read together the words of this beautiful Native American hymn about creation for our closing.”

Marsha Engle Middleton

United Methodist Identity Points:

- All people are of sacred worth, including people of all ages, genders, national origins, native languages, educational status, socioeconomic conditions, sexual orientations, abilities and disabilities, and political ideologies.
- United Methodists strive to be diverse by intent, not by default. We are called to look for ways to be more inclusive of others and to live this intentional diversity out in our everyday lives, as well as in our lives related to the church.
- United Methodists are diverse in almost every way imaginable, including in how we understand non-essentials of Christianity.