

CONFIRM FOR OLDER YOUTH

Editor's Note – For older youth, we recommend using our six-week lesson outline with the following additions and eliminations from the lessons as written in the Confirm Teaching Plans.

LESSON 3 – LOVING TOGETHER

Cut video from the EXPLORE section.

LESSON 8 – WESLEY AND THE METHODISTS

Replace the EXPLORE section with this activity.

1. Divide the class into two equal groups.
2. Ask each group to choose a volunteer to be their narrator.
3. Assign the first group the attached script titled, “John Wesley’s Life” and assign the second group the passage on United Methodist history from p.66-67 of the Teaching Plans.
4. Give each group five minutes to work through their script so that they can act out the story as it is being read aloud.
5. Invite each group to come to the front of the room and act out their part of the story as their narrator reads it aloud. The groups should present their stories in order.
6. After each story, ask the following questions
 - a. What do you think was the most important part of this story? Why?
 - b. What questions does this story leave you asking?

LESSON 16 – A LOVING CHURCH

Cut video from EXPLORE section.

LESSON 19 – EXPERIENCING GOD

Replace the EXPLORE section with this activity.

1. Ask a volunteer, or several volunteers, to read from the attached script titled, “The Wesleyan Quadrilateral.”

2. On a whiteboard or a piece of flip-chart paper draw a box with four quadrants. Label the quadrants: scripture, tradition, reason, and experience.
3. Give each student 8-10 sticky notes and invite them to write one or two responses to each of the following questions.
 - a. How does Scripture connect us with God?
 - b. What are your favorite traditions at church?
 - c. What have you learned through reason that has helped you understand God?
 - d. What experiences have shaped your beliefs about God?
4. Go over each section of the quadrilateral and discuss the answers your students have provided.
5. Invite students to pick two of their favorite answers that someone else posted and place these in their student journals to reflect on.

LESSON 27 – HITTING THE MARK: SIN AND GRACE

Cut the video from the CONNECT section.

Replace the EXPLORE section with this activity.

1. Divide the class into groups of three.
2. Assign half of the groups to read and discuss Genesis 2:15-3:13 and the other half to discuss Romans 7:7-25.
3. Ask each group of three to respond to perform the following tasks:
 - a. Read through the passage once together.
 - b. Read through the passage a second time silently.
 - c. Define “sin” as you see it in this passage in one sentence.
 - d. Define “grace” as you see it in this passage in one sentence.
4. Ask all of the groups that read the same passage to meet with each other and compare their responses. Invite them to discuss any disagreements or differences in their definitions.
5. Invite the entire class to come back together. Ask a representative of each passage to present their definitions.
6. Ask the class to discuss why these definitions might differ. Discuss how the Bible includes a number of different portrayals of sin. Sometimes sin is an individual action and sometimes sin is a systemic problem. Sometimes sin is even described as a beast. Throughout the Bible we see sin defined in a number of ways.

LESSON 37 – A SPIRIT TO FIND

Replace the CONNECT section with this activity.

1. Give each student an index card. On one card, have them write the word, "Talent" and on the other card write the word, "Gift"
2. Divide the class into pairs.
3. Give each pair five minutes to talk together. During their conversation, each student needs to write down three talents their partner has on the "Talent" card and three gifts the partner has on the "Gift" card.
4. If students ask for a definition of talent or gift, tell them that the definition is up to them. The confusion is part of the activity.
5. At the end, ask each student to give their index cards to their partners.
6. Ask the following questions:
 - a. How did you define what a talent was?
 - b. How was a gift different than a talent?
 - c. How did you find out what your partner was talented or gifted at?
 - d. When you hear the phrase "spiritual gifts," what does it bring to mind?

JOHN WESLEY'S LIFE

John Wesley was born to an Anglican priest and a mother who raised him with a deep respect for religion and Christian morals. From his earliest breath, John seemed destined for a life dedicated to the church.

When he left home he enrolled at Oxford, where he and his brother Charles studied to become priests. During their time in school, they founded a small group whose members vowed to live holy lives, free from sin. They focused on practical steps they could take to follow the Bible's teachings, and they committed to things like taking Communion once a week, praying daily, fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays, and regularly visiting prisoners and the sick. Other students mockingly labeled them the "Holy Club," a name that John and the others chose to embrace. It was in this Holy Club that John Wesley laid the first foundations for what would become Methodism.

Despite his good works, his studies, and his dedication to living a holy life, John struggled with feeling close to God. He believed on an intellectual level, but he felt that he had never experienced God in a more personal way.

Nevertheless, John continued to pursue a holy life. He would spend part of each morning reading the Bible and meditating on its meaning. One morning, he read from Mark 12, where Jesus says, "You aren't far from God's kingdom." These words troubled him. He didn't feel close to God's kingdom at all.

That same night, he was at a meeting on Aldersgate Street in London, when someone there began to read aloud from an essay by Martin Luther. The words Luther wrote connected with John on a deep level. That night, he wrote in his journal that he had felt his heart "strangely warmed" and that, for the first time, felt he trusted in Christ. He felt confident about his faith and believed that his sins had been forgiven. This moment, known as the Aldersgate Experience, was a turning point in John Wesley's life and renewed his passion to preach the Gospel.

Soon after, one of John's friends and a member of the Holy Club, George Whitefield, asked him to preach. Whitefield was an open-air preacher who took his sermons outside the walls of the church to preach to everyday people in the fields or by the rivers or at the mines, wherever he could find them. John was initially nervous about the invitation because of the non-traditional nature of open-air preaching. But eventually he grew to embrace it and began to travel far and wide, preaching in the open to anyone who would listen.

A lot of people came out to listen to John's sermons, and many began to follow him. They would seek his advice and ask him to weigh in on religious matters, yet he never intended to start a new denomination. John remained a priest in the Anglican church until his death.

Nevertheless, his movement thrived; and he began to pass on the practices that he and his friends had undertaken in the Holy Club at Oxford. The movement grew and grew; and soon critics began to mockingly call them "Methodists," a slur against the methodical nature of their piety but a name which the members gladly embraced.

Over time, the Methodist movement continued to expand, not only in England but across the Atlantic as well. Lay preachers carried the traditions of John Wesley and the Methodists into America, and here it took hold and flourished.

THE WESLEYAN QUADRILATERAL

In the United Methodist Church, we have a tool that helps us make sense of what we believe. It's called the Quadrilateral. At its most basic level, the Quadrilateral is a method we can use to think about theology—to take in all the information we have, make sense of it, and decide what we believe about who God is.

The Quadrilateral is based on John Wesley's principles for making sense of our faith. But John Wesley never called it by this name. Instead, he just did it. The term "Wesleyan Quadrilateral" didn't actually pop up until the 1960s, when a Methodist theologian summarized Wesley's approach to theology.

The Quadrilateral is comprised of the four sources through which we gain knowledge about God: Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience.

Scripture is the most important part of the Quadrilateral. It is the standard against which the other sources are judged.

Tradition represents the collected wisdom of the church over the centuries. It keeps our theology connected to ideas that have deep roots.

With *reason*, we can test the truth of our beliefs against the way we know the world to be. This allows us to make sure our faith is both practical and coherent.

Finally, our *experience* of God breathes life into all our clever theories. It makes room for our personal stories and helps to make our theology vibrant and alive.

This can seem really complicated, but it's actually pretty simple. If you consider it, the Quadrilateral is really similar to the way you already think about the world. For instance, all of you know not to touch a hot stove. How do you know that? Well, one, your parents taught you not to. That's kind of like Scripture. Two, no one else goes around touching hot stoves. That's a pretty common tradition. Three, you know that a hot stove is hot and that hot things can burn you. That's reason. And four, maybe you touched a hot stove once; or maybe you saw someone else do it, and you saw that he or she got hurt. That's experience.

Perhaps you'd need only one of those factors to know that touching a hot stove is not the best idea; but when you have all four, it's pretty easy to come to the right conclusion. Don't touch the stove!

The Quadrilateral takes this process and applies it to our quest to understand God, which is a lot harder than understanding a stove. Because God is really big and complicated and hard to understand sometimes. And even this process doesn't get us all the way there, but it helps. We can still come to different conclusions, but it gives us a way to discuss our differences as we constantly seek to embrace God.