

LEAD
LEAD
LEAD



RESURRECTION
STUDENTS





[Mentor Curriculum Guide]

[DEAR MENTOR,]

Thank you for being a part of a Lead Discipleship Group for High School students! The purpose of Discipleship Groups is to engage students in an intentional faith community and encourage them in their spiritual journey. You play an instrumental role in this process. By your investment of time and compassion for students, you help provide a safe and welcoming space to dig deeper into faith. So, thank you!

The Lead curriculum is designed as a two-year track. It is designed to help students explore, and practice leadership skills through a Biblical lens. We will talk about how to show up as leaders in our schools, faith communities, and families throughout this track. The sessions are rooted in scripture and designed to be centered around discussion, dialogue, and challenging students to live as faith leaders in their circles. The discussion questions are a guide for discussion. You have the freedom as the mentor to dig deeper or omit certain elements you see fit for your group. The purpose of small groups is to create a safe and welcoming community where students can build community and deepen their faith. Always be mindful of students' needs that week and how you (the mentor) can best encourage the group of students in their faith.

Thank you for mentoring students as they journey toward becoming deeply committed Christians!



[The Purpose of Resurrection]

The Lead curriculum is fashioned around the church's purpose. Everything the church does points to some element of this statement.

Our Purpose is to build a Christian community where non-religious and nominally religious people are becoming deeply committed Christians.

The curriculum is meant to take student from Confirmation, where they choose a faith in Jesus to enacting their faith in leadership, moving to becoming "deeply committed Christians." It is also a safe place for non and nominal Christians to learn leadership through the lens of Christian values and practices.

[Student Ministry Statement]

Students developed a statement that describes how they intend to live into the Resurrection purpose. It says this:

Resurrection Students will create a safe, authentic and inclusive community where everyone belongs and has the opportunity to choose to grow and live out their faith.

Our goal as students, mentors and parents is to continue to work towards creating a place where "students belong so they can choose to grow and live out their faith." It isn't always easy and formulaic. But we believe if we keep the Resurrection purpose and the Student Ministry statement in mind when we are interacting with students, planning programs and lessons, then we will move closer to these ideals.

[Desired Outcomes]

When a student graduates from student ministry and moves out into the world, we want them to understand the complexities of their faith as differentiated from others. We want them to express their faith in meaningful and empathic ways, providing tangible leadership to others. And we want them to be in non-judgmental caring relationships with their peers and mentors. We break this down into specific objectives by age groupings. The Lead discipleship group, focused mostly on 9th and 10th grade students, will have the following objectives.



[Specific Outcomes]

We see students potentially living out their faith halfway through their high school experience in the following ways:

In their Expression

- Live out Spiritual gifts through specific leadership roles inside and outside the church identifying themselves as emerging leaders.
- Learn leadership principles and develop leadership skills through service within the church and sharing creative ideas on how the church can be the church.
- Navigate choices, priorities, values and relationships through a rich theology with the ability to articulate their favorite spiritual practices expressing what it means to act like and follow Jesus.
- Service to other diverse communities in urban and rural settings.

In their Faith

- Begin to be a disciple that creates disciples, seeing their own growth in this experience.
- Use tools to read the Bible in context and know where to look when they have questions.
- Develop Biblical literacy to the point where they can articulate their faith story in relationship with the Biblical story.
- Ask hard questions.
- Connect faith and world through introduction to real conversations on harsh realities of racial justice, privilege, and other difficult topics with peers.
- Choose to attend worship on a regular basis with their family and siblings at their initiation.
- Articulation of Methodism and connection to the world.

In their Relationships

- An experience of authentic small group community with deeper relationships with a mentor/adult leader that knows them, listens to them and pours into them.
- Begin to develop identity in relationship to faith in Jesus.
- Invite others to church and be able to say why church is important to them (more than just fun) through healthy evangelism strategies.
- Actively involved in creating a safe, affirming and inclusive environment for LGBTQ people so that they and others feel a part of the community.
- Involved in intergenerational experiences in the church and community.
- Engage in mental health, stress, and anxiety conversations with care and support.
- Mentor and serve younger students



[How Does Curriculum Do These Things?]

It doesn't. Caring mentors do. The subject isn't math or history or reading or writing. The subject is the student. The curriculum will open doors that will reveal who students are and will allow them to explore who they are becoming. This doesn't mean we don't pay attention to God or Jesus's life, sacrifice and resurrection. In fact, we allow the student to view themselves through all of these lenses.

Lead is a two-year-long Discipleship Curriculum designed for students entering 9th and 10th grade, but also applicable to all high school students. Students will be challenged to read scripture through the lens of Biblical Leadership, as well as apply their knowledge in tangible ways to practice the leadership skills they are learning.

[LEAD Discipleship Course]

Weekly Session Overview

Each session will have a similar flow and rhythm. There will be more content than you will need for your group time, and you might not cover it all. That is okay! Figure out what works best for your group and adapt. We recommend reviewing the scripture and main points of the session, a few of the discussion questions, and an activity or two.

- **Background Info:** In each session, Background Information is provided for you, the mentor, to help set up and frame the discussion. Feel free to pull from any of this content as you teach the session or guide the conversation. You'll want to read through this info ahead of time so that you are aware of it, and not just read it word-for-word the day of the session!
- **Opener:** This is an opening question, activity, or icebreaker exercise designed to engage students and get them talking about the session's topic before you immediately dive into the scripture passage or discussion questions. This is important in helping students build community and breaking barriers within your group. This helps break the ice!
- **Scripture:** Each session, there will be one or more Bible passages for the group to read together and discuss. Students should bring their Bible to each group meeting (or use a Bible app on their phone) so they can look up the Scripture passages and follow along. Never force a student to read out loud if they are uncomfortable doing so, but encourage multiple people to read from week to week.
- **Discussion Questions:** This is where some groups will spend most of their time each session. Don't feel like you need to rush through these questions or hit every single one. If you spend 20 minutes having amazing conversations around only a few of the questions, that's great! At the same time, add your own questions or adjust the provided questions if you feel like we've missed something.



- **Response Activity:** This could be a spiritual practice, a group exercise, a practical application, or an activity that we ask you to complete in your time together as a group. Although extroverts and natural conversationalists will want to spend the bulk of their time on the Discussion Questions, we also want to provide space for those who process internally or learn and grow through different methods besides talking. Activities are important in building a safe and healthy community experience.
- **Journal Reflection Prompts:** Each week we will provide a journal prompt for students to engage in free writing and journaling. Encourage students to think of journaling both as a spiritual practice and a life-long skill.
- **Mental Health Check-In:** This might be the most important 5-10 minutes of your weekly session, as you check in with your students' mental health and emotional well-being. This time is especially important for high-achieving students—those who consider themselves leaders in their schools, churches, sport teams, and communities—and are facing constant pressure both externally and internally. Essentially, this is a space set aside for you to go around and ask each student, “How is it with your soul?” Be sure to look for non-verbal cues and clues from students too, and follow-up with students outside of your group session if necessary.

If any mental health “red flags” arise during the Mental Health Check-In (thoughts of suicide, self-harm, use of alcohol or drugs, sexual assault or harassment, abuse by an adult or a peer, etc.), please reach out to a student ministries staff member or pastor immediately, ideally with the student's knowledge, consent, and presence. Together, we would then connect the student to our Care and Counseling Resources, which are also available at resurrection.church/care

- **Joys/Concerns and Prayer:** Always end your session by sharing joys and concerns (praises and prayer requests) and praying together. Sharing our burdens with each other is one way we can lighten the load we carry. Follow up with students to check in on how things are going, and remember to pray for one another throughout the week.



[How to Interpret the Bible]

There are lots of challenges when it comes to reading and understanding scripture. It isn't easy. That's why people have discussed certain passages for thousands of years. Here are some tips that might be useful to you.

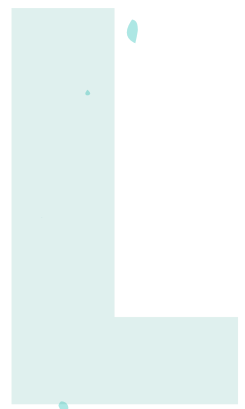
- Use the CEB (Common English Bible) translation of the Bible. This version is easy to understand and is used in many United Methodist circles.
- Get a Bible App. You Version is easy to use and has lots of translations if you want to compare how other scholars or people in different time periods interpreted the original Greek or Hebrew.
- Use a Study Bible. We recommend the Wesley Study Bible which comes in the CEB translation and has notes throughout to help understand scripture.
- Read Adam Hamilton's book, *Making Sense of the Bible*. It is a quick read and will give you insight on how to generally read scripture. Adam's insight into some frequently asked questions about the Bible is easy to understand and, well, makes sense!
- Always consider these things when reading the Bible.
 - The Author – Who is it? Why did they write it?
 - The Audience – Who was the author writing to? What were they trying to tell them?
 - The Culture – What do we need to know about the time period in which it was written? What were the customs that influenced the writing?
- Always consider yourself and your points of view. You are shaped by your culture, family of origin, ethnicity and many other influences. How might this adjust how you read scripture? Remember, the Biblical authors didn't have the 21st century in mind when writing the Bible.
- Prior to your session with the students, read the scripture several times. Then read the story leading up to this piece of scripture and what follows it to understand the context better.
- Use a commentary, which is a scholar's view of what the scripture means. These can be detailed. If you want to go this route, consult a pastor and ask what their favorite commentary is. Most of the time, a study Bible provides enough commentary for non-scholars.
- Ask someone for help when you don't understand. Our staff will always want the opportunity to help crack the code of difficult to understand scripture.
- Here are some fancy words you will never use. But they will make you feel like a Bible scholar.
 - Exegesis – The interpretation of Scripture. Another form of the word is "exegetical" or "exegete." Fully exegeting a scripture means to look at the original language and possible interpretations, the cultural context and the intent of the author.
 - Hermeneutic – The lens you are using when interpreting the Bible that includes your own experience and education. One's hermeneutic always includes one's limited and biased experiences and knowledge with the understanding that others come from a different hermeneutic.



[Classroom Management Tips]

- Call everyone by their name. Ask when you forget.
- Know something about everyone – their interests, sports, etc. Take notes if it helps you remember. Refer to what you know about them on occasion in group and personal conversation.
- Make eye contact. Never turn your back on your students.
- Sit in a circle, if possible. Make sure the adults are evenly distributed.
- Sit close (or next to) students that have the most difficult time behaving. Conversely, always sit across from the best behaved and engaged students.
- Affirm and amplify good behavior and engagement often. Deal with bad behavior and lack of engagement more quietly.
- Use the words of students to ask the next question or to introduce the next topic or activity.
- Keep your questions simple and to the point, attempting to draw on a student's own experience to frame the question.
- Only ask one question at a time.
- Use fidget tools to keep the brains of active students busy. This will help them focus on what you and others are saying.
- Be sure to keep the session moving by using various types of activities and discussion. Don't stay on any one activity or discussion for longer than 15-20 minutes.
- Always ask for help. Staff and other mentors may have strategies that may address exactly what you need.





YEAR 1 Curriculum Overview

UNIT 1: GET TO KNOW YOU (2 SESSIONS)

1. Mentor/Parent Meeting
2. Community Building

UNIT 2: IDENTITY (2 SESSIONS)

1. Love Languages Introduction and Assessment
2. Love Languages Application

UNIT 3: BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP (9 SESSIONS)

1. Leader Profile: Jesus
2. Leadership Practice and Application: Servant Leadership
3. Leader Profile: Rahab
4. Leadership Practice and Application: Courageous Leadership
5. Leader Profile: Paul
6. Leadership Practice and Application: Delegation
7. Leadership Practice and Application: Mission and Vision of the Church and Student Ministry
8. Leader Profile: Mary, Mother of Jesus
9. Leadership Practice and Application: Availability and Humility

UNIT 4: GOD'S KINGDOM AND SOCIAL JUSTICE (3 SESSIONS)

1. God's Heart for Justice
2. The Kingdom of God and Social Justice
3. Finding Your Cause and Your Voice within God's Kingdom

UNIT 5: EVANGELISM: SHARING OUR FAITH WITH OTHERS (3 SESSIONS)

1. Profile of Your Generation
2. Evangelism: Dreaming Big
3. Inviting Others Into your World: Putting Evangelism into Practice

UNIT 6: SPIRITUAL PRACTICES (4 SESSIONS)

1. Worship and Mindfulness
2. Gratitude and Generosity
3. Accepting, Receiving, and Giving Forgiveness
4. Mental Health Practices: Coping with Stress, Depression, and Anxiety



UNIT 1

Get To Know You (2 Sessions)

>> UNIT OVERVIEW

Our first two sessions are designed to build community among your group and class. The first session is designed to build community among students, parents, and mentors. The second session is designed to build community among students and mentors and introduce some pieces of the curriculum together.

As we are developing our group dynamics, it is important to remember that while our hope is that students draw nearer to Christ throughout these sessions, we also want students to experience an environment where they feel safe being fully themselves. Here are some tips to help you do that.

Call students by name: *Learn their names and use them! It's hard, sometimes we don't see students for a while, but ask, and look at their nametags.*

Follow up with first time students: *Take a few minutes to write out a postcard or a note to a new student. In class grab their address so you can even mail it out that day!*

Keep staff informed: *If you have a student report something to you, or you notice something you are concerned about, please let us know! That is what we are here for. You are the first people our students will connect with. Also, if students have behavioral problems that you need assistance with, reach out to a staff member as soon as you notice them.*



As for setting up your group dynamic, here are some things we suggest to help throughout the year, and some random things to try.

Fidgets – having fidgets in your bin (like bubble poppers or play-doh) can be helpful for students so they have something to do with their hands while engaging in the class. This is a great way to help students engage.

Group Guidelines – Take time in your first session to make a group guidelines poster. Have students contribute ideas to what your guidelines should be to create a safe, healthy environment for students.

Parent Sub List – We have lives, and we are busy. We have subs that can come in and help, but our first line of defense is always reaching out to parents to see if they are able to come and sub for the class if a mentor cannot be there.

Snack List – This is an optional way to have students help contribute to the class. You can have a weekly snack list. Or once a month have a special snack day.

Emailing Parents – Keeping up to date with parents is a helpful way to ensure they know what is going on in class and feel supported. Think about this similar to how you would coach a team. What you do matters to the development of the student, let's keep parents updated.

Attendance – Each week you will get a virtual email attendance list. Please fill it out – this helps us to know who is there.

Talking Something – Sometimes taking turns talking can be difficult. One strategy to try is having a talking 'something'. It could be a talking stick, some groups used stuffed animals. A visual to help students remember when it is (or isn't) their turn to talk.

As you begin this year with your students, know that our team appreciates your work and dedication to helping students grow in faith and community with us.



YEAR ONE

UNIT 1 | SESSION 1

Get to Know You: Mentor/Parent Meeting

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Hello Parents and Students! Welcome to LEAD. My name is _____, and my name is _____, and we are the mentors for your students Discipleship Group this year!

[Give a little background info about yourself, and why you serve. What you do for your work, how long you have been at this church, etc. This is a great time to give parents your emails if you are open to that]

This Discipleship Group, designed for 9th-12th graders, is an introduction for students to what it means to live as a Biblical Leader.

We know that you (students) are already leaders at school, on your sports teams, and many of you are already leading in our church. We want to give you even more tools in your toolbelt to help you grow as a leader in this class. The things we will talk about are all centered around scripture, but also will help you lead in all the different areas of your life.

Even if you don't think of yourself as a leader, remember, we all have influence, and leadership looks different for every person. Over the next school year, we will explore leadership through the lens of love, spiritual practices, evangelism, and more.

In addition to growing in faith and leadership skills, we hope you come out of this year with a community of people around you.

Parents, we want to partner with you this year. If there is something we should know, or a way to support your family, please let us know. Here is how you can be involved in our group and support us in this experience.

[this is up to you, but we suggest inviting them to be substitutes for the classes, or signing up to send snacks, sending around a sheet of paper to catch their emails]



>> OPENING QUESTIONS

This is a question for parents AND students. What are some qualities of a leader?

[write answers on the board]

Looking at this list of qualities, what do you think are some qualities that might also reflect a Biblical Leader?

[star or highlight what is on the board, or add new]

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Great responses! There are so many qualities of a great leader and some of these we will dive into this year. Pass out the scope and sequence for the year. Review the themes of each of the units below.

Unit 1: Get To Know You

This is a time for us to get into the class together and build relationships with each other.

1. Leader/Parent Meeting
2. Community Building Week 1

Unit 2: Identity

Everyone gives and receives love differently.

1. Love Languages Introduction and Assessment
2. Love Languages Application

Unit 3: Biblical Leadership

Diving into different Biblical figures and the leadership skills we can learn from them.

1. Leader Profile: Jesus
2. Leadership Practice and Application: Love Others
3. Leader Profile: Rahab
4. Leadership Practice and Application: Courageous Leadership
5. Leader Profile: Paul
6. Leadership Practice and Application: Delegation as a Leader
7. Leadership Practice and Application: Mission and Vision of the Church and Student Ministry
8. Leader Profile: Mary, Mother of Jesus
9. Leadership Practice and Application: Availability and Humility

Unit 4: God's Kingdom and Social Justice

How can leaders support, encourage, and uplift others?

1. God's Heart for Justice
2. The Kingdom of God and Social Justice
3. Finding Your Cause and Your Voice within God's Kingdom



Unit 5: Evangelism: Sharing Our Faith with Others

Focusing on sharing our stories with others.

1. Profile of Your Generation
2. Evangelism: Dreaming Big
3. Inviting Others Into your World: Putting Evangelism into Practice

Unit 6: Spiritual Practices

How to care for our soul, as we care for others?

1. Worship and Mindfulness
2. Gratitude and Generosity
3. Accepting, Receiving, and Giving Forgiveness
4. Mental Health Practices: Coping with Stress, Depression, and Anxiety

>> MENTOR PROMPT

While these are the main topics that we will cover throughout this year, many other leadership qualities will come up as well as we learn and navigate each of them. Does anyone have any questions?

Note, some people may ask about requirements because of past experience with Confirmation. There are no requirements for this course, however students are encouraged to come as often as they can because that is how they will get the most out of the curriculum and experience.

If you have time, go around and do introductions, and joys and concerns.

>> JOYS/CONCERNS AND PRAYER

Close by sharing joys and concerns and praying together as a group.

Share Joys first: Things you are thankful for or ways you've encountered God this week.
Share Concerns second: Things going on that you want to lift up to God and share the burden of with others.

Close your session in prayer. Encourage a student to pray or ask multiple people to pray.





Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal lines. The page features a large, faint watermark of the word 'LEAD' in the background.

YEAR ONE

UNIT 1 | SESSION 2

Get to Know You: Community Building

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Hello Students! Welcome to LEAD. We met some of you last week, our names are _____ and _____, and we are the mentors for your students Discipleship Group this year!

[Give a little background info about yourself. Do you have pets? What's your favorite candy? Who is your favorite musical artist? Why did you want to hang out with teenagers on a Sunday morning? What do you do for your work? This is where students are determining if you are trustworthy – they are looking for authenticity]

We know that you (students) are already leaders at school, on your sports teams, and many of you are already leading in our church. We want to give you even more tools in your toolbelt to help you grow as a leader in this class. The things we will talk about are all centered around scripture, but also will help you lead in all the different areas of your life. We will also have lots of fun together.

Even if you don't think of yourself as a leader, remember, we all have influence, and leadership looks different for every person. Over the next school year, we will explore leadership through the lens of love, spiritual practices, evangelism, and more.

>> OPENING ACTIVITY: ME AND ALL MY FRIENDS

Move tables to the side of the room and put chairs in a circle in the center of the room. Have one less chair than the number of players so one person has to stand in the center. Whoever is in the center has to say something that is true about them (ex: my favorite superhero is Captain America), and everyone that shares that fact, has to get up and move seats. Whoever doesn't, gets a seat in the middle. The game repeats. Play this game for about 10 minutes, or until everyone has a chance to get in the middle.

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Now that we know each other a little bit better, we are going to take some time to think about leadership together because over the next 9 months we are going to be talking about what leadership looks like, and how we can live that out every day.



>> ASK

What does leadership mean?

What are characteristics of a leader?

Think about one person in your life you consider to be a leader? What is it about them that helps you see them as a leader?

>> ACTIVITY: CIRCLES OF INFLUENCE

Sometimes it can be hard to see ourselves as leaders, because we don't always have the opportunity to be up-front, dictating what happens. Sometimes people see extroverts, or someone with charismatic personalities as the leaders. Anyone can be a leader though, and we are all gifted with circles of influence around us.

For this activity tape a line down the center of the room. If you agree with the statement, move onto the line. After each question have students move back off of the line. If you don't have tape have students move from one side of the room to the other to indicate their answers.

I have at least one person I trust

I have been asked my opinion before

I have encouraged a friend before

I have welcomed someone to sit with me

I have helped someone before

I held the door open for someone

I have bought someone a gift because I wanted to

I have tried to change someone's mind about something

I have wished that my friend listened to me, because I could have helped

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Did you notice anything that those statements had in common? Every statement represented some form of leadership. Every time you agree with the statement, you have had an opportunity to be a leader because you have a chance to influence someone else. We all have circles of influence between our friends, sports teams, schools, and other communities we are a part of. It is important as we are learning our leadership skills this year to remember to use those skills in all areas of our life, not just when we think other people are looking to us to be a leader. This is a great opportunity for a leader to share a personal leadership story – remember students are looking for authenticity.



>> RESPONSE ACTIVITY: STUDENT LEADERS

Take some time as a class to brainstorm who some student leaders they know are. They could be in their church, local community, or in the global community. Write them on the board as they come up with them.

Here are some examples of student leaders who have positively impacted their communities, and the world.

Malala Yousafzai: Malala gained international prominence for her advocacy of education rights for girls in her native Swat Valley in Pakistan, where the local Taliban had banned girls from attending school. Despite facing threats to her life, Malala continued to speak out and was targeted by an assassination attempt in 2012. Since then, she has become a global advocate for education and women's rights, co-authoring a memoir and becoming the youngest-ever Nobel Prize laureate.

Emma Gonzalez and David Hogg: Survivors of the Stoneman Douglas High School shooting in Parkland, Florida, Gonzalez and Hogg emerged as prominent leaders in the movement for gun control reform in the United States. They co-founded the advocacy group Never Again MSD and organized the March for Our Lives, a nationwide demonstration calling for legislative action to prevent gun violence.

Greta Thunberg: As mentioned earlier, Greta Thunberg gained worldwide recognition for her activism to raise awareness about climate change. Starting with her solitary school strike outside the Swedish Parliament in 2018, her Fridays for Future movement has inspired millions of students around the world to participate in climate strikes and demand action from policymakers.

Ahmed Mohamed: In 2015, Ahmed, a high school student in Texas, made headlines when he was arrested for bringing a homemade clock to school that was mistaken for a bomb. The incident sparked a national conversation about racial profiling and Islamophobia. Since then, Ahmed has become an advocate for STEM education and diversity in the tech industry.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Thinking about each of these individuals, what characteristics stick out to you the most? Why might these traits be considered good leadership traits? Does a leader have to have all of these traits? Why or why not?

>> JOURNAL DISTRIBUTION

An important part of our time together each week is going to be taking some time for spiritual practices. One of those practices is journaling. This is just one way that can help connect you with God. Everyone gets a journal, and most weeks we will have a journal prompt response to walk through together that helps us reflect on what we are talking about.

Pass out the journals. Allow students to decorate them with stickers or markers.



Unit 2

Identity (2 Sessions)

1. Love Languages Introduction and Assessment
2. Love Languages Application

>> UNIT OVERVIEW AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

We are starting out this course with two sessions on Love and Identity. **Leadership starts with Love: Loving God, and Loving others.** And to be better leaders, we also need to learn a little bit more about ourselves, as well as those around us.

In 1992 a marriage and family therapist named Dr. Gary Chapman wrote a book called, "The 5 Love Languages: The Secret to Love that Lasts." Married people read his book and benefited from it, of course, but Dr. Chapman also adapted his book for managers and employees in the workplace, for parents to better relate to their kids, and even for teenagers. But what made his ideas such a success?

Well, through the 5 Love Languages, he discovered this concept that we all GIVE and RECEIVE love in different ways. What may seem super sweet and loving to me, may just come across as weird or even inconsiderate and hurtful to you. But at the same time, I need to show you love in a way that you will understand and recognize.

There are 5 DIFFERENT WAYS that people give and receive love listed in the book:

The 5 Love Languages

1. **Words of Affirmation:** Truthful words spoken or written from one person to another to uplift or encourage to make the recipient feel loved. This is not the same as empty flattery or shallow words to get your way.
2. **Quality Time:** Intentional, deliberate time spent with a person to make the individual feel loved. Note: Quality Time means putting down your phone and actually listening when the other person is talking.
3. **Receiving Gifts:** More than a material item, gifts are a visual symbol of love representing the giver's heart toward the recipient. Giving gifts isn't about the money you spend; it's about the thought and care you put into picking out just the right item for that person.
4. **Acts of Service:** Doing something kind, intentional, and unexpected that helps someone else. It also includes having the right attitude and taking initiative... not just doing your chores because your mom made you!
5. **Physical Touch:** Intentional, meaningful, human contact to make the recipient feel loved. While we may think physical touch is reserved just for familial or romantic relationships, physical touch can be as simple as a high five, a pat on the back, a fist bump, or a clap on the shoulder.



We all have one primary LOVE LANGUAGE of how we best receive love. In our friendships or families, if we can learn how those around us receive love, then we can actually improve the quality of our relationships.

Before your next session, be sure to go to [5lovelanguages.com](https://www.5lovelanguages.com) and take the Love Language quiz as a mentor to learn more about it. When you instruct students, have them select the "I am a teenager" option. You might be surprised by what you learn about yourself, and your other group members!

The question is, what does all this have to do with our identity? Our unique Love Language Profile shows that God created us as diverse and extraordinary individuals! We are each unique and special in our own ways, in how we give, show, receive, and extend love. But our Love Language Profiles show that we are all created by God FOR Love. Now the way I show love might look different than the way you show love, but we have this desire to give and receive love to those around us. Let's learn now about how we can extend and receive love better together.

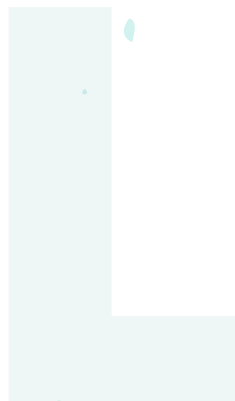
A Few Other Notes about the 5 Love Languages:

- The 5 Love Languages aren't just for romantic relationships or married people! In fact, learning others' love languages can benefit any type of relationship: friendships, sibling relationships, employee/workplace relationships, and even relationships between parents and children.
- Physical touch? That seems a little weird! We don't often think about how much physical touch plays a part in our everyday relationships...until it's taken away. Think about the loss of physical touch during the covid pandemic: no handshakes, no hugs, staying 6 feet apart at all times. While physical touch is the Love Language that can be the most easily distorted and abused, there is a time and a place for appropriate physical touch. Just remember to "read" if physical touch is appropriate:
 - (1) Read people's preferences. Are they a toucher, or not? You can always ask first too: "Can I give you a hug?"
 - (2) Read relationships. Ask yourself, "What's appropriate for this relationship?" Touch varies from relationship to relationship. You can give your best friend a hug, but not your teacher or boss!
 - (3) Read timing. Is this the best context and place for physical touch? You might be ok with your mom giving you a hug at home, but not at school! If your friend is sad after receiving bad news, holding their hand might be ok in that context, but not in normal circumstances.
- Every Love Language has a "dark side" or a shadow side These are ways people can be easily hurt and damaged or can manipulate someone's love language for harm and abuse. Beware of these shadow sides!
 - Words of Affirmation Dark Side: Flattery, vain words of praise
 - Quality Time Dark Side: Excluding Others, isolation
 - Receiving Gifts Dark Side: Bribery, buying someone off
 - Acts of Service Dark Side: Being used or mistreated, treated as a "doormat"
 - Physical Touch Dark Side: Sexual abuse or assault, disregarding consent



If you want to learn more about each of the 5 Love Languages, watch the short videos on the "Learn" page at <https://5lovelanguages.com/learn>

Resources: *5: A Teen's Guide to the Five Love Languages* by *Dr. Gary Chapman with Paige Haley Drygas* (Northfield Publishing, 2016)



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LEAD

LEAD



Identity: Love Languages Introduction and Assessment

>> MAIN POINT

Everyone gives and receives love differently

>> OPENING QUESTION

Can you speak any other languages? If so, which one? Is it easy or difficult to learn?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Learning a new language can be difficult. If you have one, share a story about a time when you traveled to another country and didn't know the language. Something especially difficult can be trying to communicate with someone who doesn't speak the same language as you. Luckily now we have technology to help us communicate!

>> QUESTION

How would you communicate with someone who doesn't speak the same language as you? What resources would you try to utilize?

Try to get students thinking about if they would try to meet people where they are and communicate in their language, or if they would expect someone else to do the work. The hope is that we would try to learn their language to communicate with them instead of just casting them off.



>> MENTOR PROMPT

Just like language is essential in our daily lives, so is love. God created us to love, but just like around the world we have different languages, each person gives and receives love in different ways. We all have a primary Love Language that tells us how we prefer to give and receive love. Learning how to communicate our love in different ways is important in improving our relationships with the important people in our lives.

Has anyone ever seen the videos of elementary schoolers walking into their classes and getting to choose how their teacher welcomes them? Let's watch a video together about this.

WATCH VIDEO: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cjkl-RkaBng>

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why might this be an effective way to welcome students into class each day?
2. What are other things that could be on the list?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Today we are going to practice doing this in our classroom!

>> RESPONSE ACTIVITY

Welcoming One Another

Have students circle up in 2 equal concentric circles facing each other (like speed-friending!). Make a poster of the icons and descriptions below. Go through the poster one-by-one and have students practice each way to welcome one another. Ex: Fist bump the person across from you, then the circle rotates so you are facing someone new, etc. Go through each of the examples (skip helping lead).



Fist Bump



Encouragement



Ask About
My Week



Pick a
Sticker



I want to
help Lead

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Which one of the ways to welcome our friends felt the most natural/comfortable for you to receive?

Which one of the ways felt the most comfortable for you to give?



>> MENTOR PROMPT

Pass out students LEAD Notebooks and be sure to write their name inside. Have them date the first page.

Now we are going to be talking about the 5 Love Languages, make a note in your book which Love Languages sound like you.

- 1. Words of Affirmation:** Truthful words spoken or written from one person to another to uplift or encourage to make the recipient feel loved. This is not the same as empty flattery or shallow words to get your way.
- 2. Quality Time:** Intentional, deliberate time spent with a person to make the individual feel loved. Note: Quality Time means putting down your phone and actually listening when the other person is talking.
- 3. Receiving Gifts:** More than a material item, gifts are a visual symbol of love representing the giver's heart toward the recipient. Giving gifts isn't about the money you spend; it's about the thought and care you put into picking out just the right item for that person.
- 4. Acts of Service:** Doing something kind, intentional, and unexpected that helps someone else. It also includes having the right attitude and taking initiative... not just doing your chores because your mom made you!
- 5. Physical Touch:** Intentional, meaningful, human contact to make the recipient feel loved. While we may think physical touch is reserved just for familial or romantic relationships, physical touch can be as simple as a high five, a pat on the back, a fist bump, or a clap on the shoulder.

We were created by God to love, and we each have a unique way to give and receive Love. But Love is also choice. We must choose to love others in the way that makes the most sense to them. Sometimes choosing to love others means pushing past our own preferences and typical "communication" patterns. This is a different view of love than how our surrounding culture often portrays love, which often makes love all about emotions or feelings or our own satisfaction. When we choose to love others in the way that resonates with them the most, it is a self-sacrificial form of love, that is not selfish or for self-gain.

>> SCRIPTURE

1 John 4:7-21 (a view of the type of love God desires from us and models for us)

Psalms 36:5-9 (a portrait of God's great love for us)



>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. According to the 1 John 4 passage, why do we love? Based on this passage, in what ways can we show our love and God's love to others?
2. Re-read 1 John 4:20. Do you agree that you cannot love God and hate others at the same time? Why is it important to both Love God and Love others?
3. Is loving others easier once we have experienced love ourselves?
4. Think creatively: How does God use the 5 Love Languages to show love to each of us? How does God show us love through: Quality Time, Words of Affirmation, Acts of Service, Physical Touch, and Giving Gifts? (*Hint: Look at Psalm 36 for some ways God shows love to us!*)

>> RESPONSE EXPERIENCE: LOVE LANGUAGE EXAMPLES AND OPPOSITES

Supplies needed: Paper (the bigger the better!) and pens/markers

Complete this Response Experience Individually or in smaller groups of two or three.

Come back together as a larger group to discuss your answers.

On a large sheet of paper, write down the 5 Love Languages down across the left side. Then create two columns: Good Examples and Extreme Opposites. For each Love Language, come up with at least one Good Example of how that Love Language might be displayed, and then one Extreme Opposite or Distortion of that Love Language.

Hint: Dr. Chapman explains that each Love Language has several "dialects" or variations. So, Words of Affirmation might look like giving words of praise, words of appreciation, words of kindness, or words of encouragement! Be creative and think of different ways to show each Love Language beyond just the obvious ones!

Example:

Love Language	Good Example	Extreme Opposite/Distortion
Words of Affirmation	Writing an encouraging card to a teacher	Using sarcasm or humor to tear others down
Quality Time	Inviting a classmate out to coffee	Always picking the activity that YOU want to do in your friend group
Receiving Gifts	Seeing a book that your sister would love and getting it for her	Only giving someone a gift because you feel obligated or because they got you one first
Acts of Service	Washing and cleaning out your dad's car	Forgetting to clean out the litter box AGAIN
Physical Touch	Giving your friend a big hug after you haven't seen them all summer	Saying, "Gross, you smell! I don't want to sit next to you!"



>> MENTOR PROMPT

Of the five love languages, most people have a primary language or favorite one that makes them feel most loved. But identifying it can be confusing. After all, we all like getting gifts or receiving kind words or having someone do a kind act of service for them!

*Once they're done, invite them to take the Love Languages Assessment Quiz which will help them narrow down their primary love language. **Write down each student's love language so you can talk more about them next week!** After everyone is done, collect their responses for next week so you can follow up with their love languages. Let them know that next week we will learn more about Love Languages and how we can apply them to our lives.*

Go to: <https://5lovelanguages.com/quizzes/2>

Select the option that says, **"I am a teenager."**

Or download and print this page <https://media.5lovelanguages.com/6727f5cf-fc69-455c-96e8-9f1c58375a56/LoveLanguagesTeensPersonalProfile.pdf>

>> JOURNAL PROMPTS

Have students complete these journal prompts on their own at home, or in session if you have time. The practice of journaling is something we will promote all four years of high school in our Discipleship Groups. Write these prompts on the board or text them out in a group chat so they can copy them in their LEAD Student Journals.

1. How has God shown you love?
2. What is one way you can show love to others this week?

>> MENTAL HEALTH CHECK-IN

Take several minutes to go around and ask each student, "How is it with your soul?" Explain that John Wesley encouraged the original members of Methodist small groups to ask one another this question to "check in" on each other's mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Remember, if any "red flags" or mental health concerns arise during this time, please direct students to appropriate Pastoral Care and Counseling Resources (cor.org/care) and inform a member of the student ministries staff team.

>> JOYS/CONCERNS AND PRAYER

Close by sharing joys and concerns and praying together as a group.

Share Joys first: Things you are thankful for or ways you've encountered God this week. Share Concerns second: Things going on that you want to lift up to God and share the burden of with others. Close your session in prayer. Encourage a student to pray or ask multiple people to pray.



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YEAR ONE

UNIT 2 | SESSION 2

>> MAIN POINT

Jesus showed sacrificial love

>> BEFORE YOU START

Make sure everyone has taken the Love Language Quiz or give students time in your session to go online to www.5lovelanguages.com/quizzes/love-language and complete the quiz. (They should select the option that says, "I am a teenager.")

Or download and print this page <https://media.5lovelanguages.com/6727f5cf-fc69-455c-96e8-9f1c58375a56/LoveLanguagesTeensPersonalProfile.pdf>

>> OPENER: LOVE LANGUAGES

Using the welcome poster from last week's session, invite students to choose how they would like the mentors to welcome them that day.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. If students are comfortable, invite them to share what their Love Language is.
2. Were you surprised by the results of your Love Language Assessment, or did they match what you expected?
3. What do you think love has to do with leadership?



>> MENTOR PROMPT

Throughout this year we will see how love and leadership are intertwined when leadership is healthy. Now that we've learned a little bit about each Love Language (in Session 1) and discovered our own Primary Love Languages (through the Love Language Assessment), we can begin the hard work of learning other Love Languages so we can better communicate and show Love with those around us. Take a moment and think about the person that loves you the most. Maybe it's a parent, or a grandparent. Maybe it is a friend, sibling, aunt, or uncle.

Ask:

1. How does a person show that they love you? *Students might respond with answers like, they show up for me (Quality Time), or they give the best hugs (Physical Touch), they always encourage me (Words of Affirmation), etc. Help students see how that person is using one of the love languages.*
2. Does that person give you love using your primary love language, or their primary love language?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

To truly show love to others, you must be willing to adapt your own style and ways of showing love in order to honor someone else's primary Love Language. "Learning to speak love and appreciation in a language the other person can receive is the key to enhancing all human relationships." (Chapman and Drygas, 16).

>> RESPONSE ACTIVITY: ADAPTING LOVE LANGUAGES

Using the following scenario examples, as a class, or in small groups of 3-5, think about how you might work through this situation.

Scenario 1: You have the Primary Love Language of Quality Time, but your best friend has the Primary Love Language of Words of Affirmation. You keep inviting her out to coffee or to spend time hanging out after school, but she keeps giving you excuses and saying that she needs to practice for choir. That hurts your feelings! At the same time, she recently had a major accomplishment in choir and got a solo in the upcoming concert, yet you completely disregarded it and didn't even say, "Hey, Way to go! I'm so proud of you!" Each of you was hurt, but you didn't understand why. What could you have done to show your friend love?



Scenario 2: Your parents have the love language of Acts of Service. They seem to expect you to take time to empty the dishwasher or clean the bathroom whenever you notice it's dirty without them asking. They get so upset when you don't. You have the love language of Gift Giving, and sometimes your parent comes in to clean your room. You don't want them in your stuff and don't understand why they care so much about your room anyway. How could frustration be avoided in this situation?

1. Why do you think it's important to respect others' preferences when it comes to Love Languages?
2. How do you think learning other Love Languages could help in your friendships? In your sibling relationships? With your parents/guardians?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Adapting and responding to others' Primary Love Language is a way we can choose to Love Others Well. It's also a way we can be leaders in our relationships, whether within our friend groups, our siblings, our even our parents or employers. Over time, you might be able to even initiate conversations with them about how you like to best receive love and appreciation.

As Dr. Chapman writes, "The process might feel awkward at first.... Little by little, though, that will change. With repetition and the right attitude, you'll see growth in your relationships. By learning the love languages, you'll make a lasting difference in the lives of those you love." (Chapman and Drygas, 19).

>> SCRIPTURE

Read the following Bible passages:

John 15:9-13 (God's love for us)

Mark 12:28-31 (2 Greatest Commandments)

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why are the two commands of Loving God and Loving others so connected in scripture?
2. What do you think it means to "give up one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13)? How can this apply to using the Love Languages?
3. Do you think speaking someone else's Love Language is a form of sacrifice? Why or why not?
4. Both of today's scripture passages are the words of Jesus. Can you think of specific examples from the Bible where Jesus showed different Love Languages? (Examples: Acts of Service by washing disciples' feet; Words of Affirmation by telling Peter "On you I will build my church;" Physical Touch by reaching out and healing people; etc.)



>> JOURNAL PROMPTS

Have students complete these journal prompts on their own at home, or in session if you have time. The practice of journaling is something we will promote all four years of high school in our Discipleship Groups. Write these prompts on the board or text them out in a group chat so they can copy them in their LEAD Student Journals.

1. What love language is your preference?
2. Who is someone you look up to as a leader, and why?

>> MENTAL HEALTH CHECK-IN

Take several minutes to go around and ask each student, "How is it with your soul?" Explain that John Wesley encouraged the original members of Methodist small groups to ask one another this question to "check in" on each other's mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Remember, if any "red flags" or mental health concerns arise during this time, please direct students to appropriate Pastoral Care and Counseling Resources (cor.org/care) and inform a member of the student ministries staff team.

>> JOYS/CONCERNS AND PRAYER

Close by sharing joys and concerns and praying together as a group.

Share Joys first: Things you are thankful for or ways you've encountered God this week.
Share Concerns second: Things going on that you want to lift up to God and share the burden of with others.

Close your session in prayer. Encourage a student to pray or ask multiple people to pray.





Unit 3

Biblical Leadership (9 sessions)

1. Leader Profile: Jesus
2. Leadership Practice and Application: Loving Others
3. Leader Profile: Rahab
4. Leadership Practice and Application: Courageous
5. Leader Profile: Paul
6. Leadership Practice and Application: Delegation
7. Leadership Practices: Mission and Vision of the Church and Student Ministry
8. Leader Profile: Mary, Mother of Jesus
9. Leadership Practice and Application: Availability and Humility

»» BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP INTRODUCTION/MENTOR NOTES

Every single year, both people inside the church and outside church—in the business world and corporate settings or non-profits—spend thousands of dollars and hundreds of hours trying to become better leaders. They go to conferences, listen to podcasts, read books, or take courses like this one. It seems like every week, there is a new book written on leadership, particularly this idea of Christian leadership [show pictures of books like “Canoeing the Mountains” or “Lead: 12 Gospel Principles for Leadership” or “Laws of Leadership”]. If you Google “Christian Leadership” it returns over 2 BILLION results!

But what does the BIBLE say about leadership? I mean, we are Christians after all? We are here, in a church. The Bible is pretty important to us, right?

Over the next few sessions here in LEAD, we are going to spend some time looking at models or profiles of Biblical Leaders and what we can learn from them today. And some of these people that the Bible would consider leaders are people that we would never expect to be leaders today. Like Rahab: she was a prostitute living in a foreign, enemy city. Or then there's Moses. He KILLED a man, had a severe lack of self-confidence, and some questionable anger-management issues. Or what about Paul: there's a guy that used to murder Christians and thought he was doing the right thing. Or Mary: a lowly teenager, then unexpectedly became the mother of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Each of these leaders from the Bible has an important leadership lesson to teach us today—something we can learn and apply to our lives and daily practices. For each Biblical leader we discuss, we are going to take a look at their lives and leadership in two parts: the first week or session, we are going to look at them as a person: Who they are, what's their story, and what made them a great or unique leader in their own day and time. Then, the second week or session, we will discover how we can apply the same leadership qualities or characters to our own practices and lives today, right now.



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YEAR ONE

UNIT 3 | SESSION 1

Biblical Leadership: Leader Profile: Jesus

>> MAIN POINT

Jesus is the Son of God

>> BACKGROUND INFORMATION

During our first two sessions on Biblical Leadership, we are going to be focusing on Jesus as a leader. To understand Jesus as a leader, we first have to understand who Jesus is. Students may have heard a lot about who Jesus is, and some may only know Jesus is the baby we talk about at Christmas-time. Wherever students land with their knowledge it is okay. We will fill in some blanks here, and it is important to allow other students to share their knowledge with each other. Some of it might be true, and some of it might be untrue. Gently help students navigate a misconceptions about Jesus as you discuss. If you are not sure, let them know you are not sure and invite a staff member to come in and discuss the questions with the class, or look up the answer on your own.

As you discuss, remember that Jesus was not only a Christian figure, but is referenced as a religious leader in many historical texts. We also see Jesus mentioned in other religious texts, including the Quran. It is not the existence of Jesus that is contested, but that he was resurrected. As Christians, we believe that Jesus conquered death through the resurrection and is the Messiah that God promised in the prophecies (that we will talk about today in Isaiah).

Our first week of this unit we will talk about what we already know about Jesus inviting students to share their knowledge with each other – help to fill in blanks. We will also explore the prophecies shared in the Old Testament book of Isaiah to help others prepare for the coming of Jesus. We will compare those prophecies to what we know about the life of Jesus. Finally, we will learn what Jesus says about Himself through the “I Am” statements shared in John to understand what Jesus taught about who He is. The goal of this session is to help students understand that the Christian faith, and Methodist tradition believes in Jesus as the Son of God and to learn more about what scripture says about Jesus as a person.



>> OPENING ACTIVITY

Ahead of time, write up the questions below on index cards. If you decide to add new questions, be sure the questions are ones every student can easily and comfortably answer. No sensitive or personal questions, please. Pass them out randomly to students.

>> QUESTIONS

- Would you ever go skydiving?
- What is your favorite holiday?
- What do you like to do in your free time?
- What is your favorite color?
- What is your favorite food?
- Is cereal soup?
- What's your favorite season and why?
- Is a hotdog a sandwich?
- What superpower would you choose if you could?
- If you could be an animal for one day, what would you be?
- What is your favorite emoji?
- What is the best day of the week?
- What do you like to eat for breakfast?
- What's your favorite meal?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Over the next few sessions here in LEAD, we are going to spend some time looking at models or profiles of Biblical Leaders and what we can learn from them today. And some of these people that the Bible would consider leaders are people that we would never expect to be leaders today.

Each of these leaders from the Bible has an important leadership lesson to teach us today—something we can learn and apply to our lives and daily practices. For each Biblical leader we discuss, we are going to take a look at their lives and leadership in two parts: the First week or session, we are going to look at them as a person: Who they are, what's their story, and what made them a great or unique leader in their own day and time. Then, the second week or session, we will discover how we can apply the same leadership qualities or characters to our own practices and lives today, right now.

>> VIDEO

The Bible Project is “a nonprofit, crowdfunded organization that makes free resources like videos, podcasts, articles, and classes to help people experience the Bible in a way that is approachable and transformative. We do this by showcasing the literary art of the Scriptures and tracing key biblical themes from Genesis to Revelation.” Today we are going to watch a short clip that gives us a summary of who Jesus is.



>> **WATCH** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p7XRPGzL6kk>

1. Using your background knowledge, and what you heard in the video, what do you know about Jesus? *Consider writing answers on the board to provide a visual.*
2. What is something you wish you knew/understood about Jesus?

>> **MENTOR PROMPT**

When we think about Jesus, we often think about his teachings, miracles, his life on Earth, death, and resurrection. Today we will first talk about the Messianic prophecy we read about in Isaiah. The Messianic Prophecy was a prediction written during the time of the prophet Isaiah that alluded to the coming of a Messiah, a savior, that God would send to the people of Israel. We are going to split into groups and read through the prophecies to see what was predicted about Jesus.

>> **SCRIPTURE**

Split students into three groups. Assign each group a scripture passage and have them write down what is similar to what they know already about the life of Jesus. Come back together and discuss the following questions.

Messianic Prophecy

Isaiah 7:13-17

Isaiah 42:1-9

Isaiah 52:13-53

>> **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What are some similarities between what you read, and what you know about the life of Jesus?
2. Not everyone believed that Jesus fulfilled this prophecy, why do you think that might be?

>> **MENTOR PROMPT**

Earlier in the session you shared what you know, and have heard, about Jesus from reading scripture, or being in worship. Then we looked to the prophecies about Jesus that came before Jesus was even born. What we haven't looked at yet, though, is who Jesus says he is. In scripture we read 'I AM' statements where Jesus tells us who He is. Each of the "I AM" statements we will look at were recorded in the New Testament book of John.



>> SCRIPTURE - WHO DOES JESUS SAY HE IS?

Using scripture in the book of John, we are able to learn what Jesus says about himself. Take time to read each scripture as a class, or share the statements below, and talk through the discussion questions below focusing on what they mean. Consider relating them to the Messianic prophecy as well.

I am the bread of life – John 6:35

I am the light of the world – John 8:12

I am the gate – John 10:9

I am the good shepherd – John 10:11-18

I am the resurrection and the life – John 11:25

I am the way, the truth, and the life – John 14:6

I am the true vine – John 15

1. Do any of these statements align with what you have already heard about Jesus? Did any of the statements surprise you?
2. What do you think Jesus means when he says I am the true vine? *Hint: branches produce more fruit when they are attached to the vine. Similarly, our lives are abundant when we stay connected to Christ.*
3. Jesus used bread and light to describe himself. Why would he choose those specific words? *Hint: they are common items that everyone would know about and would understand the importance of them in their lives.*

>> JOURNAL PROMPTS

Have students complete these journal prompts on their own at home, or in session if you have time. The practice of journaling is something we will promote all four years of high school in our Discipleship Groups. Write these prompts on the board or text them out in a group chat so they can copy them in their LEAD Student Journals.

What I AM statement that Jesus makes is the most comforting to you, and why?

What is something about the Isaiah prophecy about Jesus that surprised you?

>> MENTAL HEALTH CHECK-IN

Take several minutes to go around and ask each student, "How is it with your soul?" Explain that John Wesley encouraged the original members of Methodist small groups to ask one another this question to "check in" on each other's mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Remember, if any "red flags" or mental health concerns arise during this time, please direct students to appropriate Pastoral Care and Counseling Resources (cor.org/care) and inform a member of the student ministries staff team.



>> JOYS/CONCERNS AND PRAYER

Close by sharing joys and concerns and praying together as a group.

Share Joys first: Things you are thankful for or ways you've encountered God this week.
Share Concerns second: Things going on that you want to lift up to God and share the burden of with others.

Close your session in prayer. Encourage a student to pray or ask multiple people to pray.



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Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal lines. The word 'HEAD' is faintly visible in the background, repeated twice.



YEAR ONE

UNIT 3 | SESSION 2

Biblical Leadership: Leadership Practice and Application: Loving Others

>> MAIN POINT

Loving Others is Leadership

>> BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Once we understand who Jesus is, we will talk about His leadership. While Jesus has so many characteristics of leadership displayed throughout scripture, we are going to focus on how He invites us to love others. Loving others, and including all people, was a central theme in the ministry of Jesus. As leaders, we are called to love others as well, and include all, recognizing that everyone has a place. As Christian Leaders it is important that loving others is central in our leadership, just as it was with Jesus. In addition to reading scripture about the importance of love in our lives as Christians, we will review a secular leadership article about what it means to show love in leadership. After reading the article, we will compare it to what we already know about Jesus. We want students to know that our faith doesn't just stop at the door, but loving others is a central part of leadership in every area of our lives, and Jesus was an incredible model for that. Be sure to consider how students can live out this characteristic in their lives NOW. We know that everyone has influence, and students have an opportunity to change the culture of their school by choosing to love others with their leadership.

>> OPENING QUESTION

Who is your favorite famous person? Why?



>> MENTOR PROMPT

Last week we learned about Jesus, what we know about him, what people say about him, and most importantly, what he says about himself. This week, we are going to be talking about the leadership qualities that we can learn from Jesus. What leadership qualities can you identify from what you already know, and have learned, about Jesus? *Give students a few moments to answer.* There are lots of leadership qualities we can learn from Jesus, but today we are specifically going to be focusing specifically on how Jesus showed love to all people.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think the first leadership quality we are talking about is loving others?
2. What stories have you heard about Jesus showing love to others?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Love was central to the ministry of Jesus and His time on Earth. In the scripture we are looking at today, Jesus sums up all the laws that we see in the Old Testament into two commandments, and both of those centers around love.

>> SCRIPTURE

Mark 12:28-34

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why would Jesus indicate that these two practices are the most important of all the laws?
2. Look up the Ten Commandments in the Old Testament. If you had to categorize them into the two commandments Jesus gave, where would you put each one? (Exodus 20:1-17) *Using a dry erase board, or sheets of paper create a visual of the categories.*

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Loving others is something that Jesus invites us, and calls for us, to do as a part of our faith. However, loving others is also an important part of leadership. Love can look a lot of different ways but love in scripture is defined for us in 1 Corinthians 13. It lists many characteristics to help us define love, patience, kindness, not envious, not jealous, or rude, and the list goes on. *Why might those qualities be important in a leader? Take some time after they answer to read this article together as a group or summarize it for your students.*

Read This Article: <https://www.thnk.org/blog/leading-with-love/#>



>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Which one of these examples of leading with love sounds the most difficult, and why?
2. Which one of these examples of leading with love sounds the easiest for you?
3. How would your school change if everyone tried to use these three examples of leading with love in everyday life?
4. Think of one leader that you know of that displays these characteristics. Who are they/how do you know of them? Give an example of how they display this.

>> ACTIVITY

In this article, we learn three ways we can exhibit love in our leadership. 1. Making a genuine effort to understand each other, 2. accepting that we are all flawed, 3. have courageous conversations. As a class, work together using what you know about Jesus to identify how He emulates each of these loving characteristics. Afterwards, work together as a class to identify specific ways you can try that at school. *Consider giving each student a sheet of paper or writing them on a dry erase board in the room.*

1. Making a genuine effort to understand each other
2. Accepting that we are all flawed
3. Have courageous conversations

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Love and leadership are not always tied together, but maybe they should be. As we continue on discovering new leadership traits, remember that the most important thing for us to do as a human is to show love to other people. Leaning on those three examples we discussed earlier: making a genuine effort to understand each other, accepting that we are all flawed, and having courageous conversations, we can positively impact and influence the people around us.

>> JOURNAL PROMPTS

Have students complete these journal prompts on their own at home, or in session if you have time. The practice of journaling is something we will promote all four years of high school in our Discipleship Groups. Write these prompts on the board or text them out in a group chat so they can copy them in their LEAD Student Journals.

1. Why do you think love is an important leadership skill?
2. What is one courageous conversation you have had?



>> MENTAL HEALTH CHECK-IN

Take several minutes to go around and ask each student, "How is it with your soul?" Explain that John Wesley encouraged the original members of Methodist small groups to ask one another this question to "check in" on each other's mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Remember, if any "red flags" or mental health concerns arise during this time, please direct students to appropriate Pastoral Care and Counseling Resources (cor.org/care) and inform a member of the student ministries staff team.

>> JOYS/CONCERNS AND PRAYER

Close by sharing joys and concerns and praying together as a group.

Share Joys first: Things you are thankful for or ways you've encountered God this week.
Share Concerns second: Things going on that you want to lift up to God and share the burden of with others.

Close your session in prayer. Encourage a student to pray or ask multiple people to pray.



Handwriting practice area with 14 horizontal lines. Large, faint, light blue letters 'READ' are visible in the background.



YEAR ONE

UNIT 3 | SESSION 3

Biblical Leadership: Leader Profile: Rahab

>> MAIN POINT

God can use anyone,

>> BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The next two weeks will be focused on the Old Testament character Rahab as a leader. It was uncommon for women to be lifted up during this time period, but because Rahab was a prostitute, or possibly running a brothel, she is an especially unexpected character for us to look at for leadership. Except that what we know to be true is that God can use anyone. Not only do we see leadership from Rahab, but she was a significant part of God's story, and even a part of the lineage of Jesus. In today's session we will talk about how categorizing people into groups is often a normal part of our human experience and we see that reflected in movies and shows. Those categories often impact how we perceive others, and what we expect from them. It is easy to look at Rahab's life and judge her experience. She was a foreigner, a woman, and a prostitute. She was living in an enemy city that was about to be attacked, invaded, and conquered by the Israelite army. Yet she went out of her way to welcome and protect two men who would have been considered her enemies.

What we know about Rahab primarily comes from the Old Testament book of Joshua, chapters 2 and 6. She lived in the Canaanite city of Jericho, which was on the destruction path for Israel's conquering army. When two spies from Israel's army showed up at her door, Rahab made a choice and took matters into her own hands: she chose to hide and protect the spies, keeping them safe. In return, she negotiated her and her family's safety and protection once the invading Israelite army came to destroy Jericho.

There are several possible reasons why Rahab would protect and hide the spies: First, the text in Joshua 2:9-13 reveals the most obvious reason: that she and her people feared the Lord and believed that the God of Israel was the One True God. Rahab wanted to cast her lot with the Israelites because she thought she had a better chance of survival by siding with them. Second, as a woman and a prostitute, she was likely looked down upon in her own society in Jericho. Rahab possibly saw this as an opportunity to escape her former life in Jericho and start a new life among the Israelites. Third, Rahab lived in an ancient near east culture that valued welcoming strangers and showing hospitality. Even though the Israelite spies were her enemies, she was brave and courageous, while still showing kindness.



>> OPENER: TWO TRUTHS AND ONE LIE

Supplies Needed: Index cards, writing utensils

- Divide your group into two teams. Have everyone write down three facts about themselves on a piece of paper. However, two should be truthful, and one should be a lie! Try to make them as interesting and tricky as possible!
- One at a time (alternating teams), each team will send a representative forward to read the facts about themselves. The other team guesses which is the lie.
- If the other team guesses correctly, they score a point. If they guess incorrectly, the representative's team scores the point.
- The team with the most points after everyone has shared their truths and lies wins!

>> DEBRIEF THE OPENER

- Was it difficult or easy to guess the lies?
- What's something new you learned about someone else today?
- Name one fact you found most interesting about a particular person.

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Lots of movies and shows 'categorize' students based on their reputations, hobbies, clothing, or something else about them. We can see that in movies like *Inside Out*, *Mean Girls*, *The Breakfast Club*, *Turning Red*, *Zootopia*, and more. This is so popular in television series and movies because it reflects our culture and is relevant for many people.

>> QUESTION

1. Thinking about your school and your experiences, are students in your school categorized into 'groups' based on interest or reputation?
2. What groups are typical for high schoolers to be categorized into?
3. Do you think these categories and/or reputations impact how we perceive certain people? Why or why not?



>> MENTOR PROMPT

Today we are going to be talking about someone we meet in the book of Joshua, named Rahab. When considering all the different people throughout the Bible, Rahab may not necessarily stand out as a leader. She was a foreigner, a woman, and a prostitute. She was living in an enemy city that was about to be attacked, invaded, and conquered by the Israelite army. Yet she went out of her way to welcome and protect two men who would have been considered her enemies.

What we know about Rahab primarily comes from the Old Testament book of Joshua, chapters 2 and 6. She lived in the Canaanite city of Jericho, which was on the destruction path for Israel's conquering army. When two spies from Israel's army showed up at her door, Rahab made a choice and took matters into her own hands: she chose to hide and protect the spies, keeping them safe. In return, she negotiated her and her family's safety and protection once the invading Israelite army came to destroy Jericho.

>> ACTIVITY – TRUE OR FALSE

Supplies: index cards, writing utensils

Give each student an index card. Have them write "TRUE" on one side, and "FALSE" on the other. After sharing each statement, have students vote on the statements. At the end, share the answers and more information. Mix up the order for fun!

- Rahab is one of only four women mentioned in Jesus' genealogy in Matthew 1:5. –

TRUE

- She becomes the mother of Boaz, and the great-great-great-grandmother of King David. She is named in Matthew 1 alongside the women Tamar, Ruth (her eventual daughter-in-law), Bathsheba, and Mary.
- Rahab is commended for her faith and hospitality in two other books. **TRUE**
 - The New Testament books of Hebrews and James
- Because Rahab was a prostitute, we can assume that she didn't have much to lose.

FALSE

- While Rahab initially known by her title ("a prostitute named Rahab" – Joshua 2:1), the facts that she owned her own house, hosted the spies, had direct contact with the king of Jericho, and made quick and cunning decisions probably all point to the fact that she may have been running her own business or acting as a landlady. She was more than "just a prostitute." She was a leader! We are more than our reputations too.
- It was not normal for strange men to walk into Rahab's home. **FALSE**
 - As a well-known prostitute (or, just as likely, the propriety of a boarding house/brothel), it wouldn't have been uncommon for strange men to enter and exit Rahab's home.



>> SCRIPTURE

Read the following Bible passages:

- Joshua 2:1-21
- Joshua 6:22-25
-

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What things made Rahab an “outsider”? Do you think she was considered a leader by her community?
2. Thinking about what you just learned, what leadership characteristics do you see in Rahab?
3. Why do you think Rahab's story is included in the Bible? What does her life teach us?

>> RESPONSE EXPERIENCE: SPLIT SECOND DECISION

Rahab demonstrated great leadership ability by thinking quickly on her feet. When is the last time you had to make a split-second decision? Either sharing in smaller groups or individually (journaling your response), think about a time when you successfully made a quick decision. Reflect on these questions:

1. What happened during a time when you had to make a split-second decision?
2. What emotions or feelings were you experiencing in the moment?
3. How did you feel afterward when everything turned out ok?
4. Do you feel like you are more prepared the next time you have to make a quick decision?
5. Rahab had to make a split-second decision and decided to protect the spies. Why do you think Rahab would protect and hide the spies, risking her (and her family's) safety?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

There are several possible reasons why Rahab would protect and hide the spies: First, the text in Joshua 2:9-13 reveals the most obvious reason: that she and her people feared the Lord and believed that the God of Israel was the One True God. Rahab wanted to cast her lot with the Israelites because she thought she had a better chance of survival by siding with them. Second, as a woman and a prostitute, she was likely looked down upon in her own society in Jericho. Rahab possibly saw this as an opportunity to escape her former life in Jericho and start a new life among the Israelites. Third, Rahab lived in an ancient near east culture that valued welcoming strangers and showing hospitality. Even though the Israelite spies were her enemies, she was brave and courageous, while still showing kindness.



>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do students risk by being brave and courageous while showing kindness?
2. What is one thing you want to take away from Rahab's story?

>> JOURNAL REFLECTION PROMPTS

Have students complete these journal prompts on their own at home, or in session if you have time. The practice of journaling is something we will promote all four years of high school in our Discipleship Groups. Write these prompts on the board or text them out in a group chat so they can copy them in their LEAD Student Journals.

1. What is a label you have been given in your life?
2. How has that label impacted or affected you?
3. Have you ever felt disqualified from being a leader?

>> MENTAL HEALTH CHECK-IN

Take several minutes to go around and ask each student, "How is it with your soul?" Explain that John Wesley encouraged the original members of Methodist small groups to ask one another this question to "check in" on each other's mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Remember, if any "red flags" or mental health concerns arise during this time, please direct students to appropriate Pastoral Care and Counseling Resources (cor.org/care) and inform a member of the student ministries staff team.

>> JOYS/CONCERNS AND PRAYER

Close by sharing joys and concerns and praying together as a group.

Share Joys first: Things you are thankful for or ways you've encountered God this week.
Share Concerns second: Things going on that you want to lift up to God and share the burden of with others.

Close your session in prayer. Encourage a student to pray or ask multiple people to pray.





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YEAR ONE

UNIT 3 | SESSION 4

Biblical Leadership: Leadership Practice and Application: Brave and Courageous

>> MAIN POINT

We can be brave and courageous

>> BACKGROUND INFO

In our last session, we learned about the Leader Profile of Rahab. Rahab took charge of a tricky situation, showed compassion to her enemies, and risked her life by helping two enemy spies. Today we will talk about Rahab again, but this time about the leadership skills we see in Rahab. Specifically, her leadership skills of being brave and courageous. Sometimes, leadership involves being brave and courageous, even when it is difficult or scary. Rahab was brave and courageous by welcoming in two spies, hiding their location from the Jericho king, helping them escape from the city through her window. Doing this allowed her to protect her family during the coming war, as well as honor the God of Israel. In return, the Israelites offered Rahab and her family safety, and a place to live out their days. Courageous leadership is an important aspect of leadership. An article in the Harvard Business Review, *What Courageous Leaders Do Differently*, talks about three ways that courageous leaders lead differently. Courageous leaders display openness and humility, put principles first, and focus on making environments safer for others.

Read: (<https://hbr.org/2022/01/what-courageous-leaders-do-differently>)

>> OPENER

What is the scariest roller coaster you have ever been on? What was so scary about it? What made you choose to ride it?



>> MENTOR PROMPT

Today we will talk about Rahab again, but this time about the leadership skills we see in Rahab. Specifically, we will talk about her leadership skills of being brave and courageous. Sometimes, leadership involves being brave and courageous, even when it is difficult. Rahab was brave and courageous by welcoming in two spies, hiding their location from the Jericho king, helping them escape from the city through her window. Doing this allowed her to protect her family during the coming war, as well as honor the God of Israel. In return, the Israelites offered Rahab and her family safety, and a place to live out their days.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why might courage be a leadership trait?
2. What would the opposite of a courageous leader act like?
3. How can a brave and courageous leader impact a community or organization?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Courageous leadership is an important aspect of leadership. An article in the Harvard Business Review, *What Courageous Leaders Do Differently*, talks about three ways that courageous leaders lead differently. Courageous leaders display openness and humility, put principles first, and focus on making environments safer for others. (<https://hbr.org/2022/01/what-courageous-leaders-do-differently>)

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why would each of these three characteristics be important for leaders to display?
2. Do you believe that courage is something you can learn, or is it only a character trait you are born with? Why?

>> RESPONSE ACTIVITY: HOW WAS RAHAB COURAGEOUS?

Take time to re-read the story of Rahab (Joshua 2:1-21). After you do, work together as a class, or in small groups, to identify how Rahab might display each of the 3 characteristics listed below from the Harvard Business Review. For more context, have students review the HBR Article individually or as a class. If students work in groups, have them present/explain what they found to others.

The Harvard Business Review article called *What Courageous Leaders Do Differently* (<https://hbr.org/2022/01/what-courageous-leaders-do-differently>) shares the following four skills that encompass a courageous leader.

1. Courageous leaders display openness and humility
2. Courageous leaders put principles first
3. Courageous leaders focus on making environments safer for others



>> SCRIPTURE

Read the following Bible passages:

James 2:24-26

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The James passage commends Rahab for her faith. How did Rahab demonstrate faith? How did she put her faith into action?
2. Is there someone in your life that has displayed courageous leadership? What was the experience like?
3. Why can displaying courageous leadership be challenging, or even scary?
4. How can we live out courageous leadership in our lives each day? How might people see a reflection of Jesus through our actions due to our courageous leadership?

>> ACTIVITY: PRACTICING COURAGE

Either as a large group or in smaller groups of two or three, brainstorm practical ways we can practice courage in our daily lives. Think realistic: what can we do this week? Then, put some of your ideas into practice! Come together as a class to review the ideas together.

Examples:

1. Courageous leaders display openness and humility
 - a. Apologizing when you did something wrong
 - b. Sharing stories about your life with people you trust
2. Courageous leaders put principles first (standing up for what is right)
 - a. Standing up to someone who bullies someone else
3. Courageous leaders focus on making environments safer for others
 - a. When you notice something that is unsafe, say something

>> JOURNAL REFLECTION PROMPTS

Have students complete these journal prompts on their own at home, or in session if you have time. The practice of journaling is something we will promote all four years of high school in our Discipleship Groups. Write these prompts on the board or text them out in a group chat so they can copy them in their LEAD Student Journals.

1. What is something you can do this week to display courageous leadership?
2. Think about the three qualities of courageous leadership, which one is the easiest for you? Which one is the most difficult?



>> MENTAL HEALTH CHECK-IN

Take several minutes to go around and ask each student, "How is it with your soul?" Explain that John Wesley encouraged the original members of Methodist small groups to ask one another this question to "check in" on each other's mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Remember, if any "red flags" or mental health concerns arise during this time, please direct students to appropriate Pastoral Care and Counseling Resources (cor.org/care) and inform a member of the student ministries staff team.

>> JOYS/CONCERNS AND PRAYER

Close by sharing joys and concerns and praying together as a group.

Share Joys first: Things you are thankful for or ways you've encountered God this week.
Share Concerns second: Things going on that you want to lift up to God and share the burden of with others.

Close your session in prayer. Encourage a student to pray or ask multiple people to pray



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YEAR ONE

UNIT 3 | SESSION 5

Biblical Leadership: Leader Profile: Paul

>> MAIN POINT

People are capable of change

>> BACKGROUND INFO

Since we can't cover the whole story of Paul's life in this session, we are going to focus on Paul's conversion experience in Acts 9. Paul went from being a persecutor of Christians to a strong Christian leader, apostle, and pastor. Great leaders are constantly growing, changing, and developing, and Paul was no exception. Paul also had to overcome many obstacles and challenges: he had a reputation as someone who hurt Christians and many believers were wary of him at first. Throughout his ministry, he faced many other difficulties and pressures, which he wrote about in 2 Corinthians 6:1-10.

Students today face many pressures as leaders, both externally from teachers, parents, peers, and coaches, and internally from that inner voice or internal critic. Or perhaps they don't see themselves as a leader. Like Paul, they may have to overcome a negative reputation or those around them wouldn't consider them leaders. But through God's grace and the help of friends and mentors, we all have the ability to become leaders in our own way. Being a leader is more than simply having "natural abilities." It is having a heart of compassion for others and the willingness to learn and grow as a person.

Before he became a pastor and missionary for Jesus, Paul originally persecuted Christians. Paul first comes on the scene in the biblical story in Acts 8:1-3 when he was a willing bystander and participant in the stoning of the first Christian martyr Stephen.

Many Christians resonate with Paul's story because he had a profound "conversion experience" while he was traveling to the city of Damascus to persecute and kill Christians. During that experience, Paul was blinded by a great light and Jesus Christ spoke to him, saying, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" (Acts 9:3-4) After three days, Paul regained his sight, and from that moment on, he became a great teacher, preacher, and missionary for Jesus. He traveled many miles, planted churches, wrote letters, and even witnessed to Gentiles (non-Jewish people).

As Paul worked to spread the gospel, he knew it was an impossible task to do it alone.



Paul became a mentor for younger leaders, trained them, and delegated tasks to them. Instead of needing to be everywhere, Paul would leave churches, and correspond via letter with them, giving advice and wisdom for them to develop leadership within their communities. Paul's leadership skill of delegation is something we can all strive towards.

Some mistakenly believe that Paul changed his name from Saul to Paul after he became a follower of Jesus. But Saul or Saulos is simply the Hebrew or Jewish version of his name, and Paul or Paulos is his name in Greek. After he began his ministry among the Greek-speaking Gentiles, he began going by the Greek language version of his name, to become "all things to all people" for the sake of spreading the Gospel of Jesus (1 Corinthians 9:22-23). Think of it as the difference between John (English) and Juan (Spanish)!

Paul is credited with writing several letters in the New Testament, including Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, and Philippians, and others. He was also an extensive traveler and church planter, and his missionary journeys are recounted in the book of Acts. He started churches in many places including Ephesus, Philippi, Crete, and Corinth.

>> OPENING QUESTION

Do you think people can change for the better? Why or why not? Do you think there is a limit to how much someone could change?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

The next few weeks we will focus on Paul from the New Testament. Paul was a leader in the early Christian Church, and partially responsible for the fast growth of the Christian Church. Paul went on many missionary journeys across Europe and Asia planting churches, teaching individuals about faith, training their leaders, and leaving to start another church. However, Paul was not always a church planter. Does anyone know about Paul's history?

>> READ THE FOLLOWING BIBLE PASSAGES

Acts 9:1-22

You could read this straight through, or in chunks with the following questions interspersed.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do we learn about Paul at the beginning of the scripture passage?
2. What changed for Paul?
3. How did the people initially react to Saul/Paul's conversion? Did they accept him as a leader right away?
4. How would you react?



>> MENTOR PROMPT

People can change, but sometimes it is hard to believe that change is possible. Especially when the change is so drastic it changes the person into someone completely different.

>> ACTIVITY

Supplies: Paper, blindfold

For this activity, send one student (the one that you will blindfold – this should be an extroverted student who doesn't mind a joke) into the hallway. Remaining students will make a maze using sheets of scrap paper to make the border of the maze. Tell the students that they are supposed to shout the correct directions to the blindfolded student. Tell the blindfolded student that the students inside were given instructions to shout lies about the maze to trick them into stepping out of the maze. DO NOT tell the students who made the maze that. Once the student is blindfolded and the maze is complete, bring the blindfolded student inside and have them begin to complete the maze while the other students shout directions. Once it is over, ask the following questions.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why was it difficult for the blindfolded student to get through the maze? *(because they thought we were lying about the instructions!).*
2. Ask the blindfolded student why they thought they were lying. *(because a trusted leader told them the rules and they followed it)*

>> MENTOR PROMPT

The student heard from a trusted person that everyone inside this room was lying, and it was a part of the experience. There were religious leaders who were vehemently opposed to the movement of Christianity and were trusted leaders in the community. Paul likely grew up trusting those leaders, listening to them, and learning from them, without ever actually learning the truth about Jesus. What we learned is that when Paul met Jesus, his life was changed.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Would you characterize Paul as a natural-born leader, or as someone who had to develop as a leader (or both)? Which type of leader are you?
2. In what ways did Paul learn, grow, and change as a person?
3. Who were the people that helped Paul grow and develop as a leader? Do you have mentors in your life that help you grow as a person and leader?
4. Why do people (and especially leaders) need to keep growing, changing, and learning?



>> RESPONSE ACTIVITY: PAUL THE PASTOR

What was Paul like as a Pastor and a Church Leader? Look up each of the following passages and answer these questions about each one. Have students do this activity on their own or in small groups of two or three? Or you can have each group/student look at one passage, and then report back their findings to the larger group.

>> READ THESE PASSAGES

- Acts 16:12, 16-34
- Acts 18:1-11
- Acts 19:1, 8-10
- Galatians 2:11-16 (this one may be a bit tricky!)
- Philippians 1:12-20 (also a little tricky!)

>> ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS ABOUT EACH PASSAGE

- In the passage, what city or place was Paul in?
- What was the conflict?
- How did Paul respond?
- Did he display any leadership qualities or characteristics?

>> JOURNAL REFLECTION PROMPTS

Have students complete these journal prompts on their own at home, or in session if you have time. The practice of journaling is something we will promote all four years of high school in our Discipleship Groups. Write these prompts on the board or text them out in a group chat so they can copy them in their LEAD Student Journals.

- One area I desire to grow or develop as a leader is...
- One way I have changed in the last few years is...

>> MENTAL HEALTH CHECK-IN

Take several minutes to go around and ask each student, "How is it with your soul?" Explain that John Wesley encouraged the original members of Methodist small groups to ask one another this question to "check in" on each other's mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Remember, if any "red flags" or mental health concerns arise during this time, please direct students to appropriate Pastoral Care and Counseling Resources (cor.org/care) and inform a member of the student ministries staff team.



>> JOYS/CONCERNS AND PRAYER

Close by sharing joys and concerns and praying together as a group.

Share Joys first: Things you are thankful for or ways you've encountered God this week.
Share Concerns second: Things going on that you want to lift up to God and share the burden of with others.

Close your session in prayer. Encourage a student to pray or ask multiple people to pray.



Handwriting lines for notes.



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YEAR ONE

UNIT 3 | SESSION 6

Biblical Leadership: Leadership Practice and Application: Delegation

>> MAIN POINT

Delegation promotes growth

>> BACKGROUND INFO

Today we are going to be continuing our conversation about Paul, from the New Testament. To recap what we learned last week, Paul was someone who spent his life persecuting Christians, met Jesus, and changed his life going on many missionary journeys that significantly impacted the growth of Christianity. Today we are going to be talking about the leadership practice of delegation that we see in Paul. Paul's calling was to spread the good news of Jesus around the world. The problem is that Paul could not be everywhere, even if he wanted to. What we learn about Paul is that he trained other leaders (Timothy) to help him start churches. After he would start a church, he would leave the leadership in the hands of the church, checking in via letters to encourage them and teach them. If Paul hadn't delegated the leadership and evangelism to others, would Christianity have spread as quickly?

We see delegation used in lots of areas of life to help further the mission and vision of a group, organization, mission, or vision. Sometimes we see delegation happen using volunteers. Delegation can also happen within homes to share responsibilities among the household. When that happens, it frees up space for everyone involved and allows for shared responsibility of the experience or space. Delegation promotes growth. It is an important leadership skill for our students to understand, even though it is difficult. It is often easier for us to just do it ourselves instead of taking the time to teach others. Help them think creatively about what delegation could look like in your group, and how we see Paul live that out.

>> **OPENING QUESTION** If you could hire a personal assistant to do one thing for you (it has to be something you already do) to enhance your life, what would you have them do? What would you do with all of your free time from not worrying about that thing?



>> MENTOR PROMPT

Today we will continue our conversation about Paul from the New Testament. To recap what we learned last week, Paul was someone who spent his life persecuting Christians, met Jesus, and changed his life going on many missionary journeys the significantly impacted the growth of Christianity.

Read This Article Together from the Harvard Business Review about delegation: <https://hbr.org/2017/10/to-be-a-great-leader-you-have-to-learn-how-to-delegate-well>

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Where are some places you have seen delegation used? What are some examples?
2. What are ways you have seen your parents delegate responsibilities within your home? Why might they do that?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

We see delegation used in lots of areas of life to help further the mission and vision of a group, organization, mission, or vision. Sometimes we see delegation happen using volunteers. Delegation can also happen within homes to share responsibilities among the household. When that happens, it frees up space for everyone involved and allows for shared responsibility of the experience or space. Delegation promotes growth!

>> RESPONSE ACTIVITY

After reading the article, think about ways your group could delegate functions that help the group run smoothly. Talk about why that might be beneficial and how the group could grow. Things like inviting students, following up with new students, helping to organize outside hang outs, running the group me, could all be appropriate ways for students to help lead the group through delegation. Assign students different roles to support your group. Follow up with them in future weeks.

1 Corinthians 4

Ephesians 4:1-16

Philippians 1 (this could be broken up in chunks for larger groups)

Looking at the four ways to delegate from the article we read earlier, how do you see Paul represented in these?

1. Start with your reasons.
2. Inspire their commitment.
3. Engage at the right level.
4. Practice saying "yes," "no," and "yes, if."



>> RESPONSE ACTIVITY: DELEGATION IN OUR SMALL GROUP

After reading the article, think about ways that as a class, the leaders could delegate different parts of the class. Talk about why that might be beneficial and how the class could grow. Things like inviting students, following up with new students, helping to organize and outside hang out, running a group me, could all be appropriate ways for them to help lead the class. Assign students different roles to support your group. Follow up with them in future weeks.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How could we use delegation in our group setting?
2. How might our group benefit from delegation?

>> JOURNAL PROMPTS

Have students complete these journal prompts on their own at home, or in session if you have time. The practice of journaling is something we will promote all four years of high school in our Discipleship Groups. Write these prompts on the board or text them out in a group chat so they can copy them in their LEAD Student Journals.

What is one way you have seen delegation be successful...

What is one way you have seen delegation be unsuccessful...

What is something you learned about Paul's leadership...

>> MENTAL HEALTH CHECK-IN

Take several minutes to go around and ask each student, "How is it with your soul?" Explain that John Wesley encouraged the original members of Methodist small groups to ask one another this question to "check in" on each other's mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Remember, if any "red flags" or mental health concerns arise during this time, please direct students to appropriate Pastoral Care and Counseling Resources (cor.org/care) and inform a member of the student ministries staff team.

>> JOYS/CONCERNS AND PRAYER

Close by sharing joys and concerns and praying together as a group.

Share Joys first: Things you are thankful for or ways you've encountered God this week.
Share Concerns second: Things going on that you want to lift up to God and share the burden of with others.

Close your session in prayer. Encourage a student to pray or ask multiple people to pray.



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YEAR ONE

UNIT 3 | SESSION 7

Leadership Practices: Mission and Vision of the Church and Student Ministry

>> MAIN POINT

We are the body of Christ

>> BACKGROUND INFO

Church of the Resurrection was founded in 1990 by Senior Pastor Adam Hamilton. We are a part of the United Methodist Church, and we have multiple campus locations in the Kansas City area plus an online worshipping congregation around the country.

The life of our church is guided by three statements:

- **Our Purpose** is to build a Christian community where non-religious and nominally religious people are becoming deeply committed Christians.
- **Our Vision** is to be used by God to change lives, strengthen churches, and transform the world.
- **Our Journey** is to know, love and serve God.

Our Resurrection “key distinctives” – things that we try to live out as a church:

- **Outward focused:** reaching others not yet in our community through radical hospitality
- **Bridge-Building:** making connections with those different than us
- **Thought-provoking:** being willing to ask hard questions and not “check our brains at the door”
- **Hope Radiating:** living out the hope of the Resurrection and believing that the love of Jesus always wins

Resurrection Students will create a safe, authentic and inclusive community where everyone belongs and has the opportunity to choose to grow and live out their faith.

“Resurrection-isms,” or common phrases you might hear around church:

1. **“Closing the Gap”** between how things are and how things should be: in our lives, in our community, and around the world. We’ll talk more about this in our next series, “God’s Kingdom and Social Justice,” but essentially this means bringing the world more in line with the dream that God has for it



2. **“The Worst thing is never the last thing.”** What this means is that God has a way of turning even the worst things around for God and brings hope and light even into our darkest days. We are a Resurrection people. We are hopeful people. We believe in a God who raised his son Jesus from the dead, and that won't leave us alone on our darkest days.
3. **“Not only do I believe it; I'm counting on it!”** This is something you'll hear Pastor Adam say after his Easter message. People will often ask him, “Hey, you don't really believe all this do you? Like, you don't really believe that Jesus rose from the dead or was born from a Virgin?” But we do believe it! And we place our hope and trust in it too!
4. **“The Five Essentials Practices of the Christian Faith.”** These are ways you can become a more deeply committed Christian. We'll talk more about them next year in our LEAD Discipleship Small Group, but for now, just know that the Five Essentials for Christian Growth are: Worship, Study, Serve, Give, and Share.

Some of the things we care about, or **THAT** make us unique as a church:

1. We have a heart for many social justice causes in our community. We have a “Hunger Stoppers” ministry that works to provide food for families around Kansas City through our Overland Park Food Pantry and our Food Mobile. Our Backpacks for Hunger program provides for kids who need food on the weekends and during the summer when reduced and free lunch programs aren't running. We have partner schools throughout the KC area, and we work with them to provide books, tutoring, classroom parties, and building updates. We partner with Flourish Furnishings and have a Beds Ministry to provide furniture for those who need it. There are many ways to get involved!
2. We also care about global missions around the world! We have global partnerships in Honduras, Costa Rica, Haiti, Malawi, South Africa, Puerto Rico, and on the Mexico border! You can go on an international Serve Trip with your parents now, or by yourself when you turn 17.
3. We have a passion for strengthening other churches. What that means is that we give away almost ALL the content we produce and create: sermons, graphics, curriculum...you name it! We also host churches and pastors from across the country for conferences and special events—both online and in person.
4. We have a dedicated ministry for individuals with special needs called “Matthew's Ministry.” It's named after the “founder” of this ministry, Matthew Joyner, who was a non-verbal handicapped child who came to Resurrection with his parents in the early days of our church. We as a church stepped up to support Matthew and others like him so that they could be included and belong as a part of our worshipping community.
5. We are working toward racial reconciliation and full LGBTQ+ inclusion. We have done several series on become The Beloved Community, and we have put out a statement on racial justice, which can be viewed here: <https://cor.org/justice/racial-justice>. We also long to be a welcoming church where everyone can belong and anyone can feel at home, regardless of gender identity or sexual orientation.



Find out more at:
<https://cor.org/visit/our-story>
<https://cor.org/vision-2030>

>> OPENER: IDEAL COMMUNITY

Your group has been stranded on a deserted island. You have everything you need to set up a new community (clean water, unlimited food source, shelter, supplies, etc.). What kind of community would you want to create? What rules or structure would you put in place? How would you govern or lead yourselves? Set a timer and take 8-10 minutes to brainstorm what your "Ideal Community" would look like. Take notes on a whiteboard or piece of paper if needed.

After the timer goes off, debrief the Opener:

- Did you come to any immediate agreements or consensus while setting up your community?
- What conflicts or disagreements came up in your community?
- What role did God or religion have in your community?
- Did any "natural leaders" emerge in your ideal community?
- If this scenario actually happens, do you think your group would survive on a deserted island with the structures and systems you put in place?

>> QUESTION

How did you/your family find Resurrection? What is something you like about Resurrection?

Leaders, be sure to share your Resurrection story. How did you find yourself here, why did you stay, what do you love about this church, and most importantly, why do you serve in student ministry?

- If you were inviting someone brand new to our church, how would you describe it or tell them about it? (Try to think beyond, "It's big!" or "It's cool!")

>> MENTOR PROMPT

There are many different reasons people choose churches, but one important reason is the community we get to be a part of together. Community helps us grow, gives us space to ask faith questions, and a space to be ourselves. Before we get into our session today, we are going to hear from our Lead Director of Student Ministry, Steve Schneeberger about what it means to be a part of Resurrection, and Resurrection Students.

>> VIDEO

Video Script

Hey Resurrection students. I'm Steve Schneeberger, the Lead Director over Resurrection Student Ministries. I am so proud that you have taken steps to become a leader both in our church and your community by being a part of the LEAD Discipleship Course. As you



wrap up this unit on Biblical Leadership, I wanted to share a little bit more on what it looks like to be a part of our church, Church of the Resurrection, and the type of culture we hope to create together in Resurrection Student Ministries.

Way back in 1990, our Senior Pastor Adam Hamilton (show picture of Adam from the 90s) had a big vision. He had a dream of starting a church in Kansas City where non-religious and nominally religious people could grow into deeply committed followers of Jesus. So, he started Church of the Resurrection. Ironically, our first meeting place was in a funeral home! From just a few dozen people back in 1990, we've grown into five campus locations in Kansas City plus an online congregation around the country.

But you may be wondering....What's a non-religious or nominally religious person?

Well, those might be people who say, "yeah! I go to church! ...on Christmas and Easter." Or they are your friends who say, "Oh, I only go to church when my grandma makes me." Or maybe you know people in your school who respond to you, "That whole Christianity and Jesus-thing...that may be for YOU, but it's not for me." Non-religious and nominally religious folks may even be those who have been hurt by the church or cast out by other Christians. It's a sad reality that some Christians treat others poorly because of their background, race, gender, or sexual orientation. Many people in our communities or friend groups have experienced what we call "church hurt" or "church trauma."

But here at Church of the Resurrection, we believe that Jesus is for EVERYONE! The outcasts, and the ones that others have pushed aside or overlooked. We also want our church to be a safe place where you can bring your doubts, your questions, and even your church hurt. Are you an agnostic or even an atheist? That's ok! You're welcome here too.

We especially believe that's true in Resurrection Student ministries. **We hope to create a safe, authentic, and inclusive community where everyone belongs and has the opportunity to choose to grow and live out their faith.** We want to cultivate a place of belonging that starts from the time a student enters into student ministry in 6th grade until the time they leave as a graduating senior. We want students to know that they are always welcome to ask questions and dig deep as they confirm their faith and choose for themselves to follow after Jesus. Then as they become leaders in the group—like you all are doing right now—they will continue to grow as individuals and as a community that follows after Jesus together. Finally, as they graduate, we want each student to commit to living out their faith in life-long ways as they find new communities and places to continue to grow as disciples of Jesus.

That's a beautiful vision and a hopeful dream for Resurrection students! But it takes all of us living into it and working together to make it happen. As leaders in your friend group, in our youth group, and here at church, we need YOU to model what it means to be a safe, welcoming, and inclusive community. And we hope you will continue to invite others into building this dream and vision together.



So, the Resurrection dream started with Pastor Adam in a funeral home. But it has to continue with each of us. It has to continue with YOU. Will you help make our church and our student ministry a place where everyone feels safe, welcome, included, and like they belong?

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Did you learn anything NEW about Church of the Resurrection today?
2. What is your favorite part about our church or student ministry?
3. Why do you think it's important to connect with non-religious and nominally religious people? Who are those people in your life?
4. What does it mean to become a "deeply committed Christian"? How can we become more deeply committed?
5. In your own words, what does it mean to know, love, and serve God?

>> SCRIPTURE

Read the following Bible passage:

1. Matthew 28:16-20
2. Acts 4:32-35

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How is our church living out the "Great Commission" of Jesus from Matthew 28?
2. In what ways does our church look like (or not look like) the early church in Acts 4?
3. How can we work together to make our church or student ministry more welcoming and inclusive? In what ways do we still need to "close the gap" between the way things are and the way things should be at our church?

>> RESPONSE ACTIVITY: THE BODY OF CHRIST

Throughout the New Testament, the Church is often compared to a body and called "the Body of Christ." Divide into smaller groups and split up the passages below among your groups. Read your assigned passage in your group and answer the questions as a group. Compare how our church—Church of the Resurrection—is measuring up to the biblical standard of being "the body of Christ." Share your findings with the larger group.

Read these passages:

1. Romans 12:3-5
2. 1 Corinthians 12:12-14
3. 1 Corinthians 12:26-27
4. Ephesians 4:15-16
5. Colossians 3:12-17

Answer these questions about each passage:



- In the passage, how is the church as the Body of Christ described?
- In what ways does that sound like our church, Church of the Resurrection?
- Are there any areas in which our church needs to improve, or “close the gap” to become more like the Body of Christ according to this passage?

>> JOURNAL REFLECTION PROMPTS

Have students complete these journal prompts on their own at home, or in session if you have time. Write them on the board or text them out in a group chat so they can copy them in their LEAD Student Journals.

- One area of our church I want to explore more is...
- A non-religious or nominally religious person I could invite to church is...
- I want to become more deeply committed to Christ this week by...

>> MENTAL HEALTH CHECK-IN

Take several minutes to go around and ask each student, “How is it with your soul?” Explain that John Wesley encouraged the original members of Methodist small groups to ask one another this question to “check in” on each other’s mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Remember, if any “red flags” or mental health concerns arise during this time, please direct students to appropriate Pastoral Care and Counseling Resources (cor.org/care) and inform a member of the student ministries staff team.

>> JOYS/CONCERNS AND PRAYER

Close by sharing joys and concerns and praying together as a group.

Share Joys first: Things you are thankful for or ways you’ve encountered God this week.
Share Concerns second: Things going on that you want to lift up to God and share the burden of with others.

Close your session in prayer. Encourage a student to pray or ask multiple people to pray.





YEAR ONE

UNIT 3 | SESSION 8

Biblical Leadership: Leader Profile: Mary, Mother of Jesus

>> MAIN POINT

Even Mary experienced emotions

>> BACKGROUND INFO

While Mary is mentioned in several places throughout the New Testament gospels, the most famous story about her comes from Luke 1. This is the story of the Annunciation, when the angel Gabriel comes to Mary and announces that she has been chosen by God to be the mother of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior and God in human flesh.

There were many ways Mary could have responded to Gabriel's announcement: she could have denied God's request outright; she could have reacted in fear or anger; she could have given up and cried, believing her life as she knew it was over. Instead, she responded with willingness, acceptance, availability, and humility by saying, "I am the Lord's servant. Let it be with me just as you have said" (Luke 1:38, CEB). She accepted God's invitation to step into a leadership role, even though it meant an uncertain and difficult future.

While most students today won't face the same challenges and decisions Mary faced, they still have a choice to make. Whether they realize it or not, students today encounter many invitations to step into leadership roles. Their friends are watching how they act in class or on the team. They often have jobs or volunteer at the church in the community. Even in their own homes, they lead their younger siblings or cousins. How will students respond when opportunities come along to say "yes" to being a leader? Will they react out of fear and anxiety? Will they be unwilling to go along with what God has in store for their lives? Will they be inflexible and unwilling to adapt their carefully laid plans? Or, like Mary, will they be available and humbly say, "I am the Lord's servant."



>> BIBLICAL LEADERSHIP APPLICATION: AVAILABILITY AND HUMILITY

- When we say that Mary had “Availability,” this is more than just being in the “right place at the right time.” She wholly and fully made herself available to God and surrendered to God’s purposes. While becoming an unwed mother as a young teenager is less than ideal even today, this situation could have been potentially disastrous for Mary. She faced a lifetime of humiliation, rejection, poverty, and possibly even death—the penalty at the time for adultery and sex outside of marriage. Yet she courageously and willingly accepted whatever God asked from her, and boldly walked into an unknown future with both confidence and humility—a hard combination to achieve! We’ll take more about this unique Leadership Practice combination of availability and humility in our next session.

More about Mary:

- Shortly after her visit from the angel Gabriel, Mary travels to see her relative Elizabeth, who was also miraculously pregnant in her old age. While visiting Elizabeth, Mary sings a song of praise known as the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55). It is a beautiful and hopeful poem about how God lifts up the lowly and humbles the proud and brings justice to all.
- While we are focusing on the early parts of Mary’s story today, we know that she went on to raise Jesus and even follow him throughout his ministry. Sadly, she was even present at his death on a cross (John 19:25-27). However, she also witnessed his resurrection and ascension into heaven as well! (Acts 1:12-14)
- There is some dispute among Christians about whether Mary went on to have other children after Jesus. Catholics believe in Mary’s perpetual virginity—meaning, that she remained a virgin her whole life. Protestants believe that Mary went on to have other children with her husband Joseph after Jesus, including James, who went on to become an early leader of the church in Jerusalem and author of the book of James (Mark 6:3).

Read <https://theparentcue.org/using-a-feelings-wheel-why-its-helpful-and-how-it-works/> to prepare

>> OPENING QUESTION

1. If your parents came to you right now and said that tomorrow morning you are moving to another country and you have to cancel all your plans, what would you have to cancel? How would you feel about that?
2. What would you do if God interrupted your plans for some other purpose?



>> ACTIVITY: FAMOUS PARENTAL FIGURES

Since we are talking about Mary, the mother of Jesus, who are some other famous parental figures throughout history or in pop culture? They can either be real or fictional, and they don't have to be a traditional parent either. Go around and share about your favorite "famous parents," and then answer these questions:

- What made these famous parents special or recognizable?
- Do you think these parents asked or chose to be famous, or did it just happen to them?
- What leadership qualities or characteristics did they display?

Examples of "Famous Parental Figures" (in case your group gets stuck!)

1. **Princess Diana** – wife to British Prince Charles and mom to Princes William and Harry who was tragically killed in a car accident in 1997.
2. **Helen Parr aka "Elastigirl" aka Mrs. Incredible** – wife Bob Parr/Mr. Incredible and mom to Violet, Dash, and Jack-Jack.
3. **Sacagawea** – a Lemhi Shoshone woman who helped guide and translate for the Lewis and Clark Expedition, all while carrying her infant son, Jean Baptiste Charbonneau!
4. **Gru** – from Despicable Me has a journey with parenthood throughout the movies but shows up as a great father for the girls he adopts.
5. **Joyce Byers** – mom of Will from Stranger Things, she never stopped believing that her son was alive and stopped at nothing to rescue him when he was trapped in the dark and mysterious Upside Down.
6. **Mamie Till** – early Civil Rights leader and mother of Emmett Till, a 14-year-old black boy who was ruthlessly murdered in Mississippi in 1955.
7. **Aunt Mae** – Spiderman's aunt and mother figure. She chose to be a mom when a child needed her
8. **Molly Weasley** – The mother of Ron Weasley in Harry Potter, and a mother figure for Harry. Molly showed each of her children love, in the way they needed it.
9. **Terry** – An officer, and father, in the show "Brooklyn 99" often talks about being a parent, and how he prioritizes his family.

>> MENTOR PROMPT

The last few weeks, we have been talking about different people throughout scripture and their leadership skills. Today for our last character study, we are going to be talking about Mary, the mother of Jesus. What do you know about Mary and the story of Mary? Consider writing this on a dry erase board, poster board, or have students write it on their own sheet of paper. Throughout the session, add things that students learn!



>> SCRIPTURE

Read the following Bible passages:

Luke 1:26-38

Luke 2:51-52

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How did the angel Gabriel describe Mary when greeting her? Why?
2. How did Mary initially respond to Gabriel's announcement? How did she eventually respond?
3. What questions did Mary have for the angel Gabriel? What questions would you have if you were in her place?
4. How were Mary's plans interrupted?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Mary's life was interrupted and her plans shifted to something completely different. Her life changed into something totally unexpected. Just because she was willing, doesn't mean she didn't experience lots of different feelings. When life gets interrupted, we can experience a lot of different emotions. Sometimes those feelings are positive, and sometimes they are negative. What feelings do you think Mary experienced?

>> RESPONSE EXPERIENCE: FEELINGS WHEEL

Complete this activity on your own or in smaller groups of two to three. Re-read back through Luke 1:26-38. As a group, or on a piece of paper, write down all the words that indicate how Mary might be feeling during her encounter with Gabriel (like "confused" or "afraid"). Then, go to <https://feelingswheel.com/>. Write down any other feelings from the wheel that she might have been experiencing. *Consider printing out the feelings wheel for students. Mentors should prepare by reading how to use a feelings wheel in the background information*

Mary is one of the few people in the Bible where we have insight into her emotions and what she was thinking and feeling. For example, when she reflected upon Jesus' birth, she, "committed these things to memory and considered them carefully" (Luke 2:19, CEB). As leaders today, we can learn from Mary about reflecting on our feelings and processing our emotions in healthy ways.



>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is it easy or hard for you to talk about your feelings and emotions?
2. Do you think it's normal to experience very different—and even conflicting—feelings about a situation?
3. When you are experiencing “mixed emotions” about a situation, how do you process your feelings and decide what to do?
4. What are some healthy coping mechanisms for when your feelings get out of control, or you don't know how to handle them?

>> JOURNAL REFLECTION PROMPTS

Have students complete these journal prompts on their own at home, or in session if you have time. Write them on the board or text them out in a group chat so they can copy them in their LEAD Student Journals.

- When I am confused or afraid, I tend to...
- If an angel appeared to me and called me “favored one,” I would...
- I feel God might be asking me to say “yes” to...

>> MENTAL HEALTH CHECK-IN

Take several minutes to go around and ask each student, “How is it with your soul?” Explain that John Wesley encouraged the original members of Methodist small groups to ask one another this question to “check in” on each other's mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Remember, if any “red flags” or mental health concerns arise during this time, please direct students to appropriate Pastoral Care and Counseling Resources (resurrection.church/care) and inform a member of the student ministries staff team.

>> JOYS/CONCERNS AND PRAYER

Close by sharing joys and concerns and praying together as a group.

Share Joys first: Things you are thankful for or ways you've encountered God this week. Share Concerns second: Things going on that you want to lift up to God and share the burden of with others.

Close your session in prayer. Encourage a student to pray or ask multiple people to pray.



Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal lines. The word 'HEAD' is faintly visible in the background, repeated twice.

Biblical Leadership: Leadership Practice and Application: Availability and Humility

>> MAIN POINT

Sometimes we need to re-prioritize

>> BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Availability is the willingness to step outside your comfort zone, do hard things, and say, "Here I am Lord, send me!" For students, that may mean re-prioritizing some of their commitments so that they can be physically available to lead and serve. Or it may mean being mentally available when someone needs to talk.

Humility is a posture of looking towards others first and an attitude of self-denial. This is a tricky one for students, because they often feel like they are on the low end of the pecking order already. They answer to their parents, their teachers, their coaches, their pastors, and their small groups leaders. Mary probably felt that same way too, like she didn't have a lot of autonomy in her own life. Yet, when it would have been easy for her to get a big head about being the "favored one of God," she responded by saying, "I am the Lord's humble servant."

While these Leadership Practices of Availability and Humility were first demonstrated by Mary, they were modeled perfectly by Jesus himself. When the time came for Jesus to be crucified, although he first prayed, "Father, if it's your will, take this cup of suffering away from me," he ultimately declared, "However, not my will but your will must be done" (Luke 22:42, CEB). He was available, even to die a horrible and painful death on a cross. Furthermore, as Paul writes in Philippians 2:5-8, Jesus' entire life was characterized by an attitude of humility and obedience.

To summarize:

- **Availability** means being willing to say "yes" to God; going out of comfort zone; re-prioritizing our plans for God's purposes; being "interruptible"
- **Humility** is putting others first; having an attitude of self-sacrifice and self-denial; the opposite of selfishness or self-centeredness; not getting a big head or thinking it's all about ME



A quick note about Availability, Humility, and Healthy Boundaries:

- Often in the church or in ministry, people take advantage of our availability and humility, and may even encroach upon the boundaries we have established to protect our families or ourselves. Being available to God and others does not mean you should allow people to treat you like a doormat and walk all over you! Availability doesn't always mean saying yes, but it does mean having a conversation with God to find out what God is asking of you. You can be kind and respectful as you let people know when, where, and how you are available to them. Likewise, having humility is not the same as being humiliated. As you seek to have humility, do so in a way that maintains your dignity and self-respect.

>> OPENER PLOT TWISTS / "SUDDENLY"

(adapted from <https://www.icebreakers.ws/small-group/tall-tales-suddenly-game.html>)

Mary faced a big "Plot Twist" in her life. See if you can come up with some plot twists through this story telling game.

- Sit or stand in a circle. Explain that you are going to tell a story three sentences at a time.
- Designate a person to start the story. They should begin with just three sentences and end with the word, "Suddenly..."
- The next person picks it up and tells three more sentences, taking the story in any direction they'd like. After their turn (three sentences), they also end with the word, "Suddenly..."
- The game continues until one of the following happens:
 - Every player gets a turn
 - Your allotted time has run out (set this pre-determined time before you begin playing)
 - The players get stuck, in which case they can either pass to the next person or start a brand-new story
- Encourage students to make their stories twist and turn. Challenge players to stump the person next to them.
- If players continue to have difficulties coming up with three sentences, give the story a general topic or theme to keep it going.

>> MENTOR PROMPT

In our last LEAD Session, we discovered the Leader Profile of Mary, the mother of Jesus. Take a pause and ask this question: **What qualities or characteristics made Mary a good leader?** As an unwed teenaged mom, she was not someone her society would have looked to as a leader or a role model. Yet, what set Mary apart as a leader was her willingness to say "yes" to God, even when it would have been easier to walk away from God's plan for her life. By saying, "I am the Lord's servant. Let it be with me just as you have said" (Luke 1:27), Mary exemplified the Leadership Practices of Availability and Humility.

- **Availability** means being willing to say "yes" to God; going out of comfort zone; re-prioritizing our plans for God's purposes; being "interruptible."



- **Humility** is putting others first; having an attitude of self-sacrifice and self-denial; the opposite of selfishness or self-centeredness; not getting a big head or thinking it's all about ME.

****A quick note about Availability, Humility, and Healthy Boundaries:**

- Often in the church or in ministry, people take advantage of our availability and humility, and may even encroach upon the boundaries we have established to protect our families or ourselves. Being available to God and others does not mean you should allow people to treat you like a doormat and walk all over you! You can be kind and respectful as you let people know when, where, and how you are available to them. Likewise, having humility is not the same as being humiliated. As you seek to have humility, do so in a way that maintains your dignity and self-respect.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you think Mary thought of herself as a leader?
2. In your own words, how would you define "availability"?
3. What does it mean to be humble or have humility? What (or who) are good examples of humility?
4. Why might these things be considered important leadership qualities?

>> RESPONSE ACTIVITY: MARY'S AVAILABILITY AND HUMILITY

Split your class into two groups. Assign one article to each group. Have them read it, then summarize what they learned about that leadership practice. Come back together and answer the following discussion questions.

1. **Humility** <https://www.forbes.com/sites/alizaknox/2023/08/30/humility-helps-leadersheres-how/>
2. **Availability** <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/power-availability-your-success-leadership-robert-caliendo-telge#:~:text=Being%20available%20means%20that%20you,problem%2Dolving%20and%20better%20outcomes.>

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. After learning about these articles, how did Mary show humility? How did she show availability?
2. Which leadership practice do you think would be harder to practice?
3. What scares you about allowing yourself to be available and/or humble? What risks are involved?

>> SCRIPTURE

Read the following Bible passages:

Philippians 2:3-5

Luke 1:26-38 (review from last week)



>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does the Philippians passage teach us about humility? What does it mean when it says have the same mind as Jesus Christ?
2. Think back to our last session on Mary. What does she teach us about being available to God?
3. How is God always available to us?

>> RESPONSE EXPERIENCE: WESLEY COVENANT PRAYER

Your group might be familiar with the Wesley Covenant Prayer already, but it is essentially a Prayer of Availability and Humility. Pray it together as a group (text below), and then reflect on this prayer in student journals. As an alternative option, play the COR Worship Collective Song, "I Am Yours (The Wesley Covenant)," available on all streaming platforms, YouTube, or at this link: <https://collective.cor.org/i-am-yours-the-wesley-covenant-acoustic/>

>> A COVENANT PRAYER IN THE WESLEYAN TRADITION (CONTEMPORARY VERSION)

I am no longer my own, but yours.
Put me to what you will, place me with whom you will.
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.
Let me be put to work for you or set aside for you,
Praised for you or criticized for you.
Let me be full, let me be empty.
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.
I freely and fully surrender all things to your glory and service.
And now, O wonderful and holy God,
Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer,
you are mine, and I am yours. So be it.
And the covenant which I have made on earth,
Let it also be made in heaven.
Amen.

(from <https://thewell.cor.org/wesley-covenant-prayer-card-traditionalcontemporary-package-25>)

>> JOURNAL REFLECTION PROMPTS

Have students complete these journal prompts on their own at home, or in session if you have time. Write them on the board or text them out in a group chat so they can copy them in their LEAD Student Journals.

- What lines or words of this prayer show availability?
- What parts of this prayer show humility?
- Which parts of this prayer were the easiest for you to pray?
- Were there any lines or phrases that are difficult or challenging for you to pray?



>> MENTAL HEALTH CHECK-IN

Take several minutes to go around and ask each student, "How is it with your soul?" Explain that John Wesley encouraged the original members of Methodist small groups to ask one another this question to "check in" on each other's mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Remember, if any "red flags" or mental health concerns arise during this time, please direct students to appropriate Pastoral Care and Counseling Resources (cor.org/care) and inform a member of the student ministries staff team.

>> JOYS/CONCERNS AND PRAYER

Close by sharing joys and concerns and praying together as a group.

Share Joys first: Things you are thankful for or ways you've encountered God this week. Share Concerns second: Things going on that you want to lift up to God and share the burden of with others. Close your session in prayer. Encourage a student to pray or ask multiple people to pray.

(Portions of the Rahab and Mary LEAD sessions were inspired and influenced by *Messy People: Life Lessons from Imperfect Biblical Heroes* by Jennifer Cowart, Abington Press, 2018)



Handwriting lines for student input, consisting of 15 horizontal lines.



Handwriting practice lines consisting of 12 horizontal lines.

HEAD

HEAD



UNIT 4

God's Kingdom (3 sessions)

1. God's Heart for Justice
2. Justice, Jesus, and Jubilee
3. Finding Your Cause and Your Voice within God's Kingdom

>> UNIT OVERVIEW

According to Adam Hamilton the church should focus on “closing the gap.” There is a gap between how the world is and the world the way God intended it. Closing that gap can look different in various places, but when churches provide back packs and school supplies for children in need—versus providing back packs to every student regardless of need (equality), the Church helps close that gap and bring equity. When churches provide wells so families without water have access or lights so children who can't do homework at night because they don't have lights, that's closing the gap and providing equity.

Equity, Equality, and Justice are part of God's Kingdom, the Kingdom we pray to be here on earth when we say the Lord's Prayer. We will look to scripture to see how prophets continued to share this theme of social justice, and then Jesus showed us how to live it out. Isaiah was the prophet who foretold of a Messiah that would care about justice for all people.

We are partners with God on God's mission and one of our goals should be to be a part of bringing God's kingdom—heaven here to earth—with a focus on justice. Because we are part of community, God invites us to not only care about the needs of ourselves, and our families, but also to help meet the needs of our community. Over the last few weeks, we have been talking about justice, equality, and equity. God calls us to work towards justice for all people, and that means we have some work to do, together, as Christians.

Students should come out of this series understanding that God cares about social justice, Jesus cares about social justice, and that we can contribute to the issues that we care about. God invites us to support and care for the people in our lives and communities.



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God's Kingdom: God's Heart for Justice

>> MAIN POINT

God calls us to care about social justice

>> BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

Justice = Conforming to an impartial and fair ideal.

Unlike the common assumption, justice is not revenge

During World War 2 the "impartial ideal" would have been that the Jewish people could be safe and able to live; rather than being prejudiced against and murdered. In the story of Anne Frank and her family, Hermine "Miep" Gies worked toward justice by hiding the Frank family in the attic.

Justice is achieved with equality and equity.

Equality = The quality of everyone being considered with the same regard and having access to the same benefits.

Richard and Mildred Loving, an interracial couple, were put in prison in Virginia in 1959 because it was illegal for a white person and a black person to get married. The Equal Protection Clause was ultimately used to defend their marriage and overturn laws so that they (and others in the future) would have the same rights to marry as anyone else.

Equality can be achieved through the practice of equity.

Equity = Rules and laws that are free from bias or favoritism that enlarge, supplement, or override rigid systems.

According to Adam Hamilton the church should focus on "closing the gap." There is a gap between how the world is and the world the way God intended it. Closing that gap can look different in various places, but when churches provide back packs and school supplies for children in need—versus providing back packs to every



student regardless of need (equality), the Church helps close that gap and bring equity. When churches provide wells so families without water have access or lights so children who can't do homework at night because they don't have lights, that's closing the gap and providing equity.

Equity, Equality, and Justice are part of God's Kingdom, the Kingdom we pray to be here on earth when we say the Lord's Prayer.

God lays out the expectations of us to provide and practice justice in the world in scripture.

>> BACKGROUND INFO

Portions of this session were inspired by or adapted from The Bible Project's Study on Justice, <https://bibleproject.com/bible-studies/justice>

According to the creators of The Bible Project, the Hebrew word for justice, mishpat, occurs in the Old Testament over 400 times! Obviously, justice is of great importance to God. But what exactly is "social justice"? It's a phrase we frequently hear these days. Let's break it down into two parts:

"Social" simply means that we live in a society. Like it or not, we are a part of a greater community, connected to others! We don't get to live isolated, individualized lives. Particularly as Christians, we are called to care for each other. God especially calls us to care for those in our society who are often mistreated or looked over by others. The Bible refers to those as ones who are "oppressed."

"Justice" means "just and fair treatment for all"—not just those who can afford it or those who are privileged to have it. In the Bible, justice most often refers to protecting the vulnerable, poor, and weak, advancing the cause of righteousness, and advocating for those who cannot help themselves. It's not necessarily about "justice" in the sense of "getting revenge." And like our Opener shows, it's not always about giving "equal" treatment either. After all, racial segregation was built around the principle of "separate, but equal." Justice is more about giving people what they deserve, and we all deserve basic human rights, dignity, and the opportunity to flourish and thrive.

"Social Justice"

Justice in terms of the distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society. The theme of Social Justice runs throughout scripture:

- The ancient Hebrew laws advocated protecting the immigrants and foreigners among the people and feeding the orphans and widows by leaving food for them at the edges of your field. It even provided a "Year of Jubilee" to free slaves and return property to its original owners.
- Over and over again, the Israelite Prophets called for the Israelites to protect the weak and care for the oppressed. They reminded the Israelites that they



were once slaves in Egypt, so they should treat the vulnerable around them with kindness and dignity.

- In the New Testament, Jesus lived a life of justice by caring for the poor, healing the sick, spending time with women and children, and associating with the “least” of society. In our next session, we will look more closely at how Jesus connected God’s heart for Social Justice with his message about the Kingdom of God.

>> OPENER

Equality, Equity, and Justice (adapted from <https://uucharlottesville.org/anti-racist-curriculum/>)

Supplies needed: band aids (optional)

Tell the group they are all sitting in an urgent care waiting room with different injuries.

Assign them each a different injury:

- Cut hand
- Broken leg
- Burned finger
- Won't stop coughing
- High fever
- Scraped knee
- Asthma attack
- Flu
- Sprained ankle
- Poison Ivy
- Toothache
- Depressed
- Shut thumb in the car door

Now, tell them that for each of their injuries/sicknesses, they all will be receiving a band aid. (If you have actual band aids, pass them out!) That would be the only fair and equal treatment for everyone.

Debrief the Activity:

- How did you feel once you heard you were only getting a band aid?
- Was it equal that everyone got a band aid? Was it fair that everyone got a band aid?
- What would have made the treatments fairer or more just?
- What is the difference between equality and equity?
 - Equality is treating everyone the same or giving everyone the same thing
 - Equity is giving everyone what they need to be successful and thrive
- How is this activity like the unfair or unjust treatment people might receive in our society?
- In what ways can we work toward giving people what they need to thrive?



>> MENTOR PROMPT

Today we are starting a new unit on God's Heart for Justice and specifically today we will talk about the Kingdom of God. To do that we first need to understand the three words Justice, Equality, and Equity like we just talked about in the opening activity.

Justice = Conforming to an impartial and fair ideal.

Equality = The quality of everyone being considered with the same regard and having access to the same benefits.

Equity = Rules and laws that are free from bias or favoritism that enlarge, supplement, or override rigid systems.

According to Adam Hamilton the church should focus on "closing the gap." There is a gap between how the world is and the world the way God intended it. Closing that gap can look different in various places, but when churches provide back packs and school supplies for children in need—versus providing back packs to every student regardless of need (equality), the Church helps close that gap and bring equity. When churches provide wells so families without water have access or lights so children who can't do homework at night because they don't have lights, that's closing the gap and providing equity.

Equity, Equality, and Justice are part of God's Kingdom, the Kingdom we pray to be here on earth when we say the Lord's Prayer. God lays out the expectations of us to provide and practice justice in the world in scripture.

>> SCRIPTURE

Read the following scriptures:

After reading the scriptures, have students make a list of all of the ways God expects us to bring justice into the world based on these verses (refer to this list later).

Psalms 146:6-9

Isaiah 1:15-17

>> MENTOR PROMPT

According to the creators of The Bible Project, the Hebrew word for justice, mishpat, occurs in the Old Testament over 400 times! Obviously, justice is of great importance to God. But what exactly is "social justice"? It's a phrase we frequently hear these days. When you hear the word "social justice" what do you think of?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

We are going to break down the word into two parts:

"Social" simply means that we live in a society. Like it or not, we are a part of a greater community, connected to others! We don't get to live isolated, individualized lives.



Particularly as Christians, we are called to care for each other. God especially calls us to care for those in our society who are often mistreated or looked over by others. The Bible refers to those as ones who are “oppressed.”

“Justice” means “just and fair treatment for all”—not just those who can afford it or those who are privileged to have it. In the Bible, justice most often refers to protecting the vulnerable, poor, and weak, advancing the cause of righteousness, and advocating for those who cannot help themselves. It’s not necessarily about “justice” in the sense of “getting revenge.” And like our Opener shows, it’s not always about giving “equal” treatment either. After all, racial segregation was built around the principle of “separate, but equal.” Justice is more about giving people what they deserve, and we all deserve basic human rights, dignity, and the opportunity to flourish and thrive.

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- Over and over again, the Israelite Prophets called for the Israelites to protect the weak and care for the oppressed. They reminded the Israelites that they were once slaves in Egypt, so they should treat the vulnerable around them with kindness and dignity.
- In the New Testament, Jesus lived a life of justice by caring for the poor, healing the sick, spending time with women and children, and associating with the “least” of society. In our next session, we will look more closely at how Jesus connected God’s heart for Social Justice with his message about the Kingdom of God.

>> SCRIPTURE

Read Micah 6:8

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What do we learn about God from this scripture?
2. What do we learn about what God wants us to do from this Scripture?
3. Does this expectation make you feel excited/passionate, exhausted/overwhelmed, or ambivalent/numb (feel free to use other words to describe)?

>> RESPONSE ACTIVITY

Look back at the list you created from the previous verses (Psalm 146:6-9 & Isaiah 1:15-



17). Beside each item on the list, write “equality,” “equity,” or “justice” based on where you think it fits according to the definitions.

1. Why do you think this list is important to God?
2. Why should this list matter to you?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Oppression = unjust or cruel exercise of authority or power; something that oppresses especially in being an unjust or excessive exercise of power; a sense of being weighed down in body or mind.

Based on the definition of oppression, what are some generalized tactics that might be used to eradicate oppression?

>> JOURNAL PROMPTS

Have students complete these journal prompts on their own at home, or in session if you have time. Write them on the board or text them out in a group chat so they can copy them in their LEAD Student Journals.

1. One thing new I learned about justice is...
2. God is passionate about justice because...
3. Something I think God might be saying to me is...

>> MENTAL HEALTH CHECK-IN

Take several minutes to go around and ask each student, “How is it with your soul?” Explain that John Wesley encouraged the original members of Methodist small groups to ask one another this question to “check in” on each other’s mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Remember, if any “red flags” or mental health concerns arise during this time, please direct students to appropriate Pastoral Care and Counseling Resources (cor.org/care) and inform a member of the student ministries staff team.

>> JOYS/CONCERNS AND PRAYER

Close by sharing joys and concerns and praying together as a group.

Share Joys first: Things you are thankful for or ways you’ve encountered God this week.
Share Concerns second: Things going on that you want to lift up to God and share the burden of with others.

Close your session in prayer. Encourage a student to pray or ask multiple people to pray.



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YEAR ONE

UNIT 4 | SESSION 2

God's Kingdom: Jesus, Justice, and Jubilee

>> MAIN POINT

Social justice matters to Jesus

>> BACKGROUND INFO

Previously, we learned that God has a heart for justice. It is a theme in the scriptural writings of prophets like Micah and Isaiah.

The prophets were messengers that speak of the partnership between God and God's People. Their goal was to remind Israel of their part in the partnership between them and God—their side of the Covenant (The Bible Project).

We've talked about how Micah (Micah 6:8) showed us that justice should be a priority of ours, but we also see that justice is a priority of the Messiah who was foretold—the Messiah that would come and fulfill the prophecies and free those who lived in oppression.

It was the prophet Isaiah who foretold of a Messiah that would care about justice for people.

>> READ

Isaiah 61:1-3

Luke 4:14-21

The themes in the verses should sound familiar. Jesus knew the scriptures—He knew what the prophets taught and foretold. When He got up to read in those moments, He proclaimed that He was the Messiah and fulfilling the prophecy. The prophecy of justice!

Jesus proclaimed He was the embodiment of those verses; He became a walking talking—living example of the justice Isaiah foretold and that Jesus now claimed.

When asked, Jesus told a group of Pharisees that God's Kingdom was already among them—That means it's also among us (Luke 17:21)!



If God's Kingdom is also among us, then between Jesus and us, the Kingdom of God should involve the type of justice Jesus is and stands for.

In Matthew 6:33, Jesus says we should seek the Kingdom of God above all else...He describes the process of seeking that Kingdom is about seeking God's righteousness. Righteous living at its most basic is simply doing what is right.

Continuing to live out the type of justice Jesus embodied is a part of doing what is right.

>> OPENER

JUSTICE Acrostic

Based on what we talked about in our last session, try to create an acrostic poem for each letter of the word JUSTICE: use the word "JUSTICE" to spell out each word or line of your poem. As you write your poem, think: What does "justice" mean to you? How can we strive for justice in our lives? In our community? In our church?

You can complete this Opener as one large group or as individuals, and then share your JUSTICE acrostics with each other.

Example:

J - Just

U - Understanding

S - Stories

T - Told

I - Intentionally

C - Choosing

E - Equity

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Using what we already know about justice, how can we strive for justice in our lives?
2. How can we strive for justice in our community?
3. How can we strive for justice within our church?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Previously, we learned that God has a heart for justice. It is a theme in the scriptural writings of prophets like Micah and Isaiah.

The prophets were messengers that speak of the partnership between God and God's People. Their goal was to remind Israel of their part in the partnership between them and God--their side of the Covenant (The Bible Project).



We've talked about how Micah (Micah 6:8) showed us that justice should be a priority of ours, but we also see that justice is a priority of the Messiah who was foretold—the Messiah that would come and fulfill the prophecies and free those who lived in oppression.

It was the prophet Isaiah who foretold of a Messiah that would care about justice for people.

>> SCRIPTURE

Have students break into groups and distribute one of the scriptures to their group. Together have them read the scripture and come back together to share what they learned about the scripture, and how it relates to Justice.

Isaiah 61:1-3

Luke 4:14-21

Matthew 6:33

Luke 6:10

>> MENTOR PROMPT

If justice stems from the heart of God, then Jesus' life and actions are a depiction of the type of justice God is passionate about.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- "Preach good news to the poor."
 - What is the "good news" and why would it matter to a person who is poor whether financially or spiritually?
- In what ways does the good news provide freedom for people?
- "Proclaim release to the prisoners; recover sight for the blind; Liberate the oppressed."
 - What do each of these phrases have in common?
 - What type of freedom would people have based on what Jesus lists?
 - What's the significance of prisoners being set free?
- "Proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." Here, Jesus is saying proclaim the year of "jubilee." Have someone look up what the year of jubilee was in Hebrew tradition
 - What type of freedom does the year of jubilee bring?
(Freedom from debt and slavery)

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Based on the list that Jesus says He wants to bring to people, we see that justice essentially IS freedom. In turn, making sure people get to experience freedom is justice.



>> VIDEO ACTIVITY

Watch - Leviticus 25 | The Year of Jubilee | Bible Study

<https://www.google.com/search?client=safari&rls=en&q=Watch++Leviticus+25+%7C+The+Year+of+Jubilee+%7C+Bible+Study&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8#fpstate=ive&vld=cid:fda04845,vid:4cGhz1gkE3I,st:0>

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How was the year of jubilee an act of social justice?
2. In what way is Jesus the bringer of jubilee?
3. Why is God's concept of jubilee important, even if the Hebrew people never got to practice it back in the Bible days?
4. How can we keep the idea of Jubilee at the forefront of our minds?

>> RESPONSE AND REFLECTION

Have the students spread out in their own space without the distraction of phones or other group members. Instruct them to use a pen and paper to jot down thoughts, doodle some art, and generally reflect on today's session and the song being played.

*Play: Jubilee (Spotify link) by Maverick City Music & Bryan and Katie Torwalt (YouTube link)

- <https://open.spotify.com/track/0DcteHHiSoPSwRqSnxz2p1?si=aa1899b566fc469c&nd=1&dlsi=722388eed3384563>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=17IVivK_C9U

Encourage students to remember through the week the relationship between Jesus, justice, and jubilee.

>> MENTAL HEALTH CHECK-IN

Take several minutes to go around and ask each student, "How is it with your soul?" Explain that John Wesley encouraged the original members of Methodist small groups to ask one another this question to "check in" on each other's mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Remember, if any "red flags" or mental health concerns arise during this time, please direct students to appropriate Pastoral Care and Counseling Resources (cor.org/care) and inform a member of the student ministries staff team.



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YEAR ONE

UNIT 4 | SESSION 3

God's Kingdom: Justice and Us

>> MAIN POINT

We can get involved in issues we care about

>> BACKGROUND/CONTEXT

For the last couple of weeks, we've talked about how we are partners with God on God's mission and how one of our goals should be to be a part of bringing God's kingdom—heaven here to earth—with a focus on justice. Because we are part of community, God invites us to not only care about the needs of ourselves, and our families, but also to help meet the needs of our community. Over the last few weeks, we have been talking about justice, equality, and equity. God calls us to works towards justice for all people, and that means we have some work to do, together, as Christians.

Students should come out of this session understanding that they can contribute to the issues that they care about, and that God invites us to support and care for the people in our lives and communities.

>> OPENER

If you could solve one social justice issue, which one would you solve?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

For the last couple of weeks, we've talked about how we are partners with God on God's mission and how one of our goals should be to be a part of bringing God's kingdom—heaven here to earth—with a focus on justice.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When was a time someone spoke up for you or helped meet a need for you? How did they help you?
2. When was a time that you helped meet a need for someone else? What was that experience like?
3. Why do you think God invites us to help meet the needs of other people?



>> MENTOR PROMPT

Because we are part of community, God invites us to not only care about the needs of ourselves, and our families, but also to help meet the needs of our community. Over the last few weeks, we have been talking about justice, equality, and equity. God calls us to works towards justice for all people, and that means we have some work to do, together, as Christians.

>> SCRIPTURE ACTIVITY

Give each student a copy of the verses below. Go around the room and have different people read the verses below regarding justice. Instruct the students to highlight the verse on your page when they hear a cause they feel lines up with the things they care about:

[This will require a handout with the below verses, separate than the leader guide.]

Feeding the Hungry

- Proverbs 25:21
If your enemies are starving, feed them some bread;
if they are thirsty, give them water to drink.

Immigration Justice

- Leviticus 19:33-34
33 When immigrants live in your land with you, you must not cheat them.34
Any immigrant who lives with you must be treated as if they were one of your citizens. You must love them as yourself, because you were immigrants in the land of Egypt; I am the Lord your God.

Caring for the Sick and Disabled

- Matthew 4:24
24 News about him spread throughout Syria. People brought to him all those who had various kinds of diseases, those in pain, those possessed by demons, those with epilepsy, and those who were paralyzed, and he healed them.

Caring for Orphans

- Psalm 82:3
Give justice to the lowly and the orphan;
maintain the rights of the poor and the destitute!

Welcoming the Children

- Matthew 19:14-15
14 "Allow the children to come to me," Jesus said. "Don't forbid them, because the kingdom of heaven belongs to people like these children."15 Then he blessed the children and went away from there.



Releasing the Prisoner

- Isaiah 42:6-7

I, the Lord, have called you for a good reason.

I will grasp your hand and guard you,
and give you as a covenant to the people,
as a light to the nations,

7 to open blind eyes, to lead the prisoners from prison,
and those who sit in darkness from the dungeon.

Helping the Homeless

- Isaiah 58:6-8

Isn't this the fast I choose:

releasing wicked restraints, untying the ropes of a yoke,
setting free the mistreated,
and breaking every yoke?

7 Isn't it sharing your bread with the hungry
and bringing the homeless poor into your house,
covering the naked when you see them,
and not hiding from your own family?

8 Then your light will break out like the dawn,
and you will be healed quickly.

Your own righteousness will walk before you,
and the Lord's glory will be your rear guard.

Racial Justice

- Revelation 7:9-10

9 After this I looked, and there was a great crowd that no one could number.

They were from every nation, tribe, people, and language. They were standing
before the throne and before the Lamb. They wore white robes and held palm
branches in their hands. 10 They cried out with a loud voice:

"Victory belongs to our God
who sits on the throne,
and to the Lamb."

Gender Justice/Women's Rights

- Genesis 1:27

God created humanity in God's own image,
in the divine image God created them,[a]
male and female God created them.

Human/LGBTQ+ Rights

- Galatians 3:26-28

26 You are all God's children through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 All of you who
were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is
neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave nor free; nor is there male and
female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.



Environmental Justice/Climate Change

- Psalm 104:24-27

Lord, you have done so many things!

You made them all so wisely!

The earth is full of your creations!

25 And then there's the sea, wide and deep,

with its countless creatures—

living things both small and large.

26 There go the ships on it,

and Leviathan, which you made, plays in it!

27 All your creations wait for you

to give them their food on time.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Which scripture aligned most with what you are passionate about?
2. Are there any scriptures that surprised you?
3. Why does it matter that we know or have a social justice matter that is close to our heart?
4. How can you keep from being overwhelmed by the sheer amount of need for justice there is in the world today?

>> RESPONSE ACTIVITY

Based off the student's highlights, have them create a vision board encapsulating how your likes and passions can relate to your role in justice--Your role in bringing heaven here on earth:

Example justice vision board (Attached/Next Page)

>> JOURNAL PROMPTS

Have students complete these journal prompts on their own at home, or in session if you have time. The practice of journaling is something we will promote all four years of high school in our Discipleship Groups. Write these prompts on the board or text them out in a group chat so they can copy them in their LEAD Student Journals.

1. What's one small way you can engage with a justice issue you care about each month?
2. What is one big way you can get involved with your social justice issue within the next year?



>> MENTAL HEALTH CHECK-IN

Take several minutes to go around and ask each student, "How is it with your soul?" Explain that John Wesley encouraged the original members of Methodist small groups to ask one another this question to "check in" on each other's mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

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>> JOYS/CONCERNS AND PRAYER

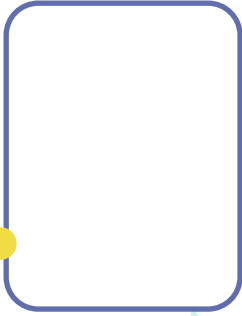
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Share Joys first: Things you are thankful for or ways you've encountered God this week. Share Concerns second: Things going on that you want to lift up to God and share the burden of with others. Close your session in prayer. Encourage a student to pray or ask multiple people to pray.






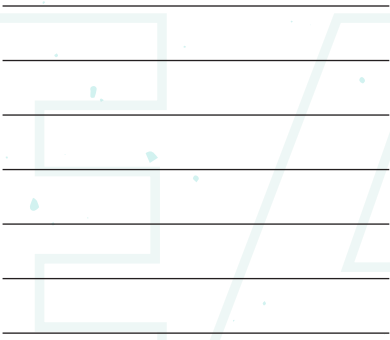
My faith



Causes I care about



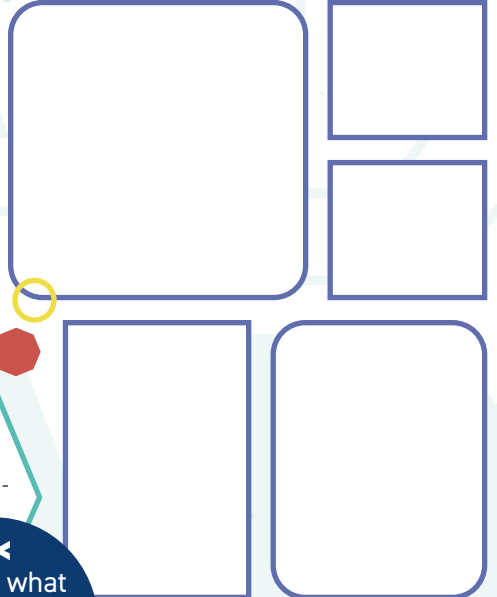
Things I enjoy



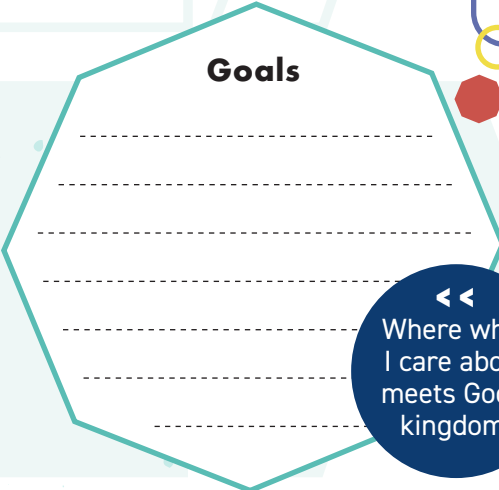
JUSTICE

[vision board]

Places I enjoy



Goals



◀◀
Where what I care about meets God's kingdom:



UNIT 5

Evangelism: Sharing Our Faith with Others (3 sessions)

1. Profile of Your Generation
2. Evangelism: Dreaming Big
3. Inviting Others Into your World: Putting Evangelism into Practice

>> UNIT OVERVIEW

If we are being honest, evangelism has somewhat of a “bad rep” in many circles. When many people think of evangelism, they think of pushy people yelling on the street corner or handing out Bible tracts. However, evangelism simply means sharing about the Good News of Jesus with others. As Christians, sharing our faith is a part of our call and mission from God (Matthew 28:19-20).

We all have different ways that we best connect with God and grow in our faith. Each new generation also has a unique opportunity to share their faith with those around them in a way that will best connect with their peers. For Generation Z (those born approximately between 1996 and 2010), that means that they will be able to share about Jesus in more effective ways than previous generations (Boomers, Gen X, and Millennials).

The Apostle Paul also had a BIG DREAM: to go to the ends of the world to tell others about Jesus. In Paul's time, the furthest place one could imagine going was Spain—the furthest reaches of the Roman Empire. In our passage today, he writes about his dream to visit the Christians in Rome, and then go on from there to Spain. We aren't sure if he ever made it to Spain and he was likely executed in Rome before he got there. But that didn't stop Paul from dreaming big when it came to telling others about Christ.

As Christians and leaders, we are called to be witnesses to Christ in both our actions and our words. Out of our love for our neighbors, we should desire to share the love of Jesus with those around us. But remember, there is no single “right way” to have faith conversations, and it's ok if you don't have all the answers. And we don't have to do this alone either! We are supported by God and by the community of other believers.

When it comes to sharing faith with others, keep in mind these four principles:

1. Be willing to be vulnerable. Opening yourself up is hard but sharing about your own beliefs and experiences of Jesus is the best way to tell others about Jesus.
2. Be yourself! Authenticity is more important than knowing all the correct words to say.
3. Be humble. Sharing the love of Jesus is not about who's “right” and who's “wrong.” We can all learn from each other, and faith is not a competition.
4. Be brave. Having faith conversations with others can be scary, but also so rewarding!



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Handwriting practice lines consisting of 12 horizontal lines.

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YEAR ONE

UNIT 5 | SESSION 1

Evangelism: Profile of Your Generation

>> MAIN POINT

We can share our faith

>> BACKGROUND INFO

In this session of LEAD, we will examine the unique ways that Generation Z tends to connect with God, faith, church, and religion. We'll also look at the story of an early church evangelist and preacher named Apollos and how he was able to share about Jesus in a new and unique way. Sometimes evangelism can have somewhat of a bad reputation in circles. People might think about pushy people yelling on the street corner. Evangelism simply means sharing about the Good News of Jesus with other people! As Christians, sharing our faith is an important part of our call and mission from God. In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus told us to 'go and make disciples of all nations'.

>> OPENER: PICTURE SHOW & TELL

Have everyone take out their cell phones and go to the photos app. Tell them to find a picture that best shows who they are as a person. Give students a few minutes to find their picture. (If someone doesn't have a cell phone, ask them to borrow one from a friend and Google Image search a picture that they connect with and shows who they are as a person.) Go around the group and have everyone "show and tell" their photo, explaining why it is a good representation of who they are.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is something that you were so excited about that you couldn't wait to tell someone about it?
2. Who is the person you shared it with?
3. What have you heard about the word "evangelism." What kinds of thoughts or feelings does it illicit?



>> MENTOR PROMPT

Today we are going to be talking about evangelism. Sometimes evangelism can have somewhat of a bad reputation in circles. People might think about pushy people yelling on the street corner. Evangelism simply means sharing about the Good News of Jesus with other people! As Christians, sharing our faith is an important part of our call and mission from God. In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus told us to 'go and make disciples of all nations'.

>> SCRIPTURE

Read the following Bible passages:

Matthew 28:19-20

Acts 18:24-28

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In our passage for today, why did Apollos need correcting when sharing the good news about Jesus?
2. How did Apollos respond when Priscilla and Aquila explained God more accurately to him (verse 26)?
3. In what ways can you be a "learner" (like Apollos) and learn from other generations? In what ways can you be a leader in teaching others in older generations?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Just like we talked about situations when we were so excited about something we had to tell someone immediately, that is what we saw in this scripture as well. Apollos couldn't wait to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with other people. Luckily, he also met mentors to help teach and instruct him as well.

We all have different ways that we best connect with God and grow in our faith. Each new generation also has a unique opportunity to share their faith with those around them in a way that will best connect with their peers. For Generation Z (those born approximately between 1996 and 2010), that means that they will be able to share about Jesus to their peers in more effective ways than previous generations (Boomers, Gen X, and Millennials).

>> RESPONSE EXPERIENCE: HOW DO YOU CONNECT WITH GOD?

Using a whiteboard or large sheet of paper, take an informal poll of the group. Ask students the following questions, and then tally their results on the board or paper. Once you tally the results, go through the following discussion questions as a group.

1. What helps you connect to God the most? (pick one)
 - a. Engaging in art (singing, painting, drawing, listening to music, etc.)
 - b. Praying



- c. Reading the Bible
 - d. Being in nature
 - e. Engaging in yoga, martial arts, or a physical activity
 - f. Writing
 - g. Meditating
 - h. Serving in the community
 - i. Attending church or youth group
 - j. Attending small group/discipleship group
2. Which of these is most important to you? (pick one)
 - a. Professional/educational achievement
 - b. Religion/Faith
 - c. Friend group
 - d. Hobbies
 3. What values do you most care about? (pick one)
 - a. LGBTQ+ rights
 - b. Gender equality
 - c. Immigration rights
 - d. Income equality
 - e. Disability rights
 - f. Environmental causes
 - g. Reproductive rights
 - h. Racial Justice
 - i. Gun reform
 4. When it comes to telling others about your faith, which of the following do you think would create a positive experience?
 - a. Inviting a person to attend church/youth group with you
 - b. Telling your own personal story of how you became a Christian
 - c. Telling the person about the benefits and changes you and others have experienced since deciding to follow Jesus
 - d. Praying with the person
 - e. Letting your actions speak, rather than words, to explain faith
 - f. Sharing digital content such as a social media post, TikTok, blog, or podcast
 - g. Quoting scripture or text from the Bible

If you want, create this poll in advance using GroupMe, Instagram, or a free survey tool like Survey Monkey ([surveymonkey.com](https://www.surveymonkey.com)) or Menti ([mentimeter.com](https://www.mentimeter.com)).

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What makes your generation (Generation Z) unique and different from older (or younger!) generations?
2. How can your generation (Generation Z) teach other generations about sharing their faith with others?
3. What is one thing you would like to tell your parents or other older adults in your life when it comes to faith or your belief in God?
4. Do you think sharing our faith with others is important? Why or why not?



5. Does your relationship with Jesus tend to be something you keep private, or something you share openly and publicly?
6. Are there “wrong” ways to talk about God and faith? If so, what are they?

>> JOURNAL PROMPTS

Have students complete these journal prompts on their own at home, or in session if you have time. The practice of journaling is something we will promote all four years of high school in our Discipleship Groups. Write these prompts on the board or text them out in a group chat so they can copy them in their LEAD Student Journals.

1. What is something you would tell your friends about faith?
2. Who is someone you would like to talk about faith with?

>> MENTAL HEALTH CHECK-IN

Take several minutes to go around and ask each student, “How is it with your soul?” Explain that John Wesley encouraged the original members of Methodist small groups to ask one another this question to “check in” on each other’s mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Remember, if any “red flags” or mental health concerns arise during this time, please direct students to appropriate Pastoral Care and Counseling Resources (cor.org/care) and inform a member of the student ministries staff team.

>> JOYS/CONCERNS AND PRAYER

Close by sharing joys and concerns and praying together as a group.

Share Joys first: Things you are thankful for or ways you’ve encountered God this week. Share Concerns second: Things going on that you want to lift up to God and share the burden of with others. Close your session in prayer. Encourage a student to pray or ask multiple people to pray.





YEAR ONE

UNIT 5 | SESSION 2

Evangelism: Dreaming Big

>> MAIN POINT

We can have big dreams!

>> BACKGROUND INFO

In our last LEAD session, we discovered ways that make Generation Z unique and how they might use their unique perspectives and approach to tell others about God. Today, we are asking them to “DREAM BIG” when it comes to evangelism and sharing their faith with others. If there were no limits or restrictions, what would you do to share the good news of Jesus with those around you?

Most awesome things start small and grow out of a big dream. In 1990, Pastor Adam Hamilton started Church of the Resurrection with just a handful of members and no church property. But he had a BIG DREAM: to start a church in South Johnson County that would specifically reach out to non-religious and nominally religious people. Over 30 years later, that big dream has become a realization, and Church of the Resurrection is able to reach thousands of people for Jesus each year. Pastor Rick Warren shares a similar story of how he started Saddleback Church in Orange County, California. His dream started with just 60 people, and now Saddleback is one of the largest churches in the country! (See <https://pastors.com/8-steps-to-dreaming-bigger/>)

The Apostle Paul also had a BIG DREAM: to go to the ends of the world to tell others about Jesus. In Paul’s time, the furthest place one could imagine going was Spain—the furthest reaches of the Roman Empire. In our passage today, he writes about his dream to visit the Christians in Rome, and then go on from there to Spain. We aren’t sure if he ever made it to Spain and he was likely executed in Rome before he got there. But that didn’t stop Paul from dreaming big when it came to telling others about Christ.

Maybe your dream isn’t to start a church or become a pastor or travel to Spain. That’s ok! But what BIG DREAM has God planted in your heart? What unique talents, gifts, and experiences has God given you to accomplish that dream? Who can help you along the way in accomplishing your BIG DREAM?



>> RESOURCES CONSULTED FOR THIS LEAD SESSION

- *Dream Big* (book) by Bob Goff (Nelson Books, 2020)
- “Get Ready to Dream Big” (blog) by Bob Goff (<http://faithgateway.com/blogs/christian-books/get-ready-to-dream-big>)
- “Dreaming Big for God” (sermon) by Steven J. Cole, <https://delessons.org/audio/Dreaming-Big-for-God-Steven-Cole.pdf>.

>> OPENER: HIDDEN TALENTS

Have a mini-talent show! We all have hidden talents or things about us that make us unique. Go around the group and have everyone share about or even show their hidden talent. Then debrief using the following questions:

1. Beyond just silly human tricks, what talents or gifts do you have?
2. How can you use your unique gifts and talents to help others?
3. What do all our unique talents and gifts tell us about God and how God created us?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

In our last LEAD session, we discovered ways that make Generation Z unique and how they might use their unique perspectives and approach to tell others about God. Today, we are asking them to “DREAM BIG” when it comes to evangelism and sharing their faith with others.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What was a big dream you had when you were a little kid?
2. Is there a time when you made a dream of yours a reality? Share about that experience.
3. If you had no limits or restrictions, what is one big dream you would try to accomplish?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

If you want to get to a place, you haven't visited before, it's always helpful to consult a map. Whether digital or hard copies, maps identify your starting location and provide you with directions to a destination. A simple “you are here” notation on a map at a theme park, a museum, or trailhead can provide a foundation for you to get your bearings. Maps also provide a visual illustration of what is between your starting point and where you want to end up. Maps help you choose the shortest routes or circumvent roadblocks and dead ends. Having a map can provide clarity about what you need to get where you are going.



>> RESPONSE ACTIVITY: DREAM MAPS

(from <http://faithgateway.com/blogs/christian-books/get-ready-to-dream-big>)

Supplies Needed: a piece of paper and pens/pencils for each student. Optional supplies: crayons, colored pencils, or markers)

With this in mind, grab a sheet of paper and take a few minutes to create a map with your big dreams as your destination. It can look like any version of a map you want—the goal is simply to draw, sketch, or doodle a map that indicates where you are currently and where you want to go over the course of the next few years. Include any speed bumps and detours, including the ones you already know as well as the ones you anticipate. Remember there is no right or wrong way to do this and no extra points for being creative or artistic. Just have fun as you create this visual depiction of getting from where you are to where your big dreams come alive.

If students are struggling to come up with ideas, share about Pastor Adam's big dream as an example. Most awesome things start small and grow out of a big dream. In 1990, Pastor Adam Hamilton started Church of the Resurrection with just a handful of members and no church property. But he had a BIG DREAM: to start a church in South Johnson County that would specifically reach out to non-religious and nominally religious people. Over 30 years later, that big dream has become a realization, and Church of the Resurrection is able to reach thousands of people for Jesus each year. Pastor Rick Warren shares a similar story of how he started Saddleback Church in Orange County, California. His dream started with just 60 people, and now Saddleback is one of the largest churches in the country! (See <https://pastors.com/8-steps-to-dreaming-bigger/>)

After you come up with your map, share it with the group. Tell the other mapmakers something you notice about their maps and what it reveals about them, about their view of God, about their dreams, or about what they must overcome to reach their dreams. After everyone has had a turn, hang on to your map as a reference for future activities.

>> MENTOR PROMPT

The Apostle Paul also had a BIG DREAM: to go to the ends of the world to tell others about Jesus. In Paul's time, the furthest place one could imagine going was Spain—the furthest reaches of the Roman Empire. In our passage today, he writes about his dream to visit the Christians in Rome, and then go on from there to Spain. We aren't sure if he ever made it to Spain and he was likely executed in Rome before he got there. But that didn't stop Paul from dreaming big when it came to telling others about Christ.

>> SCRIPTURE

Read the following Bible passage:

Romans 15:20-24



>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. From the Romans passage, what was Paul's goal (verse 20)? Where were his big dreams leading him?
2. How do you think Paul got others on board with his dream?
3. What tends to stop people from living out their big dreams?
4. Do you know of any roadblocks or obstacles that stopped Paul from living out his dream?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Maybe your dream isn't to start a church or become a pastor or travel to Spain. That's ok! But what BIG DREAM has God planted in your heart? What unique talents, gifts, and experiences has God given you to accomplish that dream? Who can help you along the way in accomplishing your BIG DREAM?

>> JOURNAL PROMPTS

Have students complete these journal prompts on their own at home, or in session if you have time. The practice of journaling is something we will promote all four years of high school in our Discipleship Groups. Write these prompts on the board or text them out in a group chat so they can copy them in their LEAD Student Journals.

1. If you had no limits or restrictions, what would you do to tell others about Jesus?
2. How might you get others on board with your dream?
3. What are your unique gifts, skills, talents, and experiences? How can you use those to share the love of Jesus with others?

>> MENTAL HEALTH CHECK-IN

Take several minutes to go around and ask each student, "How is it with your soul?" Explain that John Wesley encouraged the original members of Methodist small groups to ask one another this question to "check in" on each other's mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Remember, if any "red flags" or mental health concerns arise during this time, please direct students to appropriate Pastoral Care and Counseling Resources (cor.org/care) and inform a member of the student ministries staff team.

>> JOYS/CONCERNS AND PRAYER

Close by sharing joys and concerns and praying together as a group.

Share Joys first: Things you are thankful for or ways you've encountered God this week.
Share Concerns second: Things going on that you want to lift up to God and share the burden of with others.

Close your session in prayer. Encourage a student to pray or ask multiple people to pray.



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Evangelism: Inviting Others Into your World: Putting Evangelism into Practice

>> MAIN POINT

We can share our faith!

>> BACKGROUND INFO

As a refresher, in this LEAD Unit, we are looking at evangelism, or sharing the love of Jesus with others. In Session 1, we talked about the unique ways that Generation Z views faith and connects with God. In Session 2, we asked students to “Dream Big” when it came to sharing the love of Jesus with those around them. Now, in Session 3, we are putting those two things together to talk about practical ways we can put evangelism into practice.

This session in particular may be difficult for students who don't like talking about their faith or believe it should be a “private” thing between them and Jesus. However, remind your group that you don't have to be mean or a bully or pressure others when sharing about Jesus! Rather, if we have encountered the love of Jesus, wouldn't we want others to experience that same love and grace for themselves? This shift in perspective may be helpful when it comes to talking about evangelism.

As Christians and leaders, we are called to be witnesses to Christ in both our actions and our words. Out of our love for our neighbors, we should desire to share the love of Jesus with those around us. But remember, there is no single “right way” to have faith conversations, and it's ok if you don't have all the answers. And we don't have to do this alone either! We are supported by God and by the community of other believers.

When it comes to sharing faith with others, keep in mind these four principles:

1. Be willing to be vulnerable. Opening yourself up is hard but sharing about your own beliefs and experiences of Jesus is the best ways to tell others about Jesus.
2. Be yourself! Authenticity is more important than knowing all the correct words to say.



3. Be humble. Sharing the love of Jesus is not about who's "right" and who's "wrong." We can all learn from each other, and faith is not a competition.
4. Be brave. Having faith conversations with others can be scary, but also so rewarding!

Resources consulted for this LEAD session:

- 7 Practices of Healthy Youth Ministry by Youth eSource (<http://www.youthesource.com/7-practices/>)

>> OPENER: SOCIAL MEDIA SHARE

Ask the group, what forms of social media are they on? How do they typically engage in social media? For each social media platform (Instagram, TikTok, BeReal, Twitter, etc.), come up with a creative way to point others to Christ or share the love of God.

Come up with a tweet, a TikTok video, and an Instagram post or story that sends a message of God's love. If students are really bold, invite them to create and share that post on their feed!

>> MENTOR PROMPT

As a refresher, in this LEAD Unit, we are looking at evangelism, or sharing the love of Jesus with others. In Session 1, we talked about the unique ways that Generation Z views faith and connects with God. In Session 2, we asked students to "Dream Big" when it came to sharing the love of Jesus with those around them. Now, in Session 3, we are putting those two things together to talk about practical ways we can put evangelism into practice. Remind your group that you don't have to be mean or a bully or pressure others when sharing about Jesus! Rather, if we have encountered the love of Jesus, wouldn't we want others to experience that same love and grace for themselves? This shift in perspective may be helpful when it comes to talking about evangelism.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When is a time that someone shared about the love of Jesus with you?
2. Have you ever had "faith conversations" or shared about your beliefs in Jesus with others? What was the experience like for you? Would you do anything differently?
3. Do you have to be perfect to tell others about Jesus? Why or why not?
4. Do you think you need to have "all the answers" when telling others about Jesus? Why or why not?



>> MENTOR PROMPT

As Christians and leaders, we are called to be witnesses to Christ in both our actions and our words. Out of our love for our neighbors, we should desire to share the love of Jesus with those around us. But remember, there is no single “right way” to have faith conversations, and it’s ok if you don’t have all the answers. And we don’t have to do this alone either! We are supported by God and by the community of other believers.

When it comes to sharing faith with others, keep in mind these four principles:

1. Be willing to be vulnerable. Opening yourself up is hard but sharing about your own beliefs and experiences of Jesus is the best ways to tell others about Jesus.
2. Be yourself! Authenticity is more important than knowing all the correct words to say.
3. Be humble. Sharing the love of Jesus is not about who’s “right” and who’s “wrong.” We can all learn from each other, and faith is not a competition.
4. Be brave. Having faith conversations with others can be scary, but also so rewarding!

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are ways you can share about Jesus using your actions or deeds?
2. What are ways you can share about Jesus using your words?

>> SCRIPTURE

Read the following Bible passages:

1 Peter 3:13-16

Matthew 5:14-16

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In the 1 Peter passage, how are we supposed to respond if people ask about our faith?
2. What do you think it looks like, practically, to let your “light shine before people” (Matthew 5:16)?
3. How can we lean upon God when telling others about our faith?
4. What are you going to do this week to share the love of Jesus with someone else?



>> RESPONSE EXPERIENCE: CAMPAIGN FOR JESUS

In Fall of 2020, Church of the Resurrection began an initiative called the "Love Your Neighbor Campaign." During a time of heated political discussion and attacking campaign ads, we put signs all over Kansas City that encouraged people to "love their neighbors." In Fall of 2022, we did another campaign, this time called the "BE Campaign." This initiative invited those around us to follow God by being just, loving kindness, and walking humbly with God (Micah 6:8). In the Fall of 2024, we started another campaign called "Do Unto Others" where we were invited to live out the golden rule, "do unto others as you would have them do unto you". Through these three campaigns, we asked people to find common ground with each other instead of fighting and insulting one another. Additionally, we used these campaigns to share the love of Jesus in a real, practical way with those in our city.

As a group, pretend you are designing the next city-wide "campaign" just for teenagers. What message would you want to give our city and our world? How would you get this message out to people? How can you use this message to point others toward the love of Jesus? What swag would you create and give out or sell? What do you want to be known for as a group? Write it all out and create a "proposal" as if you were pitching this campaign to church leaders. Mentors, share with your Youth Directors your ideas! Things to think about for your campaign

1. What campaign or event might encourage teenagers to learn about Jesus?
2. What strategies could you use to invite them?
3. Is this something you would really like to try? If so, talk to your Youth Director about the possibilities!

>> JOURNAL PROMPTS

Have students complete these journal prompts on their own at home, or in session if you have time. The practice of journaling is something we will promote all four years of high school in our Discipleship Groups. Write these prompts on the board or text them out in a group chat so they can copy them in their LEAD Student Journals.

Write down your "Jesus Story" (this is sometimes called a "testimony"). In writing your story, consider answering these questions: How did you first encounter Jesus? Who were people that pointed you toward Jesus? How has being a follower of Christ changed you or impacted your life? What does your faith in Jesus look like today?

>> MENTAL HEALTH CHECK-IN

Take several minutes to go around and ask each student, "How is it with your soul?" Explain that John Wesley encouraged the original members of Methodist small groups to ask one another this question to "check in" on each other's mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Remember, if any "red flags" or mental health concerns arise during this time, please direct students to appropriate Pastoral Care and Counseling Resources (cor.org/care) and inform a member of the student ministries staff team.



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UNIT 6

Spiritual Practices (4 Sessions)

1. Worship and Mindfulness
2. Gratitude and Giving Back
3. Accepting, Receiving, and Giving Forgiveness
4. Mental Health Practices: Coping with Stress, Depression, and Anxiety

>> UNIT OVERVIEW

Today, we start a new LEAD Unit on Spiritual Practices. **Spiritual Practices**—also called Spiritual Disciplines—are practical, tangible things we can do to grow in our faith and discover a deeper relationship with God. As Christians—and especially as Christian leaders—spiritual practices are essential because they keep us grounded and connected to God. Additionally, studies show that engaging in spiritual practices like meditation and contemplative prayer can actually help regulate our emotions, make us less reactionary, and lead us into compassion for others. John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, encouraged Christians to engage in a variety of spiritual practices, which he called “Acts of Piety” and “Works of Mercy.” By engaging in these “means of grace,” we become more like Jesus as we learn to better Love God and Love Others.

We aren't all going to connect with every type of spiritual practice, and that's ok! Some people are drawn more to quiet, contemplative practices like prayer, meditation, and Lectio Divina. Others will prefer communal practices like corporate worship, small groups, and serving those around you. However, it's important to try out different types of spiritual practices so that we can push ourselves outside our comfort zones and discover new ways of connecting with God.

In the first session, we are going to look at two spiritual practices: **Worship and Mindfulness**. Worship is our response to God's goodness and love.



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YEAR ONE

UNIT 6 | SESSION 1

Worship and Mindfulness

>> MAIN POINT

Even Mary experienced emotions

>> BACKGROUND INFO

In this first session, we are going to look at two spiritual practices: **Worship and Mindfulness**. **Worship** is our response to God's goodness and love. We tend to think of worship as a corporate experience, when the Christian community gathers in church to praise God and connect with God through singing, scripture, prayer, and a sermon or message. But worship is also an individual practice as well. We can worship God totally on our own through prayer, singing or listening to worship songs, and taking time to thank and praise God.

Alternatively, we mostly tend to think of **mindfulness** as an individual activity—something we do on our own in the quiet of our rooms. However, mindfulness can easily be practiced in a group setting, as a facilitator guides the group into a contemplative state and encourages them to be more mindful of their body, mind, and soul. We will have an opportunity to practice mindfulness in today's session through the Response Experience.

>> OPENING QUESTION

What is your favorite way to relax or de-stress? Why?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Today, we start a new LEAD Unit on Spiritual Practices. **Spiritual Practices**—also called Spiritual Disciplines—are practical, tangible things we can do to grow in our faith and discover a deeper relationship with God. As Christians—and especially as Christian leaders—spiritual practices are essential because they keep us grounded and connected to God. So many times, we put God in a box. We don't believe God can help us with our problems, or we are afraid to even ask. Sometimes, we do not feel worthy of God's love and favor. Through Worship, we recognize all the great things about God and celebrate God's goodness in our lives. This next activity will help us reflect on God's greatness.



>> OPENER: GOD IN A BOX

(adapted from <https://www.smallgroups.com/meeting-builder/worship-ideas/god-in-box.html>)

Supplies needed: three strips of paper or post-its for each person, pens, and a small box or container

- Put the small box or container in the middle of your small group circle.
- Give everyone three pieces of paper, and instruct them to write, "God Can..." or "God is..." and then finish the sentence.
- Put the completed pieces of paper in the box. Pass the box around and have each person pull out one of the slips of paper and read what God can do. Pass the box around until all slips of paper have been read.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Have you ever "put God in a box"?
- Why do we so often put God in a box?
- In what ways has God worked through your life? How have you seen God in action this week?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

We are going to look at two spiritual practices today: **Worship and Mindfulness**. **Worship** is what we will focus on first – it is our response to God's goodness and love. We tend to think of worship as a corporate experience, when the Christian community gathers together in church to praise God and connect with God through singing, scripture, prayer, and a sermon or message. But worship is also an individual practice as well. We can worship God totally on our own through prayer, singing or listening to worship songs, and taking time to thank and praise God.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some of the different rituals or traditions involved in worship?
2. There are many parts that make up a corporate worship service: music, singing, prayer, dancing, or clapping, reading scripture, fellowship, the sacraments of communion and baptism, and a sermon or message. What is your favorite part of a worship service? Which parts of worship connect you with God the most?
3. Why do you think we are called to worship God?

>> SCRIPTURE

Read the following Bible passages:

Psalms 150:1-6

Hebrews 13:15-16

Psalms 37:7



>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. According to Psalm 150, what are some different ways we can praise the Lord?
2. How can we worship God even when we are alone?
3. Where do you tend to worship God most easily: through a corporate church service or privately on your own?
4. Hebrews 13:15 says to offer a "sacrifice of praise." Why is worship sometimes a sacrifice? When is it the hardest for you to worship? Should we worship God even when we don't feel like it?
5. What do you think is the outcome or "fruit" of our worship?
6. How can we prepare our hearts and minds for worship?
7. What does it mean to "be still" before the Lord (Psalm 37:7)?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

While we have focused on worship this session, we will now shift our attention to mindfulness. For Christians, mindfulness is the practice of centering ourselves and becoming more aware (or "mindful") of God's presence in our midst. Mindfulness also helps us pay attention to the present moment and become conscious of what we are feeling and thinking.

>> RESPONSE EXPERIENCE: PRACTICING MINDFULNESS

Take a few minutes to practice mindfulness guided meditation. While there are many apps, resources, and videos out there to help with mindfulness, we recommend the **7 minute "Stilling the Mind" Guided Meditation from The Mindful Christian on YouTube**. (Direct link: <https://youtu.be/zvG1H3muCQQ>). You don't need to show the video to participate in the guided meditation; just playing the sound on your phone should work.

After practicing the guided meditation, discuss the following questions as a group.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Describe your experience of entering into mindfulness. What emotions were you feeling, or thoughts were you thinking? Did you feel uncomfortable or natural and relaxed?
2. How did you become more aware of your body, your feelings, and your thoughts? How did you become more aware of God's presence?
3. Have you practiced mindfulness in any way before this exercise?
4. Is mindfulness a spiritual practice you would like to continue doing?

For more on Christian Mindfulness, check out the book *Right Here, Right Now: The Practice of Christian Mindfulness* by Dr. Amy Oden (Abingdon Press, 2017).



>> JOURNAL PROMPTS

Have students complete these journal prompts on their own at home, or in session if you have time. The practice of journaling is something we will promote all four years of high school in our Discipleship Groups. Write these prompts on the board or text them out in a group chat so they can copy them in their LEAD Student Journals.

1. How can you practice mindfulness in your daily life?
2. What is one way you can worship this week?

>> MENTAL HEALTH CHECK-IN

Take several minutes to go around and ask each student, "How is it with your soul?" Explain that John Wesley encouraged the original members of Methodist small groups to ask one another this question to "check in" on each other's mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Remember, if any "red flags" or mental health concerns arise during this time, please direct students to appropriate Pastoral Care and Counseling Resources (cor.org/care) and inform a member of the student ministries staff team.

>> JOYS/CONCERNS AND PRAYER

Close by sharing joys and concerns and praying together as a group.

Share Joys first: Things you are thankful for or ways you've encountered God this week.
Share Concerns second: Things going on that you want to lift up to God and share the burden of with others.

Close your session in prayer. Encourage a student to pray or ask multiple people to pray.





YEAR ONE

UNIT 6 | SESSION 2

Spiritual Practices: Gratitude and Generosity

>> MAIN POINT

Gratitude is our loving and thankful response to God

>> BACKGROUND INFO

In this session, we continue our LEAD Unit on Spiritual Practices. As a reminder, spiritual practices are things we can do to draw us closer to God and grow in our relationship with Jesus. Today we look at two different but related practices: **Gratitude and Generosity**.

Similar to worship, **gratitude** is our loving and thankful response to God for all the things God has done for us and given to us. Gratitude is a specific act of worship, in which we “count our blessings” and focus on all the ways God has provided for us and helped us. Studies have shown that practicing gratitude or having an “attitude of gratitude” actually improves your relationships with others and makes you a happier and more positive person! (See <https://www.health.harvard.edu/healthbeat/giving-thanks-can-make-you-happier>)

Generosity or Giving Back should be the natural response or “next step” to gratitude. Because God has blessed us in so many ways, we should seek to extend those blessings to others. One way to think of generosity is giving back to God your **time, talents, and resources**. We give back to God our **time** when we serve and care for others. We give God our **talents** when we use our gifts and skills to bless others. We give God our **resources** when we contribute financially (such as through tithes and offerings) or when we give up our physical possessions to others (such as by donating to a clothing closet or food pantry).

Resources consulted for this LEAD Session:

- *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices that Transform Us* by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun (InterVarsity Press, 2015)
- *The Walk: Five Essential Practices of the Christian Life* by Adam Hamilton (Abingdon Press: 2019)



>> OPENER: MEMORABLE GIFTS

Supplies Needed: two pieces of paper or post-its for each person, pens

Give everyone two pieces of paper and a pen. On one slip of paper, write what has been the most memorable or favorite gift you received (or just a really good one!). On the other post-it, write down the worst gift you received. But don't specify which is which! Just write down what the gifts were.

Put all the completed pieces of paper in the center. Draw them out one at a time. Have the group guess who wrote down the gift, and whether it was their worst gift or their favorite gift. Allow the gift recipients to share about why it was such a good gift, or why it was such a horrible gift!

>> MENTOR PROMPT

In this session, we continue our LEAD Unit on Spiritual Practices. As a reminder, spiritual practices are things we can do draw us closer to God and grow in our relationship with Jesus. Today we look at two different but related practices: **Gratitude and Generosity**. Like worship, **gratitude** is our loving and thankful response to God for all the things God has done for us and given to us. Gratitude is a specific act of worship, in which we "count our blessings" and focus on all the ways God has provided for us and helped us.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In our Opener, we talked about gifts we have received. What is the best gift you have given someone else? How did you feel about giving that gift?
2. What are a few things in your life that bring you true joy?
3. In what ways do you express gratitude and thankfulness to others?

>> SCRIPTURE

Read the following Bible passages:

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Luke 6:38

Psalms 136:1-7 *Consider reading this one as a group together as a prayer.*

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In Psalm 136, what are the things the psalmist says to give thanks for?
2. How can we give thanks in every situation, like it says to do in 1 Thessalonians 5:18?
3. Who is someone you know that is a very generous person?
4. What does Luke 6:38 say about giving back?



>> MENTOR PROMPT

Generosity or Giving Back should be the natural response or “next step” to gratitude. Because God has blessed us in so many ways, we should seek to extend those blessings to others. One way to think of generosity is giving back to God your time, talents, and resources. We give back to God our time when we serve and care for others. We give God our talents when we use our gifts and skills to bless others. We give God our resources when we contribute financially (such as through tithes and offerings) or when we give up our physical possessions to others (such as by donating to a clothing closet or food pantry).

>> RESPONSE EXPERIENCE: PRACTICING GRATITUDE AND GENEROSITY

You might already be familiar with a Gratitude Journal, a way of taking time each day to give thanks for the variety of gifts God has given you. Practicing gratitude in this way helps us to be thankful with what we have and remember how God has blessed us. Gratitude should also lead to generosity—sharing our blessings with others.

First, in your journal, write down 5 things that you are grateful for. Be creative and try to think “outside the box.”

Next, in your journal, write down 5 ways you can practice generosity this month. Maybe it's through serving in church, giving an extra-generous tip to a waitress or barista, blessing someone else with a tangible gift, or giving an offering in church or a donation to a cause that matters to you.

If you have time, go around the group, and share your gratitude list and your generosity ideas. As a group, how can you practice giving back to God?

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do you show gratitude and thankfulness toward God?
2. What does it mean to have an “attitude of gratitude” in your life?
3. What sorts of things help you cultivate an attitude of gratitude? (Examples: singing praise and worship songs, serving others, spending time with friends, giving, and receiving gifts, etc.)
4. Do you have a job? Do you give any of your money back to God through church offering?
5. In what ways can you give back to God of your time, talents, and resources?



>> JOURNAL PROMPTS

Have students complete these journal prompts on their own at home, or in session if you have time. The practice of journaling is something we will promote all four years of high school in our Discipleship Groups. Write these prompts on the board or text them out in a group chat so they can copy them in their LEAD Student Journals.

1. What is one way you can give back to others?
2. How can you practice gratitude every day?
3. What are you most grateful to God for, right now?

>> MENTAL HEALTH CHECK-IN

Take several minutes to go around and ask each student, "How is it with your soul?" Explain that John Wesley encouraged the original members of Methodist small groups to ask one another this question to "check in" on each other's mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Remember, if any "red flags" or mental health concerns arise during this time, please direct students to appropriate Pastoral Care and Counseling Resources (cor.org/care) and inform a member of the student ministries staff team.

>> JOYS/CONCERNS AND PRAYER

Close by sharing joys and concerns and praying together as a group.

Share Joys first: Things you are thankful for or ways you've encountered God this week. Share Concerns second: Things going on that you want to lift up to God and share the burden of with others. Close your session in prayer. Encourage a student to pray or ask multiple people to pray.





YEAR ONE

UNIT 6 | SESSION 3

Spiritual Practices: Accepting, Receiving, and Giving Forgiveness

>> MAIN POINT

Forgiveness takes practice

>> BACKGROUND INFO

As we continue our LEAD Unit on Spiritual Practices, today we are looking at the concept of **Forgiveness**. We may not automatically think of accepting, receiving, and offering forgiveness as a spiritual practice. However, getting better at forgiving ourselves and others is a discipline we can hone through practice, just like how working out certain parts of our body makes them stronger and more flexible. As we develop a habit of forgiveness, we grow closer in relationship with our All-Forgiving God. Through forgiveness, we become more like Jesus, who frequently taught on forgiveness and even forgave those who crucified him.

Sometimes when it comes to practicing forgiveness, we have a hard time **offering forgiveness** to others. We would rather instead seek revenge or try to “get even.” Yet, refusing to offer forgiveness often only harms ourselves, and not the person who has caused us pain. We release ourselves from further emotional turmoil when we forgive the wrongdoer and show mercy to them. Furthermore, we are called to forgive each other, as the Lord forgave us (Colossians 3:13, Ephesians 4:32).

Asking for forgiveness from God or others can be very challenging. We rarely like to admit that we were wrong! Yet, the truth is that we all sin and make mistakes. When we confess our wrongs and ask for forgiveness, we have the opportunity to develop a closer relationship with God and with others.

Often, **receiving forgiveness and forgiving ourselves** is the most difficult part of forgiveness. We may feel like we don't deserve God's forgiveness or that our sin is too great to be forgiven. If this is the case, practice seeing yourself as God sees you: as a dearly loved child. We know through Scripture that God is quick to forgive and always offers mercy. Isaiah 43:25 reminds us that God does not remember our sin. Reflect on these promises the next time you need to accept and receive forgiveness from God or someone else.



Resources consulted for this LEAD Session:

- *The Sacred Way: Spiritual Practices for Everyday Life* by Tony Jones (Zondervan, 2005)
- *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices that Transform Us* by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun (InterVarsity Press, 2015)

>> OPENER QUESTION

Which is easier: forgiving others or asking for forgiveness?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

As we continue our LEAD Unit on Spiritual Practices, today we are looking at the concept of **Forgiveness**. We may not automatically think of accepting, receiving, and offering forgiveness as a spiritual practice. However, getting better at forgiving ourselves and others is a discipline we can hone through practice, just like how working out certain parts of our body makes them stronger and more flexible. As we develop a habit of forgiveness, we grow closer in relationship with our All-Forgiving God. Through forgiveness, we become more like Jesus, who frequently taught on forgiveness and even forgave those who crucified him.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Share about a time when someone offered you forgiveness. How did you feel afterward?
2. Who is someone you know that readily practices forgiveness, or has had the courage to forgive a major wrongdoing?
3. What does it mean to confess our sins to God?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Sometimes when it comes to practicing forgiveness, we have a hard time **offering forgiveness** to others. We would rather instead seek revenge or try to “get even.” Yet, refusing to offer forgiveness often only harms ourselves, and not the person who has caused us pain. We release ourselves from further emotional turmoil when we forgive the wrongdoer and show mercy to them. Furthermore, we are called to forgive each other, as the Lord forgave us (Colossians 3:13, Ephesians 4:32).

Response Activity: Forgiveness Ad Campaign

(from <https://www.smallgroups.com/meeting-builder/icebreakers/ad-campaign.html>)

Supplies Needed: large sheets of paper or poster board, markers; Optional: old magazines to cut up for pictures, scissors, and tape.

Divide into groups of three or four. Give each group large sheets of paper or poster board, markers, and any additional craft supplies available. Every group should create a magazine ad. Assign some groups to develop an ad promoting forgiveness, and the other groups an ad promoting unforgiveness. For example, a group’s ad might say,



“Forgiveness: Don’t Leave Home Without It,” or “Unforgiveness: The Natural Feeling.” Then have groups present their ads, explaining why they chose the picture or pictures and slogan they did.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is it hard to forgive those who have hurt us?
2. What happens to us when we refuse to forgive those who have harmed us?
How can offering forgiveness to someone else help us?
3. Is forgiving a wrong the same as forgetting the wrong? Why or why not?
4. Does forgiving someone mean you have to continue to be in relationship with them?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Asking for forgiveness from God or others can be very challenging. We rarely like to admit that we were wrong! Yet, the truth is that we all sin and make mistakes. When we confess our wrongs and ask for forgiveness, we have the opportunity to develop a closer relationship with God and with others.

>> SCRIPTURE

Read the following Bible passages:

Psalm 32:1-5

Matthew 6:12-15

Colossians 3:13

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In Psalm 32:1-5, how did the psalmist (David) feel before confessing his sin to God? How did he feel after confessing his sins to God?
2. Do you relate to David in Psalm 32? How so?
3. In what ways can we know that God has forgiven our sins?
4. According to these scripture passages, why is it important to forgive others?
5. Why is it hard to forgive those who have hurt us?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Often, **receiving forgiveness and forgiving ourselves** is the most difficult part of forgiveness. We may feel like we don’t deserve God’s forgiveness or that our sin is too great to be forgiven. If this is the case, practice seeing yourself as God sees you: as a dearly loved child. We know through Scripture that God is quick to forgive and always offers mercy. We are going to practice together the Ignatian Examen, which is an ancient spiritual practice.



>> RESPONSE EXPERIENCE: IGNATIAN EXAMEN

(Adapted from <https://www.jesuits.org/spirituality/the-ignatian-examen/>)

The *Ignatian Examen* is an ancient spiritual practice that involves mentally reviewing your day, confessing to God any times you have sinned, and asking for God's forgiveness for the faults you have committed. As a group, take a few moments to silently go through the steps of the *Examen*. If you want, you can journal your responses to each step. You might want to play soft background music. Close your time of examination by praying together the Lord's Prayer.

1. Place yourself in God's presence. Imagine yourself in a safe place, surrounded by the love of God. Give thanks for God's love.
2. Pray that you might have the grace to understand how God is acting in your life, and what God needs to reveal to you.
3. Review your day. Recall moments when you felt God was near and moments when it seemed like God was distant.
4. Reflect on what you did, said, or thought throughout these interactions. Were you drawing closer to God, or further away? Are there any moments for which you need to ask forgiveness from God or another person? Confess those moments to God and ask for God's forgiveness. Thank God for giving you grace and mercy.
5. Look forward to tomorrow. Think of how you can be more aware of God's presence and work to show God's love to others.
6. Conclude by praying the Lord's Prayer.

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Isaiah 43:25 reminds us that God does not remember our sin. Reflect on these promises the next time you need to accept and receive forgiveness from God or someone else.

>> JOURNAL PROMPTS

Have students complete these journal prompts on their own at home, or in session if you have time. The practice of journaling is something we will promote all four years of high school in our Discipleship Groups. Write these prompts on the board or text them out in a group chat so they can copy them in their LEAD Student Journals.

1. Who is someone you need to forgive?
2. What is something you need to forgive yourself for?

>> MENTAL HEALTH CHECK-IN

Take several minutes to go around and ask each student, "How is it with your soul?" Explain that John Wesley encouraged the original members of Methodist small groups to ask one another this question to "check in" on each other's mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.



Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal lines. The page features a yellow vertical bar on the left side with two white chevrons pointing right. The background is decorated with light blue watercolor splatters. Large, faint, light blue letters 'E', 'A', and 'D' are visible in the background, serving as a guide for letter height and placement on the lines.

YEAR ONE

UNIT 6 | SESSION 4

Mental Health Practices: Coping with Stress, Depression, and Anxiety

>> MAIN POINT

Our mental health matters to God

>> BACKGROUND INFO

So far in this Unit of LEAD, we have focused on spiritual growth and spiritual disciplines. But our mental health is just as important as our spiritual health. For this final session of LEAD, YEAR 1, we will be focusing on mental health strategies and potential coping methods for stress, depression, and anxiety.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), an estimated 31.9% of teens aged 13-18 have an anxiety disorder such as General Anxiety Disorder, Panic Disorder, Social Anxiety Disorder, Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD), or Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Additionally, an estimated 4.1 million adolescents aged 12-17 in the United States have had at least one depressive episode (17% of the adolescent population). (From <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics>)

Clearly stress, depression, and anxiety are affecting students in huge numbers, more now than ever particularly due to the covid-19 pandemic. While the stigma around mental illness for Generation Z is not as strong as in previous generations, some students may still feel uncomfortable talking about these topics. Others might feel freedom and liberation in being able to speak openly about mental health. Either way, the goal for today's session is to create a safe place for students to share about their mental health needs and struggles, and offer positive ways to deal with stress, depression, and anxiety.

Positive coping skills and practices are shown to help teens develop resilience over time and "release the pressure" on their mental health. The following approaches are some suggestions of these coping mechanisms:

(Adapted from https://www.newportacademy.com/resources/mental-health/mental_health_temperature_check/)



- Compassionate and Positive Self-Talk
- Yoga, meditation, conscious breathing, and other mindfulness practices
- Practicing gratitude
- Spending time in nature
- Exercise and physical activity
- Self-expression through art, music, writing/journaling
- Prayer, attending church, or engaging in other religious activities such as reading the Bible or singing worship songs
- Listening to calming music
- Drinking plenty of water
- Getting adequate sleep
- Eating healthy, balanced meals

NOTE: While developing individual coping methods for stress, anxiety, and depression is an important step in mental health, it may not be our only step. Often when it comes to anxiety and depression, medication and therapy are also necessary and beneficial treatments. Please direct students to appropriate mental health resources through a therapist, psychiatrist, or their primary care doctor. **As always, if a student says anything that is cause for concern or alarming to you, please report it immediately to your student ministries director.**

>> RESOURCES CONSULTED FOR THIS LEAD SESSION

- RECHARGE Youth Group Series (October 2022)
- National Institute of Mental Health (<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/>)
- Newport Academy (https://www.newportacademy.com/resources/mental-health/mental_health_temperature_check/)

>> OPENING QUESTION

What is your favorite form of self-care?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

So far in this Unit of LEAD, we have focused on spiritual growth and spiritual disciplines. But our mental health is just as important as our spiritual health. For this final session of LEAD, YEAR 1, we will be focusing on mental health strategies and potential coping methods for stress, depression, and anxiety.

>> RESPONSE ACTIVITY: MENTAL HEALTH CHECKUP

(adapted from https://www.newportacademy.com/resources/mental-health/mental_health_temperature_check/)

Supplies Needed: copies of Mental Health Checkup



>> MENTAL HEALTH CHECK IN

(adapted from https://www.newportacademy.com/resources/mental-health/mental_health_temperature_check/)

1. What three words best describe how you're feeling right now?
2. On a scale of 1-10, going from negative to positive, what number best describes your state of mind?
3. Fill in the blank: Something I've been thinking about a lot lately is...
4. If your feelings were weather, what kind of day would it be outside?
5. If your life were a movie, what songs would be on the soundtrack right now?
6. What would you like to have less of in your life right now?
7. What would you like to have more of in your life right now?
8. What is the hardest part about being you right now?
9. How are you doing physically? Give yourself a score on a scale of 1-10.
10. Answer these questions about your physical well-being:
 - a. Are you getting enough sleep? (7-9 hours of sleep a night)
 - i. Most Days
 - ii. Some Days
 - iii. Rarely
 - b. Are you exercising regularly? (3-5 times per week of at least 30 minutes)
 - i. Most weeks
 - ii. Some weeks
 - iii. Rarely
 - c. Are you drinking enough water (48-60 ounces a day)
 - i. Most Days
 - ii. Some Days
 - iii. Rarely
 - d. Are you eating regular meals?
 - i. Most Days
 - ii. Some Days
 - iii. Rarely

Distribute a copy of the Mental Health Checkup to each student. Give them a few minutes to complete the Checkup. Then, discuss using the following questions.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Was there anything that surprised you or came up for you through this mental health check-in?
2. How realistic does achieving these mental health 'expectations' seem within the busyness of life?
3. In general, what areas do you think are the hardest for teenagers to achieve?



>> MENTOR PROMPT

We talk a lot about mental health in different areas of our lives. We hear about it at school, at home, at the doctor, and even in church. Mental health is also an important part of our spiritual health, and our mental health matters to God. Today we will look at mental health through our faith. It's important to remember that while mental health and spiritual health are linked, one is not necessarily an answer for the other. Prayer is an amazing tool and a great way to connect and commune with God, but it should be used in addition to a mental health professional during mental health crises. Talk to your Youth Director or Pastor about getting connected to a mental health professional to get connected to a mental health professional.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some things that give teenagers stress or anxiety?
2. What are some negative ways that teens tend to cope with stress, anxiety, or depression?
3. How or why can they neglect their physical health and well-being? Do you think that affects their mental health and well-being? How might that also impact our spiritual health as well?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

At the very beginning of scripture, God models rest for us by taking a sabbath after creating the world. We read about Jesus stepping away, and resting, or choosing to be alone, multiple times throughout scripture. Jesus worked hard during his ministry to travel and teach others about the love of God, but even the importance of this, he took time to rest. Additionally, we see Jesus taking these moments to connect with God.

>> SCRIPTURE

Read the following Bible passages:

Mark 1:35

Mark 6:31

Luke 5:16

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In those scriptures, what does Jesus teach us about rest, mental health, and spiritual health?
2. Why does Jesus take time to pray during His times of rest?
3. When you are feeling alone or lonely, who do you reach out to for support?
4. How can the adults in your life best support your mental health needs?



>> MENTOR PROMPT

What we read about Jesus is how Jesus practiced rest and prayer. Amid our busy lives, it can be difficult to take time to rest, pray, or be in silence. Sometimes people will take what is called a 'solitude retreat' to focus on their mental and spiritual health. When you take a solitude retreat, you take time to rest, read scripture, pray, and be in nature. You remove yourself from all stimulation – no contact, and no talking for a whole day (or sometimes 2-3 days!). While we don't have time to spend 2-3 days without talking or stimulation, we do have 5-10 minutes, and I want us to practice that for the next few minutes.

>> RESPONSE EXPERIENCE: SOLITUDE

Put on a song with no words, dim the lights if possible, and invite students to find a comfortable spot in the room. Have them leave their phones face down on the table and be silent for 5-10 minutes (depending on how much time you have). They can take time to pray, think, or even close their eyes. Naps are biblical!

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What surprised you about the last five minutes? Was it easy or difficult?
2. Is there a way you could practice solitude in your daily life? How?

>> JOURNAL PROMPTS

Have students complete these journal prompts on their own at home, or in session if you have time. Write them on the board or text them out in a group chat so they can copy them in their LEAD Student Journals.

1. What is one way that you would like to try to relieve stress?
2. What is something you could do to practice rest?

>> MENTAL HEALTH CHECK-IN

Take several minutes to go around and ask each student, "How is it with your soul?" Explain that John Wesley encouraged the original members of Methodist small groups to ask one another this question to "check in" on each other's mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Remember, if any "red flags" or mental health concerns arise during this time, please direct students to appropriate Pastoral Care and Counseling Resources (cor.org/care) and inform a member of the student ministries staff team.



>> JOYS/CONCERNS AND PRAYER

Close by sharing joys and concerns and praying together as a group.

Share Joys first: Things you are thankful for or ways you've encountered God this week.

Share Concerns second: Things going on that you want to lift up to God and share the burden of with others.

Close your session in prayer. Encourage a student to pray or ask multiple people to pray.



Handwriting practice area consisting of multiple horizontal lines. The word 'LEARN' is faintly visible in the background.



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LEAD

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RESURRECTION
STUDENTS