

LEAD LEAD LEAD



RESURRECTION
STUDENTS

MENTOR GUIDE
YEAR 2





[Mentor Curriculum Guide]

Year 2

[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. All 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 adult mentors that know them, listen to them and pour 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 2 Curriculum Overview

UNIT 1: COMMUNITY

Session 1: Being Community
Session 2: Growing Community

UNIT 2: CLIFTON STRENGTHS

Session 1: Strengths Finder
Session 2: Your Strengths

UNIT 3: MARY MAGDALENE

Session 1: Mary Profile
Session 2: Showing Up

UNIT 4: PETER

Session 1: Peter Profile
Session 2: Bouncing Back

UNIT 5: ESTHER

Session 1: Esther Profile
Session 2: Leveraging Influence

UNIT 6: JOSHUA

Session 1: Joshua Profile
Session 2: Bravery & Strength

UNIT 7 SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Session 1: Leaders in our Lives
Session 2: Leading in Churches

UNIT 8: EVANGELISM

Session 1: The Great Commission
Session 2: Invitation not Influence
Session 3: Fruit of the Spirit

UNIT 9: 5 ESSENTIAL PRACTICES

Session 1: Worship
Session 2: Prayer
Session 3: Study
Session 4: Serve
Session 5: Give/Share

SEASONAL

Thanksgiving: Gratitude in Faith
Advent: Patience
Lent: Practicing Silence



YEAR TWO

UNIT 1 Community

Session 1: Being Community
Session 2: Growing Community

>> 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 an attendance list (in some circumstances virtually by email). Please fill it out – this helps us to know who is there. And it will help you remember the names of the students.

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 TWO

UNIT 1 | SESSION 1

Being Community

>> 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 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 group. 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.

>> OPENER

Your small group might already have a groupme so that you can stay in touch throughout the week. If that's the case, take some time to make sure everyone present in your group today is added. If you don't have one, take some time to create one and add everyone in! Either way, ask your students to immediately send in

1. Their top 3 (appropriate!) emojis, and 2. Their favorite (appropriate!) gif.



>> OPENING ACTIVITY

ACRONYM ACCOUNTABILITY

Supplies needed: WWJD and HWLF Bracelets

Pass out a WWJD and HWLF bracelet to each student.

Explain the meaning behind the concept:

WWJD bracelets were super popular back in the day, they were meant to make people think before they act, what would Jesus do. Nowadays, there are bracelets around that answer that original question by saying, HWLF: He Would Love First.

- What do you think of WWJD and HWLF as concepts?
- What biblical examples can you think of that support that Jesus would in fact love first?
- If time permits, as everyone to share their favorite story about Jesus and why it's their favorite.

>> MENTOR PROMPT

When talking about Jesus original disciples, we hear a lot about the fishermen: Peter, Andrew, James, and John. We often hear less about a few others. Jesus asked Matthew to follow Him, and he did--just like the fishermen did. But what's notable is that Matthew was tax collector. That means he worked for the oppressive Roman government that was ruling over the Jewish people at the time. Tax collectors were widely hated by the Jewish people because not only did they make them pay what they owed the government, but they would charge extra just to make more money for themselves. They regularly took advantage of hardworking everyday people.

- What do you think the disciples who were fishermen thought when Matthew joined the community that Jesus was building?
- How do you think Matthew felt following Jesus into that community and possibly seeing someone he had scammed?

>> VIDEO AND DISCUSSION

There's another disciple we don't often hear about: Simon the Zealot. As a group, watch the video below to learn more about him. Use someone's phone, tablet, or computer to watch this video as a group (Start at 10:46, end at 14:30):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U1z8pbA4iYA&t=646s>

- How do you think Matthew, a tax collector for the Roman government felt when he realized Jesus had invited Simon the Zealot to be in the community he had just joined?
- What do you think was going through Simon's mind when he realized a Roman government worker was in his small group?
- How do you think the first few days and weeks of following Jesus went for the 12 disciples?



The idea of having small groups within a church comes from the idea that Jesus grouped together those that followed Him, and they all learned together, served together and followed Jesus together--sound familiar?

John Wesley, the founder of our church's denomination, Methodism, used variations of small groups in his ministry as a pastor. He wrote down much of what we believed about how to be a follower of Christ and to this day, we still follow much of what he thought.

Read each of these statements and, as a group, try to decipher what John Wesley meant or was trying to accomplish within his small groups:

To speak each of us in order, freely and plainly, the true state of our souls, with the faults we have committed in thought, word, or deed, and the temptations we have felt, since our last meeting.

To end every meeting with prayer, suited to the state of each person present.

To desire some person among us to speak his own state first, and then to ask the rest, in order, as many and as searching questions as may be, concerning their state, sins, and temptations.

The members of the groups John Wesley created were accountable to each other, encouraged each other to be loving, do good in the world, and avoid getting into big fights about how best to live a Christian life.

- What types of things are you accountable for in your life? List them.
- Why is it important to strive to maintain accountability for those things?

>> SCRIPTURE

Read the following Bible passages:

- Matthew 9:9-13 (The Calling of Matthew)
- Luke 6:12-16 (Disciples and Simon the Zealot)

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why do you think Jesus chose to have dinner with Matthew and his Tax Collector and sinner friends?
- The Pharisees who saw Jesus eating with Matthew's friends judged him for doing so. What do you think of Jesus' responses to them?
 - "Healthy people don't need a doctor, but sick people do."
 - "Learn what this means: I want mercy and not sacrifice."
 - "I didn't come to call righteous people, but sinners."



- Do a short profile on the disciples Jesus chose to be in His community (you can use your phone/google, or your awesome Sunday School Skills.) What do you learn?
 - Simon, whom he named Peter
 - Simon's brother Andrew
 - James
 - John
 - Philip
 - Bartholomew
 - Matthew
 - Thomas
 - James the son of Alphaeus
 - Simon, who was called a zealot
 - Judas, the son of James
 - And Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor

Jesus' community was filled with people with different backgrounds, different viewpoints and different experiences...but they all had Jesus in common. Our small groups operate much the same way. We have a lot in common, but we also have a lot that is different.

>> RESPONSE ACTIVITY: ANSWERING THE CALL

Grab some paper and markers and tell your students you are developing a small group covenant, some rules and guidelines everyone in the group will have to abide by in order to keep this community safe. After all, Jesus probably had to make it a rule that Simon the Zealot and Matthew the Tax Collector didn't try to (actually) kill each other when they were together.

How can this community answer Jesus' call to be in community with Him, and safely be in community with each other?

Small Group Covenant:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Have everyone snap a photo of the covenant on their phones so they can always refer back to it.

This is your community. Jesus called the disciples, and He's calling to you too.



Mentors: Take some time to share with your students why their presence in this group matters. Share what it means to you when you get to hear their answers to the questions, when you get to laugh together, and when you get to support each other in hard times. This moment is not meant to make them feel guilty if they don't attend every week, but to reinforce that having each and every individual present is always a gift!

>> JOURNAL REFLECTION PROMPT

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 Student Journals.

- What are all the different communities you belong to?
- Jot down whether or not you feel safe in those communities and think about why or why not. How can you work to make those communities safer? If that's not in your power, who can you talk to that can help you establish more safety emotionally, mentally, and physically?

>> 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 as a way 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 TWO

UNIT 1 | SESSION 2

Growing Community

>> BACKGROUND INFO

Children's Bureau: All4kids.org The Importance of a Community for Teenagers.
<https://www.allforkids.org/news/blog/the-importance-of-a-community-for-teenagers/#:~:text=Encouraging%20them%20to%20get%20involved,community%20service%20as%20a%20family>

>> OPENER

- What's your criteria for choosing to follow a social media account? Funny? Meaningful? Knowledgeable?
- Who are the people who you send memes and videos to constantly?
- What's your criteria for celebrities you'll spend money and take time out to see?
- Who/what are the ones you tell your friends about or bring with you?
- What brands do you absolutely swear by and recommend to others?

For fun, have the students share their favorite (appropriate!) memes and gifs into your groupme. If there are people present who aren't in the groupme, spend some time adding them.

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Sometimes we create community around the similarities we have with each other. We gravitate toward people who enjoy what we do so we can talk about it and enjoy it together. It's natural for us to share the things we like and our experiences with other people in our lives. However, sometimes we have reasons we choose not to share things with others:

- You like your friend group the way it is.
- You don't want a bunch of people finding out your favorite coffee spot or favorite view where you live.
- You don't want people to judge you for what you like or how you choose to enjoy your time.

Do you relate to any of these examples? Is there a different example you find more relatable?



According to the Children's Bureau, "Overall, community is characterized by a group of people that care about each other and feel that they belong together. A group can help provide a sense of belonging, mutual support, greater influence, and exploration for young teens"

How would you define community based on your own experiences?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Community has multiple benefits in life, a few of those benefits, specific to teen populations are:

- It meets practical needs when you need a favor.
- It helps create a space to learn transparency, vulnerability, emotional maturity, trust, and emotional regulation. It also teaches compassion for others.
- It helps people to not be selfish by teaching responsibility and providing the opportunity to look outward.
- It provides lessons in conflict resolution
- It presents opportunities for forgiveness.
- It challenges a person to become an even better person.
- It allow people to shift their perspective.

There are specific signs to identify a healthy community:

- It's free of peer pressure.
- It's authentic and genuine.
- It's supportive and provides accountability.
- It's diverse and inclusive.
- It's outward focused.
- You have a desire to be part of it.
- You bring positive change to it.

How many of these do each of your communities include?

>> SCRIPTURE

Read the following Bible passages:

John 19:25-27 (Jesus' closest friends and relatives at his death)

John 20:11-18 (Jesus appears to Mary)

Matthew 28:16-19 (Jesus' instructions)



>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

John 19:25-27

By the time Jesus was dying on the cross, His community had grown beyond just the 12 disciples. Mary Magdalene had been healed by Jesus and become a loyal follower. John, known as the disciple, whom Jesus loved, was one of His closest friends. Jesus' mother stayed near Him throughout His ministry and was there when He died.

- Why do you think Jesus told His dearest friend to take His mother in?
- What is significant about Jesus arranging this care taking relationship while He's suffering on the Cross?
- What do you think knowing they had each other meant to those witnessing Jesus' death?

John 20:11-18

Mary Magdalene was at the cross when Jesus died, and at the tomb to take care of His body as soon as she was allowed to be after honoring the Sabbath.

- Only a few people in Jesus' community were present during His darkest hour--why do you think that is?
- Why do you think Jesus chose to talk to Mary in those moments?
- Why do you think Jesus sent His friend Mary to tell the disciples He was alive instead of someone else or instead of showing up to them Himself?
- Who would you trust to deliver a vital message like the one Mary shared with the disciples?

Matthew 28:16-19

- Jesus instructed his disciples to go and make more disciples. Why do you think He did that?
- What's the significance of the fact that Jesus' instructions to the disciples were His last words ever to them?
- What are some ways that the individuals in this group can make disciples, as Jesus instructed?
- What were Jesus and His disciples known for?
- How can we strive to be known for the same things Jesus is known for?
- Overall, what do we learn from these three pieces of scripture about how Jesus valued community?

>> RESPONSE ACTIVITY: GO & GROW

Jesus' community grew over time. He didn't only stick with the initial 12. He added to that community as He went along. Often, people would become a part of that community after Jesus had done some sort of miracle. By healing people and spending time with those who are usually ignored, Jesus invited others into community with Him. And then in His time of greatest despair, those closest to Him within the community were there to support Him.



Make a list of the ways you can individually serve and be blessing to others (like Jesus!)

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Make a list of ways your small group can serve others and show what it's like to be a part of a Jesus community:

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Pick a date with your group where you can all serve together:

>> 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 as a way 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 TWO

UNIT 2 Clifton Strengths

Session 1: Strengths Finder

Session 2: Your Strengths

>> UNIT OVERVIEW

CliftonStrengths is a well-known personality assessment geared towards helping humans know the positive things about their nature. This will be helpful for both mentors and students to know as we work to hone student leadership skills throughout the year.

Supplies:

- Codes: For this unit you'll need to coordinate with your mentor so that each student can have an access code to take the strengths assessment. Your mentor will have to provide the codes so that the students will know their strengths prior to next week's lesson.
- Knowledge: You'll want to read the lesson ahead of time in order to be able to confidently share the information about the assessment.
- Be sure to get to the "Discover" section of this lesson so student can apply the information they've been given.

UNIT SCRIPTURE

Psalms 139:13-16

Ephesians 2:8-10

Genesis 1:26

Psalms 29:11

Isaiah 40:29-31

Mark 12:30

Ephesians 6:10



YEAR TWO

UNIT 2 | SESSION 1

Strengths Finder

>> BACKGROUND INFO

Learning who you are is an important part of your faith journey—it's not just about learning Who God is and what God wants you to do with your life. God created each of us with similarities and differences and each of those speaks to the ways God pours into us and encourages us to live lives that are pleasing to God.

- What are some things you have in common with your family? Friends? Strangers?
- What are things about you that are unique?
- How do you continue to learn about yourself as you grow older?

For the next couple of weeks, we're going to use CliftonStrengths to learn more about ourselves.

This personality assessment comes from the research of Don Clifton. Clifton's goal was: "What would happen if we studied what was right with people versus what's wrong with people?"

Clifton was a decorated WWII veteran who wanted to spend the rest of his life doing good for humankind.

All of the psychology books he began studying at the Nebraska-Lincoln library discussed what was wrong with people and Clifton wanted to learn what was right about people. (<https://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/en/253754/history-cliftonstrengths.aspx>)

Don Clifton is known as the "father of strengths based psychology." (<https://www.simonandschuster.com/authors/Don-Clifton/181856415>)

"For two decades, from 1950 to 1969, Dr. Donald O. Clifton was a popular professor of educational psychology and researcher at Nebraska, where he first began his experimentation with strengths. He was chairman of Selection Research Inc. and later chairman of Gallup. Clifton was recognized with a Presidential Commendation from the American Psychological Association as the Father of Strengths-based Psychology and the Grandfather of Positive Psychology.



His research led to the CliftonStrengths, a powerful online assessment released in 1999. The assessment has been used by most Fortune 1000 companies, plus famous NGOs such as the World Bank and United Nations, as well as many federal government agencies and departments, including the military. Today, the assessment has helped more than 14 million people worldwide discover, understand and maximize their innate talents. The accompanying book, StrengthsFinder 2.0, was named Amazon's No. 1 bestselling book in 2013 and 2014. CliftonStrengths is used in most of the Fortune 500 along with hundreds of schools and universities.

His passion was centered around the question, "What will happen when we think about what is right with people rather than fixating on what is wrong with them?" He spent his life researching and teaching human development, discovering the true power of people developing their innate talents to lead productive lives of high value and high well-being. Building on the work of Clifton, the Clifton Strengths Institute is a long-term partnership with the Clifton Foundation and Gallup.

"The University of Nebraska-Lincoln was the birthplace for Don Clifton's early strengths research, which later culminated into the now world-famous CliftonStrengths," said Jim Clifton, chairman and CEO of Gallup. "We are proud to be creating this Clifton Strengths Institute as a model that can be replicated at universities around the world."

Article Reference: https://business.unl.edu/news/don-clifton-legacy/?contentGroup=clifton_strengths_institute

The 34 CliftonStrengths Themes Explain Your Talent DNA

When you take the CliftonStrengths assessment, you uncover your unique combination of 34 CliftonStrengths themes.

<https://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/en/253676/how-cliftonstrengths-works.aspx>

The themes, which sort into four domains (<https://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/en/253736/cliftonstrengths-domains.aspx>), are a culmination of decades of research led by Don Clifton to study and categorize the talents of the world's most successful people. <https://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/en/253754/history-cliftonstrengths.aspx> Together, the themes explain a simple but profound element of human behavior: what's right with people.

Individually, each theme gives you a way to describe what you naturally do best or what you might need help from others to accomplish.

The four domains are: Strategic thinking, Relationship building, Influencing, and Executing. The Strategic thinking domain answers the question, "How do you absorb, think about, and analyze information and situations?"

The Relationship building domain answers, "How do you build and nurture strong relationships?"



The Influencing domain answers, *"How do you influence others?"*

The Executing domain answers, *"How do you make things happen?"*

Reference (<https://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/en/253715/34-cliftonstrengths-themes.aspx>)

When you know the answers to these questions, you have a better understanding of how you operate as a human. When you have a better understanding of how you operate, you make room to learn how other people operate as well. When you know how yourself and other humans operate, you learn more about the God whose image we bear. When we learn more about God, we have an opportunity to discern who God wants us to be and how we can live a life that pleases God and allows us to live the abundant life Jesus promises us in His Word.

Each of the Four Domains encompass themes that make up that domain. Those themes are the "CliftonStrengths."

- In the Strategic planning domain, the themes are: Analytical, context, futuristic, ideation, input, intellection, learner, and strategic.
- In the Relationship building domain, the themes are: Adaptability, Connectedness, Developer, Empathy, Harmony, Includer, Individualization, Positivity, and Realtor.
- In the Influencing domain, the themes are: Activator, Command, Communication, Competition, Maximizer, Self-Assurance, Significance, and Woo.
- The Executing domain has the themes: Achiever, Arranger, Belief, Consistency, Deliberative, Discipline, Focus, Responsibility, and Restorative.

>> OPENER

How do you describe yourself when telling someone about you?

>> SCRIPTURE

Read the following Bible passages:

Psalms 139:13-16

- How does this verse relate to Don Clifton's research that says people have various domains and themes to their personalities that make up their strengths?
- In what ways do you find humans to be, "complex" like verse 14 says?

Ephesians 2:8-10

- What does it mean that we are God's "masterpiece," or in some translations, "workmanship?"
- What are some of the "good things" humans do?
- What "good things" do you hope to put into this world?

Genesis 1:26

- If we are created in God's image, what does that mean about our personalities? Our strengths?



This week, take the **CliftonStrengths for students** so that we can discuss your individual strengths.

Be sure to capture your top five strengths so you don't forget them!

>> JOURNAL REFLECTION PROMPT

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 Student Journals.

- What are you most curious about in regard to what strengths you possess?
- What do you hope to gain by learning what your strengths are and how to use them as you contribute to the world?

>> 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 as a way 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.





Your Strengths

>> OPENER

- Have everyone sit where they can see each other.
- Have students write their top five strengths on a tri-fold sheet of paper that they can place in front of them, facing the rest of the group.
- Have one person compile all of the strengths that are represented in the group on a whiteboard or large piece of poster sized paper.
- Once the strengths are compiled, have volunteers read aloud the descriptions from CliftonStrengths for each of them.
- After each has been read, have the students pair off and identify the ways they see themselves using their top five strengths in their daily lives. Make sure they jot down notes of the examples that showcase these strengths in their lives.
- After they've shared in pairs, invite the group to come back together and have each student share the strength they see them self using most in their life.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why might God have given you strengths such as these?
- What do you hope to use these strengths to accomplish in the future?

>> SCRIPTURE

Read the following Bible passages:

Psalms 29:11

- How have you seen the Lord strengthen you in your top 5?

Isaiah 40:29-31

- As young people, you are dealing with a lot: stress, mental health, family, friends, society, pressure--growing tired and weary is a part of life. When you struggle, what would it look like for God to renew the strengths you have?
- How can you continue to hope in the Lord, even when you're exhausted?



Mark 12:30

- How can you love God with your top 5 strengths, what would that look like in your life?

Ephesians 6:10

- What does it look like to be strong in the Lord?
- How can your strengths help you to lean on God?

>> RESPONSE ACTIVITY: MUSIC MEDITATION

On Youtube, Spotify, or apple music, look up the song, "The Words I would Say" by Sidewalk Prophets.

Tell your students to take a moment to meditate on the words of this song while thinking about what it means to "be strong in the Lord" using the strengths they've identified.

Have them use markers/crayons/colorful pencils to draw on the activity sheet provided. Be sure to have them write/draw/illustrate their top 5 strengths on the sheet as well.

Play the song while students meditate, write, and draw. When the song ends, invite them to share their work if they'd like.

Encourage them to take their sheet home and hang it somewhere they will see it often or have them snap a picture of it and make it their phone background when they put their phone on do not disturb.

When you close in prayer, use the trifold with their strengths listed to pray specifically for the students and their strengths.

>> JOURNAL REFLECTION PROMPT

Reflect on your top strengths. How might you use them in ways you hadn't considered before?

>> 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 as a way 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 TWO

UNIT 3 Mary Magdalene

Session 1: Mary Profile

Session 2: Showing Up

>> UNIT OVERVIEW

Throughout this unit we will be examining various leadership practices through a Biblical lens, specifically through key, canonical characters and their character traits. In this two-lesson segment, we will study Mary Magdalene, and the impact she has had on Christianity through her trait of 'showing up.' Mary was often ready and at the feet of Jesus, as one of the female disciples of Jesus, one of the last people to see the crucified Jesus, preparing his body for the tomb, and the first person to see the Resurrected Jesus and entrusted to share the news that he was ascending into heaven. Showing up is something small that we can do, that shows powerful impact for people around us. Students will be challenged in this two-week session to show up for the people in their lives in small, but meaningful ways.

BACKGROUND INFO

Mary Magdalene was called "Magdalene" because of her hometown, Magdala. We are introduced to Mary as someone who has seven demons cast out of her. Does that mean it was actual demons? Not necessarily. In Biblical times they didn't have the same words and research to articulate things. Demons could have been a phrase used to encompass things like mental health issues, someone who is neurotypical, or maybe actual demons. What we will learn, is that whatever that was, Jesus healed Mary and released her from whatever she was experiencing.

Through the history of Christianity, there has been some distinct confusion as to which stories belong to Mary Magdalene, because some stories that have been historically attributed to her, and some characteristics, are not fully confirmed by scripture. For example, Mary has been historically referred to as a former prostitute, but there isn't scriptural evidence to confirm that. The story of the woman who anoints Jesus feet with oil and wipes it with her hair is also sometimes attributed to this Mary, but in scripture that woman is unnamed and we cannot confirm that it was this Mary. There are also some people who say that Mary and Jesus were in a romantic relationship, but we don't see scriptural evidence to support that theory. However, what we do know, is that Mary is one of the three women disciples who went around with Jesus, and the male disciples, and also provided financially for Jesus and the male disciples so they could continue on in their ministry (Luke 8:1-3). Mary was one of the last people at the crucifixion and was also the first person entrusted with the news that Jesus was ascending into heaven, and given direct instructions to go and share the news. While the male disciples mourned and hid for fear of being attacked while Jesus was gone, Mary went to the feet of Jesus. What we get to learn from Mary is the importance of showing up.

UNIT SCRIPTURE

Luke 8:1-3

Mark 15:37-47

John 20:1-18

Leadership Skill: Showing up for others can impact the people around us in meaningful ways



YEAR TWO

UNIT 3 | SESSION 1

Mary Profile

>> OPENER

Pick One

- If you could spend time with any person in the world, who would it be?
- If you could ask God to change one thing about the world, what would you want changed?

>> OPENING ACTIVITY: That looks like a... –

The idea of this game is to identify a picture while only being able to see a small part of it. Split into groups of 3-5 students. Take a large envelope and cut a small hole in the side (a hole punch will do this, don't worry about having holes on both sides). Place a picture into the envelope and give one envelope to each of the groups. Have the students try to guess the picture without opening the envelope to peek. Students will try to move the picture around in the envelope – that's okay as long as it stays closed and isn't ripped any more. Depending on your class, you could even make it a race. Pictures should be of common objects students would know, like fruit, animals, etc.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Invite students to share what they had to do to figure out what their picture was.

- How did you figure out what your picture was?
- Was it easy or difficult to tell what the picture was?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Today we are talking about Mary. There were a lot of Marys in the New Testament that we read about, Mary the mother of Jesus, Mary of Bethany (the sister of Lazarus), and of course Mary Magdalene, among other Marys. Today we are going to be talking about Mary Magdalene—who was one of the followers of Jesus in the New Testament—and learning about her story. When thinking about Mary, it is important we talk about her whole story, not just pieces in isolation, so we can see a full picture of Mary. This week, we are going to learn about how Mary showed up for Jesus, and next week we will talk about how we can show up for others.



>> SCRIPTURE

Read the following Bible passage:

Luke 8:1-3

- What did we learn about Mary from this scripture? seven demons had been thrown out of her, and she along with Joanna and Susanna, provided resources for the disciples

>> MENTOR PROMPT

We learned that Mary had seven demons cast out and, with two others, provided resources for the other disciples. Let's talk about the demons. Were there actual demons living inside of Mary? Not necessarily. In Biblical times they didn't have the same words and research to articulate things. Demons could have been a phrase used to encompass things like mental health issues, misunderstanding someone who is neurotypical, someone who has a learning disability, or maybe actual demons. We don't know. What we do learn, is that whatever that was, Jesus healed Mary and released her from whatever torment she was experiencing.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How do you think Mary's life changed after having demons thrown out of her?
less fear, more confidence, etc
- Why might this be a fact that the author wants us to know?
expressed how grateful she is to Jesus for changing her life, understood how Jesus could change the lives of people firsthand
- Why would it be significant that three women provided resources for the disciples?
This means that these women cared for and provided for the disciples, emotionally and financially. For women at this time in history, it would be expected for them to marry and carry children, and not providing resources for the men they were traveling with.

>> MENTOR PROMPT

In Biblical times, women were considered second class citizens. Their purpose was largely to marry, have children, and support the family household. Women wouldn't work unless a death in the family demanded it, and typically even then they would remarry or move into another family home. They definitely wouldn't be considered a leader. What we see is that Jesus elevated the role of women and gave them leadership and equality within his community. In the passages we are about to read, we are going to read about the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. As we are listening to the scripture, think about the role that Mary, and other women played, about how it was different than the cultural norm, and how they responded differently than other disciples and followers of Jesus in crucial moments of his life.



>> SCRIPTURE

Read the following Bible passages:

Mark 15:37-41

John 20:1-18

After reading these scriptures, and the scripture from earlier today, have students list out on a dry erase board, or sheet of paper, all the ways Mary showed up for Jesus.

>> RESPONSE ACTIVITY: WHO AM I?

This is a classic game involving a blindfold and lots of people trying to disguise their voice. Have a student sit in a chair in the middle of the room, blindfolded. Point to one other student and get them to call out “who am I” – Can the student with the blindfold identify who else is in the room? It will help to have students go around and remind each other of names if you haven’t already done that today.

- Was it easy or difficult to guess someone’s voice? Who is someone’s voice that you would know without a doubt? maybe a parent, sibling, good friend, or other relative
- Mary spent a lot of time with Jesus, but she didn’t recognize his voice right away. Why? scared, disbelief, it didn’t make sense, like seeing someone at the grocery store out of context, etc

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Even though Mary showed up, she didn’t expect to see a resurrected Jesus at the tomb. She showed up because she cared about Jesus. She showed up because it mattered for her to be present there. Mary showed up for Jesus in a lot of ways, even when many of his followers turned away. Mary was there in his final moments of life, and his first moments after his resurrection. Mary was the first person that Jesus entrusted with the news that he was resurrected, and he instructed her to share the news with others. All of that happened, because Mary showed up. Mary’s showing up is her leadership gift.

>> JOURNAL REFLECTION PROMPT

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 Student Journals.

Mary showed up for Jesus in lots of ways.

- What is one way Mary showed up for Jesus?
- What is one way I can show up for Jesus this week?



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 as a way to “check in” on each other’s mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

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 TWO

UNIT 3 | SESSION 2

SHOWING UP

>> **LEADERSHIP SKILL:** Showing up for others can impact the people around us in meaningful ways

>> **OPENER:** Why do you think showing up would be considered a trait of a leader?

>> **OPENING ACTIVITY: PARTNER PICTURES**

Supplies Needed: Paper and Pens

Assign every student a partner or two. Each pair should have one student who explains a picture, and one student who draws a picture. Students should sit back-to-back. Give a picture of something to the student who is explaining. They will have to explain to their partner how to draw the item on the picture, without saying what it is. For example, they can only say lines.

>> **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

Invite students to share what they had to do to figure out what their picture was.

- How did you figure out what your picture was?
- Was it easy or difficult to tell what the picture was?

>> **MENTOR PROMPT**

Last week we talked about Mary and talked about how she showed up for Jesus. Does anyone remember what ways she showed up for Jesus? (Pause for students to answer)

She showed up financially to support Jesus' ministry, and she showed up physically at the cross and the tomb. We saw Mary show up for Jesus in times that were normal, where she provided financial resources for Jesus' ministry, and also in times of pain at the crucifixion, and even in times of her own grief after Jesus died. No matter what was happening in the life of Jesus, she continued to care and show up for him, even as many people abandoned him.



Who is someone who has shown up for you?

Mentors, take this opportunity to have a story prepared and share about someone who has shown up for you in your life

>> SCRIPTURE

Read the following Bible passages:

Mark 15:37-41

John 20:1-18

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Not many people showed up for Jesus in his final moments, including many of the disciples. Why is it significant that Mary did show up?
- Why might it have been difficult for Mary to show up for Jesus during his ministry and in his final moments?
- What does it look like to show up for someone else in high school? What are some examples?
- Why can it be difficult to show up for others in high school?
- What would it look like to show up for someone in your family?
- What would it look like to show up for someone you don't get along with?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Showing up not only has the power to uplift others, and give them hope, but it also combats the epidemic of loneliness. When we are lonely and someone shows up for us, it matters. This is why elementary schools now have a 'buddy bench' so no one ever has to feel lonely.

Watch this Ted Talk, The Power of Showing Up by Bridget Wilkinson.

https://www.ted.com/talks/bridget_wilkinson_the_power_of_showing_up

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Bridget talked about quantity of time vs. quality of time. What do you think that means?
- Do you believe that social media is to blame for social media? Why or why not?
- Do you have someone in your life that will show up and listen to you?
- What does Bridget say is the key to showing up? (Listening) Do you find that easy, or hard? Why is that hard sometimes?



➤ JOURNAL REFLECTION PROMPT

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 Student Journals.

- Who is someone in your life that might be struggling with loneliness? Is there a safe way to reach out to them?
- Make a list of 2-3 names of people you would trust to listen to you talk through your life.

» 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 as a way 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 TWO

UNIT 4 Peter

Session 1: Peter Profile

Session 2: Bouncing Back

>> UNIT OVERVIEW

Throughout this unit we will be examining various leadership practices through a Biblical lense, specifically through key, canonical characters and their character traits. In this two-lesson segment, we will study the disciple named Peter, and the impact he had on Christianity, as well as his leadership skills and traits. Most specifically, we will be focusing on the skill of bouncing back. Peter, known as “The Rock” was an imperfect person, but even though he didn’t always make the best choices, he continued to bounce back and maintain his faith. Peter continued to serve Jesus.

CHARACTER BACKGROUND

Peter, also known as Simon Peter, was given the nickname “Rock” by Jesus, stating that Jesus would build his church on Peter. Peter was known as a leader among the Disciples, often mentioned first when talking about the disciples. Peter was also known to be one of the people considered to be ‘pillars’ of faith - Peter, James, and John. Starting out as a fisherman, Peter was called by Jesus to follow him. We see many important stories throughout the Gospels that involve Peter that we will cover over these two lessons. Specifically, Peter walking on water with Jesus, Peter rebuking Jesus when Jesus shares about his impending crucifixion (and being rebuked by Jesus), and Peter denying Jesus. No matter what we saw Peter encounter, and even when things went terribly wrong, we saw Peter continue to bounce back. Peter didn’t quit leadership, or abandon the disciples, he carried on his calling.

UNIT SCRIPTURE

Luke 22:54-61

Luke 24:9-12

Mark 8:31-33, 9:2-3

Matthew 14:22-33

LEADERSHIP SKILL: Bouncing back gives us, and others, hope



Peter Profile

>> OPENER

Pick One –

- Would you rather be able to walk on water or breathe underwater?
- If you could hang out with Jesus for one day, what would you do?

>> OPENING ACTIVITY

Supplies Needed: masking or painter's tape

Using tape, make a straight line on the ground and ask all the students to stand on one side of the line. Instruct students that when you say go, they have to cross the line at exactly the same time. This could be easy, or it could take a few tries and use some creative problem solving.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What was the easiest part of this activity?
- What was the hardest part of this activity?
- What did you have to do in order to complete the task?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Today we are talking about Peter. Peter was one of the disciples of Jesus, and Jesus referred to him as the 'rock' he would build his church on. We see many stories of Peter throughout scripture. Peter was the start of the church, in the Catholic Church, they trace the line of the succession of popes (the leader of their denomination) all the way back to Peter and the first church. Pretty cool! Peter was an imperfect person, and didn't always do exactly the right thing, even though he tried to. The amazing thing about Peter, though, was that he continuously bounced back. Over and over again throughout scripture we see Peter keep trying and never giving up. What a great leadership skill!



>> SCRIPTURE

Have students split into three or more different groups. Groups should be 4-6 students. Each group will be assigned a scripture passage that they should read together as a group. Students can either choose to act out their passage or summarize their passage and share it with the group.

GROUP 1: Luke 22:54-61 + Luke 24:9-12

GROUP 2: Mark 8:31-33, 9:2-3

GROUP 3: Matthew 14:22-33

After students share their performance(s) or summary, ask students the following questions.

- How did we see (or how do we know) Peter bounce(d) back?
- If Peter didn't 'bounce back' and continue on with the mission of the church, how would life be different today?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

We learned that Peter continuously had to bounce back. Over and over again we see Peter refusing to give up, no matter what the circumstances. Even after Jesus ascends into heaven, Peter is imprisoned multiple times as he begins the work of the church, but he continues to spread the love of Jesus to all who will listen.

- What do you think it was like for Peter to 'bounce back' after being imprisoned for his beliefs? scary, overwhelming, lonely, afraid that it will happen again, maybe confident because he kept going, maybe undeterred or unashamed .
- Why do we think that Jesus wanted to build the church around Peter?

Jesus likely knew there was a hard journey ahead. That would be exhausting and overwhelming starting a brand new expression of faith and spreading it around the world. Maybe Peter's skill of bouncing back was crucial. Peter really was an entrepreneur of sorts.

- Are there other Biblical characters that you can think of that 'bounce back' after difficult seasons? Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, Moses, Paul, and many more!

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Bouncing back is a skill we see throughout scripture, because it really is something that's important to us to model as well. We know that life will not be perfect, and things won't always go the way we think it will. However, when we have the skill to bounce back, it allows us to build grit and resilience, key things that will help us as we lead others!



>> MORE SCRIPTURE

Split students into groups of 4-6. Opening up a Bible for each group to the appendix, or using the search feature in the Bible app, have students search the words 'determination' or 'resilience'. Ask students to find 2-3 scriptures per group that talks about those. Together, discuss how they might relate to Peter and what we learned today.

>> RESPONSE ACTIVITY: WHAT QUOTE RESONATES WITH YOU?

Print out the following four quotes on a piece of paper and fasten each one to a separate corner of your room. Read each quote out loud and ask students to choose a quote that they think most aligns with them. As students choose, invite any students to share. Mentors, this is a great chance for you to participate as well.

After, ask students to share what quote they think Peter would have identified with, and encourage them to share why.

- "Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed no hope at all." — Dale Carnegie
- "You may encounter many defeats, but you must not be defeated. In fact, it may be necessary to encounter the defeats, so you can know who you are, what you can rise from, how you can still come out of it." — Maya Angelou
- The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall." Nelson Mandela
- "Success is not final, failure is not fatal: It is the courage to continue that counts." — Winston Churchill

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Peter was someone who loved Jesus, and tried his best, but sometimes still failed, just like all of us. What we get to learn from Peter is that we aren't defined by our failures, but that being able to bounce back, and persevere is key to our leadership.

>> JOURNAL REFLECTION PROMPT

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 Student Journals.

- What is one way Peter bounced back?
- What is something I have bounced back from?



>> 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 as a way 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.

>> QUOTES

“Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed no hope at all.”

– Dale Carnegie

“You may encounter many defeats, but you must not be defeated. In fact, it may be necessary to encounter the defeats, so you can know who you are, what you can rise from, how you can still come out of it.”

– Maya Angelou

The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall. “
-Nelson Mandela

The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall. “
-Nelson Mandela







Bouncing Back

>> **LEADERSHIP SKILL:** Bouncing back gives us, and others, hope

>> **OPENER:** Why do you think bouncing back (or grit/perseverance/resilience) is considered a trait of a leader?

>> **OPENING ACTIVITY: THE FUTURE ANTIQUE**

Supplies Needed: Random Stuff (old mugs, telephone, camera, etc...)

Begin the game by dividing the players into a few teams 4-6 students. Ask each team to pick an item from a pile of random household materials like broken mugs, pipe cleaners, cardboard boxes, a broken watch, etc., and make up a story about the item being found as an “antique” 500 years in the future. This whole process should be completed in five minutes.

The challenge here teaches your teens to work collaboratively. This needs quick and accurate communication among teens, effectively coordinated by a mentor.

>> **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- What was the easiest part of this activity?
- What was the hardest part of this activity?
- If appropriate for your group dynamic, vote on who shared the best story!

>> **MENTOR PROMPT**

Last week we talked about how Peter bounced back throughout his life. He was a great leader, but an imperfect person, just like all of us. Does anyone remember any of the times Peter bounced back? (Pause for students to answer)



When Peter walked on water, he began to sink, but still continued to follow Jesus! He also rebuked Jesus, and then Jesus rebuked him back, AND he also denied Jesus. But even through all of that, Peter kept bouncing back, and Jesus still trusted him to start the church as we know it today. Bouncing back can be hard, but it is key in our leadership journeys.

Who is someone who you have seen bounce back from something difficult? What happened?

Mentors, take this opportunity to have a story prepared and share about someone you have seen bounce back.

>> SCRIPTURE

Read the following Bible passages. If you are short on time, split them up and have students read on their own or in a group, and summarize the story.

Luke 22:54-61 + Luke 24:9-12

Mark 8:31-33, 9:2-3

Matthew 14:22-33

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What might have made it hard for Peter to bounce back?
- Do you think Peter chose to bounce back, or was obligated to? Why?
- Why can it be difficult to bounce back after something hard in high school? (Think tests, not making a sports team, a breakup).
- Have you ever known someone who was really good at bouncing back? What were they like?
- What are things that you can do to help you bounce back from something? (listening to music, going for a walk, talking to a friend, etc)

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Bouncing back can also be referred to as grit and perseverance. Grit and perseverance are key leadership skills in successful individuals. Continuing to try instead of giving up can be hard, but in this video, we will learn why it's important.

Watch this Ted Talk called Grit - The Power of Passion and Perseverance by Angela Lee Duckworth

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H14bBuluwB8>



- Angela said that IQ wasn't the only thing setting apart the successful students. What were the other things?
- Why do you think that grit and perseverance play such an important role?
- Do you think that grit and preserving are more important, or of equal importance to each other? (no right answer here!)
- If you had to pick IQ or grit/perseverance (or bouncing back!) as a trait, what would you pick, and why?

>> JOURNAL REFLECTION PROMPT

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 Student Journals.

- Who are some people you can trust to help you bounce back?
- Who are some people you've seen bounce back?
- What are some things you can do to help you bounce back?

>> 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 as a way 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 TWO

UNIT 5 Esther

Session 1: Esther Profile

Session 2: Leveraging Influence

>> UNIT OVERVIEW

Each one of us has influence. We may not all be an influencer or celebrity, but we don't need to be famous in order to influence the people around us. What would it look like for us to leverage our influence to positively impact the people around us? That can be hard and scary, but incredibly amazing and impactful. That's exactly what we see in the story of Esther. Esther had an impossible situation ahead of her, with expectations of her family and friends, and expectations of her role as the Queen. But ultimately, Esther used her influence to save her people.

CHARACTER BACKGROUND

Esther is the only book in the Bible that has no reference to God at all, which is kind of wild considering the Bible describes the relationship between humans and God. However, as you read the book of Esther, you see so clearly where God fits into this story of Queen Esther. Esther takes place during one of the Jewish exiles, when the Persians were ruling. King Xerxes was the king at the time, and in this time in history really could do whatever he wanted. What we read is that he asked (demanded?) his queen to come to him, and she said no. So, naturally he wanted a new wife. "The Bachelor" style, lots of young women were brought to the castle to receive beauty treatments and preparation to potentially become the new queen. Esther was chosen! She was of Jewish descent, but didn't initially share that information. There's lots of drama in this book (give it a read - it's short!) but essentially the king's right-hand man wanted to get rid of all the Jewish people because they were different. Queen Esther had to decide if she would leverage her position to save her people or protect herself and her own interests.

UNIT SCRIPTURE

Esther 4:14

1 Timothy 4:12

1 Peter 4:10-11

LEADERSHIP SKILL: Leveraging our influence allows us to care for others.



Esther Profile

>> OPENING ACTIVITY

Pick One –

- If you could hang out with someone famous for a day, who would it be? What would you want to do together?
- If you could be any famous person for a day, who would it be?
- Opening Activity: Circles of Influence
- Supplies Needed: Piece of paper for circle of friendship and writing utensil for each student

Have students fill out the circles of friends worksheet thinking about people they regularly interact with on a daily basis. Mentors should also complete this and share their circles before students share their own circles.

>> MENTOR PROMPT

These are the people we see and interact with on a regular basis. These are the people closest to us, and these are our circles of influence. You don't have to be popular, or a leader, to have influence. We all have influence in every area of our lives.

Today we are talking about Esther. Esther's journey is a challenging one! Esther takes place during one of the Jewish exiles, when the Persians were ruling. King Xerxes was the king at the time, and in this time in history really could do whatever he wanted. What we read is that he asked (demanded?) his queen to come to him, and she said no, so he wanted a new wife. Bachelor style, lots of young women were brought to the castle to receive beauty treatments and preparation to potentially become the new queen. Esther was chosen! She was of Jewish descent, but didn't initially share that information. But the king's right-hand man wanted to get rid of all the Jewish people because they were different. Queen Esther had to decide if she would leverage her position to save her people or protect herself and her own interests.



>> RESPONSE ACTIVITY

Esther has ten chapters. Split the chapters up between students, giving pairs of students a chapter or two. Mentors, you can also take a chapter or two to help spread them out. Give students five minutes to read and summarize what happened in that scripture. Have students share the summary in order with their class to learn the whole story.

After students share the summary, ask students the following questions.

- How did we see (or how do we know) Esther used her influence?
- If Esther didn't use her influence, how would the story have changed?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Mordecai encouraged Esther to help their people by reminding her that her being there might be a way that God is using her to save His people. He says "perhaps you were created for such a time as this." Esther didn't have to leverage her influence. She could have ignored the problem, kept herself safe and let everyone else fend for themselves. Instead, she saw what resources she had, her influence, and used that to help those around her. We see this same idea in the New Testament as well. In 1 Peter 4:10-11 we read : And serve each other according to the gift each person has received, as good managers of God's diverse gifts.¹¹ Whoever speaks should do so as those who speak God's word. Whoever serves should do so from the strength that God furnishes. Do this so that in everything God may be honored through Jesus Christ. To him be honor and power forever and always. Amen.

- What do you think it was like for Esther to go up to the King, knowing that if she was rejected she could be imprisoned, or killed? fearful, overwhelmed, lonely, a desire to protect herself, nervous
- Why do we think leveraging your influence is a positive, rather than a negative trait? What behaviors might make it a negative trait?
- Are there other Biblical characters that you can think of that also leveraged their influence? Nehemiah, Joshua, David, Jesus, Paul,

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Leveraging your influence for the betterment of people around you is a way to utilize your resources to help others. Sometimes, leveraging your influence brings people together to create positive change and cultural shifts. Sometimes, people leverage their influence as a way to hurt, or harm someone else. Create movements of hurt, and hatred. What are some ways we have seen positive movements that shifted history because someone leveraged their influence? (Like Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce making the other famous - ha!).



>> SCRIPTURE

Read the following scriptures, and together discuss how they might relate to Esther and what we learned today.

Esther 4:14

1 Timothy 4:12

1 Peter 4:10-11

>> RESPONSE ACTIVITY: HOW CAN YOU LEVERAGE YOUR INFLUENCE?

Supplies Needed: optional index cards

Write these scenarios on index cards to talk about it in groups or walk through scenarios as a large group. Talk about each situation and how students could leverage their influence to positively impact others.

- A new student started at our school and doesn't know anyone.
- One of my friends really struggled in the game tonight and missed a big goal. We lost the game.
- I found out a local non-profit organization needs donations for their food pantry.
- One of my friends is gossiping about another friend and saying some hurtful things.
- One of my classmates was just diagnosed with a chronic illness.

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Every day we are faced with opportunities where we can choose to leverage our influence or choose to just focus on ourselves. While self-care is important and we **MUST** take care of ourselves, we also have opportunities all around us to impact the world in a positive way.

>> JOURNAL REFLECTION PROMPT

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 Student Journals.

- What is one way Esther utilized her influence?
- If you were Esther, is there anything you would have done differently? Why or why not?



» 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 as a way 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.

>>



Leveraging Our Influence

>> **LEADERSHIP SKILL:** Leveraging our influence allows us to care for others

>> **OPENER:** Why do you think leveraging our influence is considered a trait of a leader?

>> **OPENING ACTIVITY: JENGA**

Set up a jenga tower and play a few rounds until the tower falls. Instead of having students put their jenga pieces on the top of the tower, have them put them to the side.

- How might this activity represent our ability to influence others?
- Thinking about our jenga pieces representing our influence, why is influence so powerful?

>> **MENTOR PROMPT**

Just like the jenga pieces, our influence can provide stability in situations. When we choose not to use our influence for good, or choose to use it to negatively impact others, situations can become unstable like the jenga tower.

Last week we talked about how Esther leveraged her influence to protect the Jewish people. We all have communities, and circles of influence. Our influence doesn't have to be hundreds or thousands of followers. We all have at least one or two people that are in our circles that we can impact.

Esther could have just as easily ignored the Jewish people, just like it is easy for us to ignore the things going on around us sometimes, but what if we took opportunities to live differently. To show kindness, grace, and mercy. Leveraging our influence is key in our leadership journeys as we learn to lean into our communities, building trust among our peers and friends.



Mentors, take this opportunity to have a story prepared and share about a time someone leveraged their influence and impacted YOU. Maybe inviting you to church, or to serve with them. Maybe helping to positively influence you in another way.

>> SCRIPTURE

Read the following Bible passages. If you are short on time, split them up and have students read on their own or in a group, and summarize the story.:

Esther 4:14

1 Timothy 4:12

1 Peter 4:10-11

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

How does, or doesn't, our age impact our ability to influence our communities?

- Why can it be difficult to leverage your influence in high school?
- Have you ever known anyone who was really good at leveraging their influence? What did they do?
- Sometimes leveraging our influence can be scary. What is a way that we can start without feeling overwhelmed?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

In a world full of influencers, it feels like having thousands of followers could be the only way to make an impact. But Jon Levy attests that we all have the power to influence others within our communities.

Watch this Ted Talk called What Makes Us Influential by Jon Levy

https://www.ted.com/talks/jon_levy_what_makes_us_influential

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Jon said most of the influence we care about happens within our community. Do you believe that?
- Jon says influence is based on what two factors? (Who you are connected to, and how much they trust you) Why are those two factors so important?
- Human behavior is contagious. What behaviors do you see as contagious in your schools?

>> JOURNAL REFLECTION PROMPT

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 Student Journals.

- Who is someone you have seen leverage their influence? How have they done that?
- What is one way you can leverage your influence 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 as a way 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 TWO

UNIT 6 Joshua

Session 1: Joshua Profile

Session 2: Bravery & Strength

>> UNIT OVERVIEW

LEADERSHIP SKILL: Bravery and Strength

Unit Overview:

Throughout this unit we will be examining various leadership practices through a Biblical lens, specifically through key, canonical characters, and their character traits. In this two-lesson segment, we will study the warrior, Joshua, and the impact he has had on Christianity through his ability to be strong and courageous. Joshua went from being a loyal assistant to Israel's long-term leader, Moses, to being its leader and army commander.

BACKGROUND INFO

Joshua was born in the country of Egypt as a slave to the Egyptian government, along with his fellow Hebrew people. He gained his freedom from enslavement when Moses led them out of land and toward the land that God had promised they could inhabit when they were free.

Joshua essentially became an assistant to Moses who was the leader of the Hebrew nation after they followed him through the desert, across the Red Sea, and in the following years spent scouting out the land they were to conquer in the future.

Joshua was a loyal helper to Moses and a loyal servant of the Lord. As Moses was leading the Hebrew people to the Promise Land, he had to send spies ahead of them to discover what this previously enslaved and now wondering nation of people would be up against. Joshua was one of the spies Moses sent to scout out this land that the Lord had promised them--along with another fellow named Caleb--as well as 10 other spies. Their goal was to scout out the land of Canaan and when these 12 spies returned, 10 of them reported to Moses that the stakes were too high in that new country. They felt like there was no way their people, or God, could help them conquer that land. However, Joshua and Caleb were the only two that reported positive feedback to Moses--they had faith that God could and would do what God said He would do. Because of these conflicting reports, those whose reports lacked faith and were filled with negativity suffered consequences, while Joshua and Caleb, along with their families, were spared punishment.



Eventually, when it came time to take over this land, Joshua was appointed as Moses' successor and tasked with leading the Israelites and commanding the army as they fought these battles. It was under Joshua's leadership that spies were sent to the land and encountered Rahab--a woman whose story and life would become integral in the lineage of Christ the Messiah. It was under Joshua's leadership that the battle of Jericho was fought and won, and under his leadership that 12 tribes of Israel were given land after it was conquered.

Before Joshua embarked on this life-long journey of leadership, God spoke specific skillsets into Joshua's life which would help make him the successful leader and warrior that he was. Ultimately, those skills and leadership principles would be what Joshua passed down to those under his leadership--the rest of the nation of Israel.

UNIT SCRIPTURE

Joshua 1:1-9

Joshua 5:13-15

Joshua 23:1-8

LEADERSHIP SKILL: We can be brave and strong, even if we might fail.



YEAR TWO

UNIT 6 | SESSION 1

Joshua Profile

>> OPENING ACTIVITY: CONTEXT CLUES

Joshua: A person and a book about a period of time in Hebrew history. What do you know? Make a master list of all the things your group has heard or already knows about the person who is Joshua in the Bible.

>> VIDEO

Supplies Needed: Screen to watch video.

Prep students by saying this video summarizes the book of Joshua which will give context for and help us understand the person, Joshua, from the Bible.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JqOqJlFF_eU

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What details stood out to you from this video?
- What thoughts do you have on Joshua as a leader?
- What leadership qualities did he exhibit?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Today we are talking about Joshua. He was a loyal assistant who became a leader to all of the Hebrew people, a warrior and army commander, and when necessary, a spy. When thinking about Joshua, it is important we talk about his whole story, not just pieces of it in isolation, so we can see a full picture of him. Today we are going to be talking about Joshua's story and learning about the ways he led his people and how he served the Lord throughout his life.

(If helpful, have a student read the character background information from page 1 before you dive into the scripture and activity.)



>> SCRIPTURE

Read the following Bible passage:

Joshua 1:1-9

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How do you think Joshua felt after his mentor and predecessor, Moses, had died? Do you think he felt ready? Scared? Confident? Hopeful? Filled with grief?
- Based on verses 3-5, how would you have felt if you were in Joshua's position? What would your response have been? Your next steps?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Verse 6 is an important one for us to highlight and zero in on for our discussion today. God told Joshua in the very first chapter of this book to "be brave and strong" as a leader. Verse 7 re-emphasizes this command by saying, "be VERY brave and strong."

Discuss:

- What do you think God meant by, "brave and strong?"
- Where in your life do you have to hype yourself up to be brave and strong?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

By this point in the story, Joshua had already had to exhibit bravery and strength. Based on what you learned from the video and the character background, where did Joshua have to be brave and strong prior to being Moses' successor?

>> MORE SCRIPTURE

Read the following Bible passage:

Joshua 5:13-15

>> MENTOR PROMPT

The fact that Joshua saw a man appear out of nowhere holding a sword that was drawn...and instead of running away, calling for help, or drawing his own sword and charging to fight him shows strength and bravery in surprising situations. The man who appeared announced himself as the commander of God's heavenly armies which meant both Joshua and this Holy Commander shared similar responsibilities. It's significant to note that this heavenly visitor did not claim to be for or against Joshua and his cause. Once Joshua knew who was standing in front of him, he responded by worshipping God, but the Army Commander gave him even further instructions as he was worshipping--to take off his shoes because the very ground they were standing on was now holy.



>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why might God have had this heavenly army commander show up and visit Joshua?
- In what other story in scripture did a person have to take off their sandals because they were on holy ground? What's the significance of these similarities?

>> EVEN MORE SCRIPTURE

Joshua 23:1-8

>> MENTOR PROMPT

As a long-time leader of the people of Israel, Joshua fought many battles and dealt with many situations among the Hebrew people. Under Joshua's leadership, the Israelites lived through the battle of Jericho which involved trusting God through confusing instructions. Before they were able to attack those they were meant to conquer, God told them to march around the walls that stood as a fortress against enemies. Marching in circles around an enemy is not historically a tried and true battle tactic, but Joshua ensured that he and his people were obedient and after seven days of marching around those walls once per day, and then a final day that included marching around those walls seven times in one day, those walls came tumbling down (just like the song) and the Israelites were able to conquer the land.

By the end of his life, there had been many other battles, some lost, some won and Joshua had grown old and knew he didn't have much time left. But before he passed away, he had a few words to share with his people first.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Who did Joshua give credit for winning all the battles they won?
- Re-read verse Joshua 23:6 - what do these instructions sound like?
- After all of Joshua's experiences, his final instructions were reminiscent of the instructions God gave him at the beginning of his journey as a leader...what is the significance of Joshua repeating this theme?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Not everyone will grow up to be national leaders or army commanders - some might - but whatever you end up doing, you will always have opportunities to be a leader.

- What overall leadership characteristics do you think Joshua has?
- In what ways does Joshua use good leadership skills?
- Why do you think Joshua had confidence in his leadership abilities?
- Who are some people you look up to that have been brave and strong in various battles or difficult circumstances?



>> RESPONSE ACTIVITY

Use a phone to look up the definitions of the below words and jot down what you find:

- Strong
- Courage
- Brave

Strength is having moral or intellectual power and bravery, or courage is using that moral or intellectual power to take a risk and push past limitations in spite of danger, fear, or difficulty.

Think of a character from a book, movie, anime, tv comedy/drama, or even a song who you think show strength and courage/bravery.

- Who are they and what form of media are they from?
- Where do they get their morals from?
- How do they use their intelligence?
- What risk(s) do they take?
- In what ways do they persevere?
- What danger do they face?
- What were they afraid of?
- What was difficult for them?

If you're comfortable, share your character with the class.

>> JOURNAL REFLECTION PROMPT

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 Student Journals.

God's command for Joshua to be strong and courageous or bold and brave isn't meant to be a rallying cry for US to just accomplish any goal we want...God gave that command to a specific person in a specific situation...a warrior who was about to lead a life filled with battles, some he would win, and some he would lose.

- What battles is God calling you to fight on God's behalf?
- In what ways can you be strong and brave?

>> 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 as a way 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.

[illegible]



YEAR TWO

UNIT 6 | SESSION 2

Bravery & Strength

>> LEADERSHIP SKILL: We can be brave and strong, even if we might fail

>> BACKGROUND INFO

What does it mean to be brave and strong?

Brave: having or showing mental or moral strength to face danger, fear, or difficulty; having or showing courage

Strong: having moral or intellectual power

>> OPENER: THROWBACK STORY TIME

Supplies Needed: A copy of the book, *What Do You Do with a Chance?* by Kobi Yamada, preschool/elementary aged snacks (i.e. juice boxes/pouches, animal crackers/goldfish).

Either the mentor should be the story reader, or they should assign one ahead of time. Be sure to use your best, most expressive elementary school teacher voice to read the story.

Sometimes concepts are best conveyed through the lens of a child. So, gather your group in a circle on the floor or crowded around you on the floor while you read a beloved children's book about being courageous. Try your best to create a "throwback" ambiance including snacks and maybe even a rocking chair for the teacher if possible! Talk through the Mentor Prompt below and then quiet your students down and engage in good old fashioned, "story time."

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Let's recap Joshua: He was born into enslavement, trained as a spy, a warrior, and ultimately as a successor to Moses. It was his job to lead the Israelites into the land God had promised them, but that required that he led the army into battle. God's words to him were for him to "be brave and strong" and that God would not leave him.



We've talked about Joshua and his story as a leader, but now it's time for us to figure out how to apply Joshua's leadership skills in our own lives. Joshua was strong and brave when he was a spy in the land of Canaan. He was strong and brave when the commander of the Lord's Army suddenly appeared. He was strong and brave when he had to lead the Israelites round and around the city of Jericho before leading them in battle once the walls fell down! When God told Joshua that he needed to be strong and courageous, Joshua could have only had an inkling of all that he would face in his lifetime.

We, too, are called to be strong and brave when faced with the tasks the Lord sets before us. But before we figure out how best to do that, let's break the concept down old school style.

Grab a snack and gather around as we engage in story time like days of old as we discover how to have courage with the story, "What Do You Do with a Chance?" by Kobi Yamada.

Both the little boy in the story and Joshua the Warrior had to be brave and take some chances. Sometimes, people have no choice but to be brave as they survive difficult circumstances, but other times, chances come along, and we have to decide whether to take them or not. The choice between staying safely in a comfort zone or stepping out and taking a risk is actually a skillset that we can develop and hone.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How do you handle situations where you are unsure what your next step should be?
- How do you know when it's the right time to be brave vs time to not take a risk?
- How can you make sure you are ready to take a chance when the time comes?
- What does it look like to, "try?"
- In what ways do you think Joshua tried yet failed?
- When have you had a second chance at something?
- What happens when you do something even though it scares you?
- Did the boy in the story's fear go away completely? What did the boy's fear turn into?
- How did the chances Joshua took lead to incredible things?
- "Maybe I don't have to be brave all the time. Maybe I just need to be brave for a little while at the right time." Thoughts?
- What chances are floating around in your life? What incredible things could they lead to?

>> SCRIPTURE

Read the following Bible passages:

Joshua 1:9

Joshua 24:14-18



>> MENTOR PROMPT

Joshua lived a life of being brave and taking chances. After he had done what God had called him to do...sometimes successfully, and sometimes unsuccessfully, he shared his thoughts with his people. He issued a challenge that after all they had been through and all that God had brought them through, they should promise to be faithful and serve God always. Joshua said:

"But if you refuse to serve the Lord, then choose today whom you will serve. Would you prefer the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates? Or will it be the gods of the Amorites in whose land you now live? But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord." – Joshua 24:15

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Choosing to follow and obey God takes bravery and strength like Joshua, how can you choose to serve the Lord today?

>> JOURNAL REFLECTION PROMPT

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 Student Journals.

- What were you afraid of as a little kid and are you still afraid of it now?
- What's something good you're afraid to do that you haven't been able to admit to anyone that you want to do it yet?

>> 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 as a way 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 TWO

UNIT 7 SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Session 1: Leaders in our Lives

Session 2: Leading in Churches

>> UNIT OVERVIEW

The term "servant leadership" was coined in the 1970s and was developed to describe how leaders can interact with people in the way Jesus did. We often see Jesus exhibit humility, rather than exalting himself. How can we, as Christian leaders, model the same behavior? Servant leadership is directly linked to our relationship with Jesus and requires love and selflessness. It requires us to exhibit humility, and grace. All things that we are able to live into with the help of the Holy Spirit, and through modeling our lives after Jesus. When we think about what it means, truly, to be a Biblical leader, Servant Leadership should be at the top of our list.

BACKGROUND INFO

Mentors, consider reading these articles in preparation for these lessons:

<https://umcmmission.org/reflection/servant-leadership/>

<https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/pastors-of-growing-churches-are-servant-leaders>

<https://www.adamhamilton.com/blog/the-importance-of-being-a-servant/>

<https://www.adamhamilton.com/blog/serve-here-i-am-lord-send-me/>

UNIT SCRIPTURE

Read the following Bible passages:

John 13:1-20

Matthew 20:20-28

LEADERSHIP SKILL: Servant Leadership is when we exhibit humility rather than exalting ourselves.



Leaders in our Lives

>> OPENER

- If you could define leadership in one phrase, how would you describe it?
- If you could define servant leadership in one phrase, how would you define it?

>> OPENING ACTIVITY: LEADERS IN OUR LIVES

Supplies Needed: None

Have each student identify one person in their life that they would consider a leader. Maybe a principal, teacher, peer, pastor, mentor, supervisor, etc. Using the attached guide, have them answer questions on their perception of that person's leadership.

After everyone completes their sheet on their own (or if your class wants to do a collective leader and work together, that's fine too), come together and see what similarities they have seen with the leaders they shared. Reflect together on why those traits show up, or don't, and how we perceive them.

>> MENTOR PROMPT

The next two weeks we are going to be talking about servant leadership, and what that looks like through a Christian lens. Trinity Western University describes it as this, "Servant-leadership serves others by investing in their development and well-being for the benefit of the common good. Thus, good Christian servant-leaders serve God through investing in others so that together they may accomplish a task for God's glory." First, we are going to read an article from Pastor Adam about how we can view what it means to be a servant leader.



>> LEADERS IN OUR LIVES ACTIVITY

Name a Leader You Know:

What is their relationship to you:

What do they lead (this could be an organization or group of people):

What are some characteristics of leadership they exhibit?

This year you have learned about showing up, bouncing back, using your influence, and being bold and courageous. You can reference these, or other characteristics you think of!

Do you think people are drawn to them? If so, what is it about them that people are drawn to?

Is there anything about this leader's style, that you would like to model in your own leadership?



>> READ

The Importance of Being a Servant by Pastor Adam Hamilton from September 14, 2012, <https://www.adamhamilton.com/blog/the-importance-of-being-a-servant/>. The text is below:

7 The Day of Unleavened Bread arrived, when the Passover had to be sacrificed. 8 Jesus sent Peter and John with this task: "Go and prepare for us to eat the Passover meal." 9 They said to him, "Where do you want us to prepare it?" 10 Jesus replied, "When you go into the city, a man carrying a water jar will meet you. Follow him to the house he enters. 11 Say to the owner of the house, 'The teacher says to you, "Where is the guestroom where I can eat the Passover meal with my disciples?"' 12 He will show you a large upstairs room, already furnished. Make preparations there." 13 They went and found everything just as he had told them, and they prepared the Passover meal. (Luke 22:7-13)

I once met an executive who wanted to be used by God for a great purpose. He was a bit put out when the pastor suggested he begin by working anonymously in the kitchen of the homeless shelter preparing sandwiches on Saturdays. He felt he had far more potential than that—after all, he ran a large company and had leadership gifts. Realizing it was bad form to say "no" to the pastor's request, he began to prepare meals in the shelter. But an interesting thing happened to him as he served each week: The act of serving began to change him—to diminish the pride that had crept into his heart and to cultivate compassion and humility. He began to have a vision of the needs of homeless people.

Over time he invited friends and families to support the mission. He got his employees involved. Years later he was pivotal in developing a new facility that would better meet the needs of the homeless population.

But all of this started with a request that he perform a task that, at first glance, he felt was beneath him.

Why did Jesus choose Peter and John to prepare the Passover meal—the final meal he would have with his disciples? The request entailed mundane tasks of shopping, making a sacrifice in the Temple, cooking, and setting the table.

In their day this was the work of women or of servants. How did Peter and John feel to be doing this while Mary, Martha, and the other disciples remained with Jesus for the day?

There is an unnamed disciple in this story. He owned a house large enough to have a second-floor guest room that could accommodate at least thirteen for supper. He was a man of some means; nevertheless, he gladly played the part of a servant and freely gave of what he had, simply because Jesus asked.



His guest room was likely the place the disciples hid following the Crucifixion and was perhaps even the place the 120 gathered on the Day of Pentecost, when the Spirit was poured out on the believers. If this is so, the man not only gave freely to the work of Jesus without ever being named, but he did so at some personal cost.

Only in hindsight would Peter and John see the importance of the meal they prepared.

Lord, I offer myself to you. Use me to do whatever is needed, no matter how small. Like the unnamed disciple in the story, help me to serve without recognition. Amen.

>> RESPONSE ACTIVITY

Give students the attached Scripture Story Cards. Have them put the cards in order. Once they are in order, have a few students read them out loud, and follow up with the following questions. To find the correct scripture passage, head to John 13:1-20. Be sure to read it out loud!

After students share the summary, ask students the following questions.

- Why was Simon Peter initially resistant to Jesus washing his feet for him? Feet were very dirty, they wore sandals, and walked in dirt. It was more of a job for a servant - definitely not a job for a teacher let alone the Son of God. It was a humbling act of service for Jesus to do this.
- Imagine the leader that you spoke about/wrote about before was washing your feet. What would that be like? How would you feel about being in that situation? Why?
- One of the most interesting things about this passage is that Jesus washed the feet of Judas, even knowing he would go on to betray him. What do you think that action says about the leadership of Jesus?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Robert Greenleaf, the person who 'coined' the term Servant Leadership said this about it:

"The servant-leader is servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions...The leader-first and the servant-first are two extreme types. Between them there are shadings and blends that are part of the infinite variety of human nature."



The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served. The best test, and difficult to administer, is: Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived?"

In what ways does your church exhibit servant leadership as an organization?

(maybe some examples - giving away our Christmas offering, highlighting needs, supporting justice and mercy needs, etc...)

>> SCRIPTURE

Read the following scriptures, and together discuss how they might relate to what we learned today.

Mark 9:30-37

Philippians 2:1-11

>> RESPONSE ACTIVITY: HOW DO YOU LEAD? PART 1

(If you don't have time for this activity, start your session with this one next week.)

Supplies Needed: Index Cards, Pens

Take the last fifteen to twenty minutes of class to go around the building looking for staff, pastors, or ushers/greeters to interview. Have students walk in groups of 2-4, students should be within site-line of a mentor at all times. Each group should then find leaders who are in a common space to ask the following question(s). Each student should interview ONE leader. The person's name and response should be recorded on one index card per interview, and then students should return the index cards to the teachers. IF there is time after the activity, students can share what they learned in a group setting. However, these will be used the following week so teachers should collect and save them!



>> INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

(ask the starred questions, and choose 1-2 non-starred questions as well)

*Name:

*What is your role at the church (this could be a volunteer or staff!)?

*Why did you choose this church as your church home?

What is servant leadership?

What is an example of servant leadership you have witnessed here?



>> JOURNAL REFLECTION PROMPT

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 Student Journals.

- What is one way thing you can do to practice servant leadership?
- What is a need that you could help someone with 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 as a way 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 TWO

UNIT 7 | SESSION 2

Leading in Churches

➤➤ **LEADERSHIP SKILL:** Servant Leadership is when we exhibit humility rather than exalting ourselves.

➤➤ **OPENER:**

- Why do you think humility might be considered a positive trait of a leader?
- Can you be humble, and confident? (YES! Although these do get mixed up sometimes. Being confident, and experiencing pride, can both be healthy! It's when we are too prideful that it overtakes our humility, help students understand that you CAN be confident and humble. Jesus was!)

➤➤ **RESPONSE ACTIVITY: HOW DO YOU LEAD PART 2**

Supplies Needed: Dry Erase Board and Interview Cards from last week
Together as a class, begin to review the interview cards from people you met throughout the congregation. Write the four questions on the board, and have students summarize people's answers on the board and answer the following questions.

- What is your role at the church (this could be a volunteer or staff and share what they do!)?
- Why did you choose this church as your church home?
- What is servant leadership?
- What is an example of servant leadership you have witnessed here?

➤➤ **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- What kinds of roles did you learn about? Did any of the roles surprise you? What roles might be missing?
- What themes did you see about servant leadership?
- Were there any recurring examples of servant leadership?



>> MENTOR PROMPT

There are so many ways we can serve within the church. Some people are in vocational ministry, where ministry is their job! Many people are in 'avocational ministry'. Which means that people choose to serve in ministry as a passion, or hobby. Churches rely on people serving in avocational ministry and work to have lots of opportunities for us to connect. An important part of leading in churches is servant leadership, but servant leadership is an effective way to lead within the walls of the church, and outside the walls of the church.

Mentors, take this opportunity to have a story prepared and share about why you chose to serve in avocational ministry as one of their mentors. You could also share a story about someone you know who exhibits servant ministry in a way that has positively impacted others.

>> SCRIPTURE

Read the following Bible passage:
Matthew 20:20-28

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why do you think the mother wanted one of her sons to sit at the right hand of Jesus?
- How did Jesus respond to that request?
- What are some ways you have seen Jesus model a 'serve-first' lifestyle?
- What are some ways you have seen people in your life model a 'serve-first' lifestyle?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

"The 21st century has afforded us great advances, but is possible that we've actually taken a few steps back? Our future depends on our ability to embrace the human element and value obtaining a fundamental understanding of what servant leadership is and why it is relevant to us as individuals and as a society."

Watch this Ted Talk:

The Future of Your Future is Servant Leadership by Anthony Perez
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=md6monZNfyQ>

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What does it mean to be an authentic leader?
- How does servant leadership support your authenticity?
- Read this quote: "Individual commitment to a group effort-that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work." Vince Lombardi
- How does that quote relate to the idea of servant leadership?



>> JOURNAL REFLECTION PROMPT

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 Student Journals.

- What is one way you can show humility in your everyday life?
- What is one way you can model the 'serve first' lifestyle in your everyday life?

>> 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 as a way 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 TWO

UNIT 8 EVANGELISM

Session 1: The Great Commission

Session 2: Invitation not Influence

Session 3: Fruit of the Spirit

>> UNIT OVERVIEW

Evangelism is the term we use to refer to the preaching of the Gospel. It comes from the same Greek word for gospel (evangelion) and means, literally, “gospel-ing.” When we evangelize, we are “gospel-ing” – we are spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

So, we will look at three parts of the bible that show us examples of sharing the good news and inviting others into the way of Christ.

There are lots of great moments to learn leadership in the Bible. We will spend the next three weeks learning from the Great Commission, Jesus' interaction with the woman at the well and Paul's lesson about the Fruit of the Spirit.

May this be a time for deepening faith for students as well as growth and challenge in your small group.

UNIT SCRIPTURES

Matthew 28

1 John 4: 4-12

1 Galatians 5 16-28

Leadership Skills

Being with people instead of talking at them

Practicing self-reflection to measure your heart.



YEAR TWO

UNIT 8 | SESSION 1

The Great Commission

>> OPENER: Rocky Balboa

HAVE SOMEONE READ THIS IN THEIR BEST ROCKY VOICE

Let me tell you something you already know. The world ain't all sunshine and rainbows. It's a very mean and nasty place, and I don't care how tough you are... it will beat you to your knees and keep you there if you let it. You, me or nobody is gonna hit as hard as life. But it ain't about how hard you hit. It's about how hard you can get hit... and keep moving forward. How much you can take and keep moving forward. That's how winning is done! If you know what you're worth, go and get what you're worth. But you gotta be willing to take the hits, and not pointing fingers... saying you ain't where you wanna be because of him or her or anybody! Cowards do that, and that ain't you! You're better than that! I'm always gonna love you no matter what. No matter what happens. You're my son and you're my blood. You're the best thing in my life. But until you start believing in yourself, you ain't gonna have a life.

- Have you heard this before? How does it make you feel?
- Do you feel they are true statements?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Rocky's son is upset with him. Blaming him for all his problems. But Rocky calmly pauses and passes on lots of life wisdom to his son. Saying here is what it is...now go do it.

Jesus is doing the same thing. So much chaos has occurred in the disciple's world. Jesus has been crucified and buried. Then his body has disappeared. Sounds like a crazy spy movie. Where is he? Where is his body? Jesus then appears to Mary Magdalene and says "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

When the disciples get to the mountain in Galilee, Jesus meets them and says HOW IT IS, and HOW ITS GOING TO BE. "Now Go and do Likewise"



>> SCRIPTURE

Read the following Bible passage:
Matthew 28

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Ask students the following questions.

- Share the emotions that the Disciples were feeling at the beginning?
- What are the emotions when Jesus met them in Galilee?
- What are the four things Jesus tells them to do?
 - GO- don't plan, just go
 - Make disciples- what does that mean?
 - Baptize them- why?
 - Teach them what I have taught you.

>> RESPONSE ACTIVITY: WHAT CAN YOU TEACH TO SOMEONE ELSE?

Supplies Needed: Pen and paper

Round 1: Partner with one other person. One is the leader; the other is the learner. Sit back-to-back with the leader telling the learner how to draw one of the scenes below. Do not show them. Just tell them.

Round 2- Now show them the image. Sit side by side and work together to draw a new one better

Round 3- Take your image and have the "learner" show a pair with the other image how to draw your image.

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Give time for each round to fully finish before moving onto the next round. Encourage students to do their best and lean into leading and learning. It is not about artist skills, it's about mindset of leading well and learning well.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How did it feel to lead without seeing each other eye to eye?
- Did it help to work side by side?
- With practice did you get better?
- Does the learner feel more confident at the end?



>> JOURNAL REFLECTION PROMPT

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 Student Journals.

Steps to Learn, Steps to Lead

- Who can I ask to be a mentor to me?
- Who do I need to be leading next to?
- Who am I ready to be a leader to?
- What can you do to better follow Jesus' Great Commission?

>> 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 as a way 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.





Invitation not influence

>> LEADERSHIP SKILL: Being with people instead of talking at them

>> OPENER

How do the people you like to follow make you feel?

>> OPENING ACTIVITY: DOMINO TRACK

Supplies Needed: Dominos (multiple dominos per group)

Divide students into groups of 3-4 students and give each group a set of dominoes.

Have students make a domino track with a timer of 5 minutes. Take turns going around and knocking over the dominoes.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How does the domino track represent our ability to influence others?
- Thinking about our domino tracks representing our influence, why is influence so powerful?
- How many dominos did each domino need to move the next one? (one!) What does that tell us about our range of influence?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." -Maya Angelou

In the following scripture, Jesus goes out his way to show this woman care. When she tries to push him away because "she is not worthy". He acknowledged that he knows all about her.

We don't have God abilities to know people and their stories...But how can we love them no matter who or what they are?



>> SCRIPTURE

Read the following Bible passage:
John 4

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How do you define the difference between Invitation and Influence?
- The Samaritan woman was uncomfortable serving Jesus. Who would you be uncomfortable serving? Someone famous, mean, poor?
- How do you describe the conversation between Jesus and the woman?
- What was Jesus trying to show the Disciples about “the harvest”?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

In our world we have people telling us what to think. Who do we know that is walking with us to help us know what to do?

Dr. Maya Angelou had many great thoughts on how to think AND do.

>> VIDEO

Watch Just do Right by Dr. Maya Angelou <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sr6LMr-rXEc>

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

“The hardest part is, if you teach, you have to live your teaching.” - Dr. Maya Angelou

- Who do you respect because they live what they say?
- What does “JUST DO RIGHT” mean to you?
- Why would she say “take up the battle and make the world a better place?”
- How was what Jesus said effective?
- Share how Jesus’ conversation with the woman could have gone wrong?

>> JOURNAL REFLECTION PROMPT

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 Student Journals.

- Where can you be better and invitation?
- Who have you not listened to well?
- What have you learned about leadership 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 as a way 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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>>



Fruit of the Spirit

>> LEADERSHIP SKILL: Practicing self-reflection to measure your heart.

>> OPENER: Does the product of your hard work reflect your goal?

>> OPENING ACTIVITY: THE GREAT FRUIT DEBATE

It's classic debate time. Split into pairs. One person takes the positive attributes the other the negative.

Assign a fruit to each pair. Pick whichever fruits you desire. They have three minutes to organize their thoughts to present to the rest of the class their debate on their fruit. Class votes on the most persuasive presentation for the pair. THIS IS MEANT TO BE SILLY, emphasize being KIND.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Did you like the side of the debate you had to present?
- Do you feel your preparation led to the outcome you desired?
- Who was really gifted at this activity?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

ASK STUDENTS ABOUT THEIR THOUGHTS FROM THE LAST TWO WEEKS

Week 1 we talked about great commission and had these questions to reflect on

- Who can I ask to be a mentor to me?
- Who do I need to be leading next to?
- Who am I ready to be a leader to?
- What can you do to better follow Jesus' Great Commission?



Week 2 we talked about Invitation over Influence

- Where can you be better and invitation?
- Who have you not listened to well?
- What have you learned about leadership today?

>> SCRIPTURE

Read the following Bible passage:

Galatians 5:16-28

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What phrases from the scripture caught your attention?
- How about these phrases?
- “19 The actions that are produced by selfish motives are obvious, since they include sexual immorality, moral corruption, doing whatever feels good, 20 idolatry, drug use and casting spells, hate, fighting, obsession, losing your temper, competitive opposition, conflict, selfishness, group rivalry, 21 jealousy, drunkenness, partying, and other things like that
- What are the fruits that Paul lists in the scripture? love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control

>> RESPONSE ACTIVITY: WHO GOD IS?

One thought of the Fruit of Spirit, is that it describes WHO GOD IS. Divide back into pairs and assign students a Fruit of Spirit. Have them explain how God is if:

- GOD IS LOVE
- GOD IS PEACE
- GOD IS PATIENT
- GOD IS KIND
- GOD IS FAITHFUL
- GOD IS GENTLE
- GOD HAS SELF CONTROL

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- if God is these. How does God handle stress, pain, sadness, disappointment, hatred, war, money etc...
- WHAT HAPPENS IF WE USE THESE AS OUR MEASUREMENTS?

>> JOURNAL REFLECTION PROMPT

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 Student Journals.

- If these fruits are how GOD is. What does that mean for how I act?



» 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 as a way to “check in” on each other’s mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

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YEAR TWO

UNIT 9 5 Essential Practices

Session 1: Worship
Session 2: Prayer
Session 3: Study
Session 4: Serve
Session 5: Give/Share

>> UNIT OVERVIEW

"How do we walk with Christ - daily follow him, grow in him, and faithfully serve him? In the Gospels, Jesus modeled for us the Christian spiritual life. The apostles taught it in their writings. And the Church has, through the last 2,000 years, sought to pursue this Christian spiritual life. In *The Walk*, Adam Hamilton focuses on five essential spiritual practices that are rooted in Jesus's own walk with God and taught throughout the New Testament. Each of these practices is intended as part of our daily walk with Christ while also being an essential part of growing together in the church." – Adam Hamilton, *The Walk*

During this unit, we will be exploring with students how we can deepen our walk with Christ as we explore the five essential practices of worship, study, serving, giving, and bearing witness to our faith.

BACKGROUND INFO

Mentors, consider reading this article in preparation for these lessons:
<https://www.adamhamilton.com/blog/introducing-the-walk>

LEADERSHIP SKILLS

Learning to care for yourself and others through prayer
Learning to study and to lead a group study
Helping others uplifts our communities
Sharing what we have with others



YEAR TWO

UNIT 9 | SESSION 1

WORSHIP

>> LEADERSHIP SKILL: Learning to care for yourself through worship

>> OPENER

Select one or let students pick what they want to answer:

- Would you rather listen to music, or sing music?
- Would you rather have only one song, played by every musical artist in the world, or have Taylor Swift as the only musical artist and every song in the world played by her.

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Over the next several weeks, we are going to be talking about five essential spiritual practices that will help us in our faith journey. These five practices are rooted in Jesus' own walk with God and are shown throughout the New Testament. Today, we are going to be talking about worship.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Here are some opinion questions. We will get into more specifics, but just listen to where your students are in their journey! No wrong answer.

- What does worship look like?
- How can you incorporate worship into your regular life?
- How can you worship if you don't go to worship? Is there another way?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Why do we worship? (Let students answer - feel free to write their answers on the board). "Tucker, professor of worship at Boston University School of Theology, says gathering for worship is "a necessary part of life for those who intend to follow Jesus. By being with others, we learn to pray for others. We learn to confess our faults as the body of Christ, and to find pardon together," she continues. "Worship gives an opportunity for reconciliation of differences and to share Christ's peace with our neighbor."



Worship is our opportunity to experience God's grace in community with others. It is an opportunity for us to reflect and celebrate all the ways God has moved in our lives, but also to grieve, and mourn together. Worship allows us to be reminded of who God is and help us to continue in our own growth and faith development.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why is worship an important spiritual practice?
- What are some different ways we can worship? (prayer, music, reading scripture, etc)

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Pastor Adam Hamilton describes worship as having two essential expressions:

individual and **community**. Both are vital to a growing relationship with God.

Community worship isn't just an event we attend—it's something we actively participate in. It is a response to God's love that engages our whole selves. In Matthew 18:20, Jesus reminds us, "For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." When we gather for worship, Christ is not only remembered—He is active and present. We encounter Him through music, scripture, teaching, prayer, and the shared experience of worship.

But community worship is about more than what happens during the service. It's also about the **relationships** we form with the people we worship alongside. Being part of a worshipping community means growing in faith *together*—encouraging one another, walking through life side by side, and becoming a reflection of God's love in action. Worship is both a sacred rhythm and a shared journey.

>> SCRIPTURE

Psalms 95:1-7

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What are some ways we can "sing for joy to the Lord" besides music?
- How can saying thank you to God be an act of worship?
- What are some things that make you want to worship God?

>> RESPONSE ACTIVITY: WORSHIP PLAYLIST

Together, crowdsource your favorite worship songs. Encourage students to create a worship playlist on their music app. Listen to some music together while you share your favorite worship songs as a community.



>> MENTOR PROMPT

Singing is one of the most expressive and powerful forms of worship. Psalm 100:2 reminds us that worship includes praise, and music can be a beautiful way to express our joy, gratitude, and connection with God. But worship is more than music, and more than simply attending a service—it's about the posture of our hearts.

God invites us to worship with glad and thankful hearts, not out of obligation, but out of love. True worship isn't about following rituals or checking a box; it's about choosing to respond to God's love and goodness. Even when we've had a hard day and don't feel like worshipping, God welcomes our honesty—but He also gently calls us to remember who He is and what He's done.

The question isn't just what we're doing in worship, but why we're doing it. Are we showing up because we feel like we have to, or because we want to grow closer to God? When worship flows from a heart of love, it becomes a joyful response to God's presence in our lives. Psalm 100:2 encourages us to approach God with enthusiasm, gratitude, and celebration—because He is worthy.

>> SCRIPTURE

Psalm 100:2

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What's the difference between worship as an event (like a service) and worship as a lifestyle?
- In hard times, how can worship become a way of holding on to hope?
- Psalm 100 talks about coming before God with singing—what role does expression (like music, art, or prayer) play in your personal worship?
- How do you think worship can impact the way we treat others?

>> JOURNAL REFLECTION PROMPT

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 is one thing you can do to enhance your worship life?
- What is one thing you can do to add worship into your 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 as a way 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 TWO

UNIT 9 | SESSION 2

PRAYER

>> LEADERSHIP SKILL: Learning to care for yourself and others through prayer

>> OPENER

Select one or let students pick what they want to answer:

- If you could talk to anyone right now, who would it be?
- When you think, do you think in words or pictures?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Over the next several weeks, we are going to be talking about five essential spiritual practices that will help us in our faith journey. These five practices are rooted in Jesus' own walk with God and are shown throughout the New Testament. Last week we talked about how there are two types of worship, in community and individual. We talked about community worship. Today, we are going to be talking about individual worship, most commonly expressed through prayer.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Here are some opinion questions. We will get into more specifics, but just listen to where your students are in their journey! No wrong answer.

- Is there a difference between prayer and worship?
- When is the right time to pray? When is the wrong time to pray?
- How do you feel if it seems like God isn't listening to your prayers?

>> RESPONSE ACTIVITY: RECOGNIZING SOMEONE'S VOICE

Option 1 (takes some planning!)

Email the parents earlier in the week and ask them if they can send a video of themselves saying hello to your class (Hello, Freshmen! - Hello, Sophomores!). During the group time, have students listen and try and guess whose parent it is.



Option 2 (takes no planning!)

Have students close their eyes (or use blindfolds). Go around and tap one student on the shoulder. Whenever you tap them, they should say "hello", and see if students can guess who it is, just by their voice.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Whose voice was the easiest for you to recognize? Why? (hopefully they indicate someone they know, and/or are close to).

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Often, we recognize the voices of the people closest to us. We know their voice because we talk to them and spend time with them. The same is true with our relationship with God. It is easier to recognize God's voice the more we talk to God.

Why do we pray?

(Let students answer - feel free to write their answers on the board). The United Methodist Church defines it as this: "Prayer is how we communicate with God. In prayer, we share our hearts. We also pause to listen for wisdom and guidance. As John Wesley wrote, "All that a Christian does, even in eating and sleeping, is prayer, when it is done in simplicity, according to the order of God. Learn how you can grow your prayer life."

Prayer is an opportunity for us to be in conversation with God. Consider praying 5 times a day. When you wake up, when you eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and when you go to bed. These are 5 easy times to set aside for connection with God.

Prayer is also something that Jesus modeled for us all throughout his life, we see Jesus praying for all kinds of reason.

>> SCRIPTURE AND DISCUSSION

Split students into groups or pairs and give them each a scripture. Ask them to read the scripture together and determine what makes this prayer unique. Have them come together and have each group share their scripture and what they think.

- Luke 3:21 (celebrations)
 - a. Why do you think Jesus prayed during a moment of celebration like His baptism?
 - b. How can prayer help keep us grounded when everything is going well?
- Luke 22:40-44 (for help)
 - a. What does this passage show us about how Jesus dealt with fear, anxiety, or pressure?
 - b. Have you ever asked God for help in a really hard moment? What happened?



- Matthew 4 (when experiencing temptation)
 - a. Why is it sometimes hard to pray when we're struggling to do the right thing?
 - b. How might prayer have helped Jesus stay strong during temptation?
- Luke 23:34 (for enemies)
 - a. Why do you think Jesus chose to pray for His enemies—even as they were hurting Him?
 - b. How might praying for someone change the way we feel about them?
- Luke 9:28-30 (with others)
 - a. Why do you think Jesus invited His friends to pray with Him?
 - b. What's the value in praying with others, not just alone?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

When we read about Jesus' moments in prayer throughout Scripture, we discover that prayer is more than just something we do—it's a way of life. Jesus prayed in times of joy (Luke 3:21), in deep distress (Luke 22:40–44), when He faced temptation (Matthew 4), when asking for forgiveness for others (Luke 23:34), and even in moments of community (Luke 9:28–30). His example shows us that prayer isn't just reserved for church or moments of crisis—it's a constant connection to God through every season of life.

Scripture encourages us to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17), reminding us that prayer is a continual conversation with God. It's how we express gratitude, ask for help, find strength, seek guidance, and lift others up—even our enemies. Prayer is not about having the perfect words; it's about showing up before God, just as you are. Just as Jesus did, we're invited to bring our whole selves—our celebrations, our struggles, and everything in between—to a God who listens, responds, and walks with us.

>> RESPONSE ACTIVITY: FINGER LABYRINTH

(10 minutes)

Using the finger Labyrinth, students can focus on Confession, Centering, and Intercession.

First Movement: Releasing (Confession)

Place your finger at the opening of the labyrinth. Pray silently or aloud a prayer of confession. When you are finished, slowly move your finger forward along the labyrinth. Move at your own pace toward the center. Let the words of the prayer stay with you. Quiet your mind as you move through the labyrinth. Make room for emotions and stirrings that arise. What needs to be changed, forgiven, cleared, confronted, or healed in your life? Offer these situations to God as you move forward.



Second Movement: Receiving (Centering)

When you reach the center, rest your finger there for a moment before you read a scripture reading for the day.

When you are ready, read the passage slowly, as if you have never read it before. Center on God's Word and be open to what God reveals to you through the reading. Return your finger to the center of the labyrinth and reflect on the passage and what it holds for you.

Third Movement: Returning (Intercession)

As you prepare to leave the labyrinth, place your finger at the same opening in the center where you entered. Now lift up your intercessory prayers for the day and when finished, begin to move your finger back along the same path on which you entered. Let the intercessory prayers stay with you and add to them as you make the turns and move along the pattern back out of the labyrinth. Be mindful of people and circumstances in the world that are in need of your prayers. Hold each one in your heart for a part of the journey outward.

When You Have Finished

As you lift your finger from the labyrinth's end, offer thanks to God.

Labyrinth Download and instructions from The Upper Room : Praying with a Finger Labyrinth



>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Did you find it easy, or difficult, to find things to pray for during that time?
- What is something that surprised you about this prayer time?

>> JOURNAL REFLECTION PROMPT

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 is one thing you can do to enhance your prayer life?
- What is one thing you can do to add worship into your 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 as a way 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 TWO

UNIT 9 | SESSION 3

STUDY

>> **LEADERSHIP SKILL:** Learning to study and to lead a group study

>> **BACKGROUND INFO**

<https://www.umc.org/en/content/reading-the-bible>

>> **OPENER:** Why might learning how to study scripture be helpful?

>> **OPENING ACTIVITY**

Supplies Needed: Cut out Bible cards (one card for each book of the Bible) - 1 set per 4 people

****Need cards to cut out with every book of the bible****

Split into two groups, you are going to try to put the most books of the Bible in correct order within three minutes.

After, do a few of the challenges below.

- Which books of the Bible are referred to as "The Gospels"
- Which books of the Bible are referred to as "The Prophets"
- Which books of the Bible are referred to as "The Letters"

>> **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- Were there any books of the Bible that you didn't realize existed?
- What is the difference between the Old Testament and the New Testament?
- Who can share the name of their favorite book of the Bible?

>> **MENTOR PROMPT**

Today, we are going to be focusing on the Spiritual Practice of Study. When we talk about study, we are talking about studying the Bible. That could be through a Bible Study, a devotional time, a small group, reading scripture, attending worship services, and essentially, whatever we can do to continue to learn more about God. An important



thing to remember as we talk about studying scripture, is that context is important. We will also go over something called the Wesleyan Quadrilateral. It is what helps us to interpret scripture as we read it and helps us to understand what God is trying to tell us through the words we are reading.

>> SCRIPTURE

For this activity, we are going to walk through why context is important to how we understand scripture. Write on the board, or a sheet of paper, the verse Luke 4:7 (without any context). Ask students what they think it means and why it's an important scripture for us to know. Don't provide them context, just listen.

After the discussion, invite students to open up a Bible and to read Luke 4:1-13. Ask students if anything they read changed what their thoughts were about the scripture passage.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why did your thoughts on the passage change?
- Why might context be important when talking about scripture (or anything, really)?
- How did Jesus know how to respond to the devil in this passage (hint - He knew scripture!)?

What is the Wesleyan Quadrilateral?

"The phrase which has come into use relatively recently to describe the principal factors that John Wesley believed illuminate the core of the Christian faith for the believer. Wesley did not formulate the succinct statement now commonly referred to as the Wesley Quadrilateral...The resulting four components or "sides" of the quadrilateral are (1) Scripture, (2) tradition, (3) reason, and (4) experience. For United Methodists, Scripture is considered the primary source and standard for Christian doctrine. Tradition is experience and the witness of development and growth of the faith through the past centuries and in many nations and cultures. Experience is the individual's understanding and appropriating of the faith in the light of his or her own life. Through reason the individual Christian brings to bear on the Christian faith discerning and cogent thought. These four elements taken together bring the individual Christian to a mature and fulfilling understanding of the Christian faith and the required response of worship and service." From the UMC.org

Walk through the Wesleyan Quadrilateral. Put the four quadrants on the board and fill them in together (Scripture, Tradition, Experience, Reason). Work together as a class or split into groups.



>> MORE SCRIPTURE

Read the following Bible passage and interpret what it means as a group. Then move through the other elements of the Wesley Quadrilateral to gain further insight.

Deuteronomy 6:1-9

TRADITION: Think about what you know/have learned about this story. Is there context missing that you need?

EXPERIENCE: Think about your own experience with this story, with temptation, with understanding scripture, etc.

REASON: Use your brain and logical thoughts in relation to this scripture. What do YOU think?

>> SCRIPTURE

Maybe the Wesleyan Quadrilateral doesn't work for you, but maybe, instead, you could try the SOAP method. Together as a class (or in groups) practice the SOAP method – Scripture, Observation, Application and Prayer. Read this passage first and interpret what it means as a group and then move through the other elements.

1 Timothy 4:11-16

OBSERVATION: As you read it, what do you see in the scripture, what does it make you think about? What can you relate it to?

APPLICATION: What can you learn from this and how can you apply it actively in your life?

PRAYER: Take time to pray about the scripture. Thank God for the words, ask for wisdom, ask for God to help you apply it. Whatever makes sense in your situation with the scripture!

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Which method seemed more helpful for you?
- Is there a way that you like to read the Bible that involves another technique that you can share?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

There are many ways that we can participate in the spiritual practice of Study. In this video we will hear 5 tips from Aussie Dave (follow him on Instagram!) on how we can study the Bible. One of the things he shares is that reading the Bible doesn't create an immediate change in us - that's why it's something we have to practice!

>> VIDEO

Five Simple Tips On How To Study the Bible Effectively by Aussie Dave
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yeP8AN8sbN0>



>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How does reading the Bible relate to erosion?
- Why does Aussie Dave suggest reading the Gospels, and how often does he suggest we read them?
- Reflect on this statement: "We need to make sure we aren't just reading about Jesus but learning to be like Jesus".
- What is the difference between reading scripture, and a devotional?

>> JOURNAL REFLECTION PROMPT

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 Student Journals.

- Download the Bible app and pick out one Bible Study you might enjoy. Write down the name of the study.
- Write down 2 questions you have about faith.

>> 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 as a way 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 TWO

UNIT 9 | SESSION 4

SERVE

>> LEADERSHIP SKILL: Helping others uplifts our communities

>> OPENER

Select one or let students pick what they want to answer.

- Think about the last time you helped someone else. What did it feel like?
- Where is your favorite place you have ever served?
- If you could solve any world problem, what would it be?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

So far in the five essential practices, we have learned about prayer, worship, and study. Today we are going to be talking about serving, what it means to serve, and why we serve.

>> OPENING ACTIVITY

Option 1 (takes some planning!)

Connect with your Student Ministry Director and see if they have a missions opportunity that you could participate in during class together.

Option 2 (takes no planning!)

Have students in pairs pull up the Resurrection Serve page. Resurrection.Church/serve. Invite students to take three minutes to go through the website and write down as many partner organizations and what those organizations do, as they can. At the end of three minutes have students share what they learned about places Resurrection partners with. Bonus: Brainstorm a way your group might serve with one of these organization in the next few weeks/months.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Did you notice any themes about the places that Resurrection partners with?
- Why do you think Resurrection calls them partner organizations?



>> MENTOR PROMPT

Serving can look a lot of different ways but is an important part of our faith journey. It is important to partner with organizations who serve the under-served, but also to serve the people around us, and in our daily lives. What might it look like to serve someone in your family?

>> SCRIPTURE

Read the following Bible passage:
Matthew 25:31-45

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What did Jesus mean during this part of the passage: "The King said, 'I assure you that when you have done it for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you have done it for me.'"
- Take a moment to think about who you might consider as 'the least of these' that you encounter regularly (don't share who!). What is one way that you can show up for, and support them?
- Share a time that you have felt like "the least of these." What is something you wish someone else had done for you at that time? Or what did someone do for you that was helpful?

>> READ

Here I Am, Lord, Send Me, Blog from Pastor Adam Hamilton
<https://www.adamhamilton.com/blog/serve-here-i-am-lord-send-me>
The transcript of this blog is also below.

The third essential practice of the Christian life is serving. The words "serve," "serving," "service," and "servant" appear over one thousand times in the Bible. And most often in Scripture we learn that we are the servants of God. The Book of Joshua reaches its dramatic conclusion as Joshua, now aged and nearing death, says to leaders among the Israelites,

"Now fear [or revere] the Lord and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the Lord. But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord."

(Joshua 24:14-15 NIV, emphasis added)

This is Joshua's primary charge to the Israelites before he died: Serve the Lord! But what does it mean to serve the Lord?



Latreuo is a Greek word that involves serving God through worship. This, as we have seen, is an important dimension of serving the Lord. But service is not only the act of worship, as important as that is. We are meant to serve God by doing his work and his will in this world. This is a simple but important truth: God's primary mode of working in the world is through people.

So we're meant to ask, What does God want or need us to do? Let's consider the work we do to embody God's love and justice—the work we are called to do to heal the world and to help others.

In Genesis 6:6 we read that God looked upon the world he made, saw the evil and violence human beings were doing to one another, and “regretted making human beings on the earth, and he was heartbroken.” That verse has always moved me—the injustice and evil in the world left God heartbroken.

When God looks at our world today, what are the things that continue to break his heart? When God sees pain and brokenness, poverty and injustice in our world, he is moved with compassion. And I think he cries out, as he did to Isaiah so long ago, “Whom should I send, and who will go for us?” And with Isaiah I believe each of us is meant to respond, “I’m here; send me” (Isaiah 6:8).

I’ve known Christians who seemed to believe that all that God wanted from them was to go to church, to pray, to read their Bibles, and to refrain from doing evil. But throughout Scripture we find that God calls us to do good, to practice justice, kindness, and love. When we fail to do these things, our worship and other acts of devotion are worthless to God.

Consider these words from the first chapter of Isaiah:

What should I think about all your sacrifices? says the Lord.

I’m fed up with entirely burned offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts.

I don’t want the blood of bulls, lambs, and goats.

When you come to appear before me, who asked this from you,
this trampling of my temple’s courts?

Stop bringing worthless offerings. Your incense repulses me.

(Isaiah 1:11-13)

The people were rendering their service to God—by bringing their gifts and offering their prayers and songs— but they were neglecting the matters of justice and mercy and kindness. So, God said:

Learn to do good. Seek justice:

help the oppressed; defend the orphan; plead for the widow.

(Isaiah 1:17)

Micah, ministering around the same time as Isaiah, offered his well-known response to the question of what the Israelites might do to please God:

“With what shall I come before the lord, and bow myself before God on high?



Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old?
Will the lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil?
Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?"

He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?
(Micah 6:6-8 NRSV, emphasis added)

Similar words show up in other prophets, in the Psalms, and in the Book of Proverbs. Particularly meaningful for me are the words of King Lemuel in Proverbs 31:8-9:
Speak out on behalf of the voiceless,
and for the rights of all who are vulnerable.

Speak out in order to judge with righteousness and to defend the needy and the poor. Our older daughter, Danielle, is a public defender. She makes a fraction of what she could be making at a big law firm. She has about sixty cases she's carrying at any given time—more than anyone should have to carry. Ask her why she does it and she'll tell you she feels called to this work of ensuring that the poor have access to justice and that their rights aren't violated.

This is part of the lofty vision captured in the concluding line of the Pledge of Allegiance when we pledge allegiance to our nation, a nation that seeks to provide "liberty and justice for all."

It is impossible to be the kind of Christ-follower Jesus longs for without concern for justice and mercy for the vulnerable, the weak, the marginalized, the poor. Jesus' first sermon was drawn from Isaiah 61 as he read these words, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me. He has sent me to preach good news to the poor" (Luke 4:18).

Jesus devoted much of his time to ministry with the poor, the marginalized, and the second class. He ministered with peasant people, with lepers, with the mentally and physically ill. He noted that, at the final judgment, people will be judged based upon whether they provided food for the hungry, drink for the thirsty, clothing for the naked and whether they visited the sick and the imprisoned and welcomed the foreigner (Matthew 25:31-46).

He noted that when we come alongside and help those who are in need, it is as if we were doing this for him. Likewise, when we fail to do this for those who need our aid, it is as though we had turned our backs on him.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How does God primarily work in the world?
- When God looks at our world today, what are the things that continue to break his heart?



- What, if anything, can we do about that?
- In the article we read "It is impossible to be the kind of Christ-follower Jesus longs for without concern for justice and mercy for the vulnerable, the weak, the marginalized, the poor." Do you agree, or disagree? Why?
- Joshua's primary charge to the Israelites before he died was: "Serve the Lord!" But what does it mean to serve the Lord?

>> RESPONSE ACTIVITY: GOD WORKS THROUGH PEOPLE

Alongside your Youth Director, plan for students to take a walk through the church during your class time and ask people they meet some of the following questions.

- Who is one person you have seen God work through?
- Do you have a favorite place to serve at your church or in the community? Why?
- After your group collects some answers, have students share what they learned.
- Were there any common themes they could identify?
- Did people seem unwilling, or willing, to talk about their service?

>> JOURNAL REFLECTION PROMPT

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 Student Journals.

- What is one way you can serve others in your community?
- Write down the name of one person/organization you can serve 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 as a way 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 TWO

UNIT 9 | SESSION 5

GIVE AND SHARE

>> LEADERSHIP SKILL: Sharing what we have with others

>> OPENER

Select one, or let students pick what they want to answer.

- What is your favorite gift you have ever given? Why is it your favorite?
- What is the most fun thing you have ever been invited to?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

So far in the five essential practices, we have learned about prayer, worship, study and serving. Today we are going to be talking about giving of our gifts and sharing our faith with others.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Here are some opinion questions. We will get into more specifics, but just listen to where your students are in their journey! No wrong answer.

- Has any of your friends ever shared their faith with you? How did they do it/what did they say?
- Does sharing your faith seem intimidating? If so, why? If not, why not?
- If you had a million dollars to give away to one organization, and could not keep it, where would you donate it, and why?

>> OPENING ACTIVITY: GIVING

Each small group will need one giant bag of individually wrapped candy. Take out the bag of candy and tell them that the bag is for the mentors only. BUT mentors will distribute the candy amongst the whole room, IF you give back 5 of your individually wrapped candies to the mentors. Once they give back the candy, students are allowed to do whatever they want with their candy. If students have differing numbers of candy, that is OKAY. If someone complains, see if anyone is willing to share their extra candy with them to even it out.



>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- If you hadn't given the mentors back the candy, what would have happened? (mentors would have had none)
- Did anyone have less candy than another person? How did your group handle that?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Giving of our financial resources can be difficult, but God invites us to share what we have been blessed with, back to the church so that it can be shared to impact others. When you have your candy back to the mentors, or with those who had less, you were ensuring that others also had what they needed, and you were showing the love of God.

>> SCRIPTURE

Read the following Bible passage:

Matthew 6:19-21

- What was being shared in this passage?
- Do you believe that "where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"? Why or why not?
- Why can it be difficult to share our physical or financial resources with others sometimes? Is there anything we can do to make it easier?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Giving is an important part of our faith. Historically, individuals would sacrifice to their gods to appease them. What God invites us to do is to give the first ten percent back to God. It's an act of worship, and an expression of gratitude. It is a spiritual practice, and a choice for each person. The Bible challenges us to give 10% of our income, but that isn't the only way we are invited to give. We can give of our time, to serve others. We can give away gently used toys, books, and clothes to others who have need. We have opportunities to give no matter how much, or little, we have.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Does God ask us to give away everything? (NO!)
- Why might God invite us to give away some things?
- If you have ever given something of yours away, what did it feel like? Was it easy or difficult?
- Think about the things you have in your life. What would it look like if you gave something away? What might that thing be?



>> MORE SCRIPTURE

Read the following Bible passage:

Mark 16:15-16

- What was being shared in this passage?
- Why would God want us to share our faith with the world?
- What happens if we choose not to?
- Have you ever had an opportunity to share your faith with someone else? What was it like?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

In one of Adam Hamilton's books, he writes, "most people who choose to follow Jesus do so because of the positive witness of Christians through whom they experienced love and from whom they heard a compelling witness and example of what it means to be a Christian." (p.118)

- Who was that person in your life? How did they do this?
- Why do you think it was memorable to you?

>> RESPONSE ACTIVITY: ELEVATOR SPEECH

Pastor Adam also talks about giving his "elevator" speech and how answering three simple questions helps him share his faith story. In your journal, take a few minutes to write down your faith journey.

- What was your life like before you were a Christian?
- What happened that changed that?
- What difference has being a Christian made in your life?

These are great ways for us to also share our stories of faith with those around us. Mentors, this is a great time to share YOUR faith story and how you ended up here, teaching today.

>> JOURNAL REFLECTION PROMPT

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 Student Journals.

- Write down the name of one person you could invite to church next week?
- What is something you can give as an act of 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 as a way 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 TWO

Seasonal

Thanksgiving: Gratitude in Faith

Advent: Patience

Lent: Practicing Silence

>> UNIT OVERVIEW

Thanksgiving, Advent and Lent are seasons of preparation for our highest holy days. As you construct your schedule for the year, insert these where they logically fall in your calendar. You can choose the beginning of each season, the midpoint or the end. Your choice. Use these sessions in a way to prepare your students best.

Gratitude is something we practice and is something we choose to engage in regardless if someone has done something kind for us. Thankfulness is a reactionary emotional response. We say “thank you” when we get a gift and we become happy when we receive it. We practice gratitude when we have gotten a bad grade on a test but still appreciate the ability to learn and gain an education from a teacher. Even when nothing exciting is happening, we can express gratitude. Especially when nothing exciting is happening in our lives, that can be the best time to practice gratitude and shift our mindset. Where thankfulness is an emotion, gratitude is an attitude of appreciation under any circumstance. In our life and faith, there are moments that feel easy and moments that feel challenging. Gratitude is a constant reminder that we are still receiving God’s grace and gifts even on days when it is hard to give thanks. This session seeks to give students a better understanding of gratitude and how it can directly translate into their faith.

Advent is the season for anticipation for Christmas. Waiting is hard—whether it’s for a person, a package, or a promise—and we all know the frustration of standing in long lines or waiting for something we really care about. In the Bible, people like Simeon and Anna spent their lives waiting patiently for the promised Savior, Jesus, and because they knew God deeply, they recognized Him right away when He came. This session will help us explore what it means to wait well, grow in patience, and hear from God in the quiet moments.

Lent can be a period of reflection before Easter. Silence can feel uncomfortable, but it’s a powerful spiritual practice that helps us grow closer to God. Through the story of St. Benedict and the example of Jesus, we’ll explore how silence creates space for reflection, wisdom, and deeper connection with God. In this session, we’ll play, read scripture, and even practice moments of silence ourselves—learning how quiet can be one of the loudest ways God speaks.



YEAR TWO

SEASONAL

Thanksgiving: Gratitude in Faith

>> OPENER

What is the worst gift you have ever received? What was your reaction?

>> ACTIVITY: From Bad to Worst

Supplies Needed: Copies of the 10 worst gifts list.

Pair students up with one sheet per pair. Have one student read out all 10 of the terrible gifts (Be sure that each pair has someone willing or comfortable reading. Then, have them work together to determine what order they belong in from bad to worst. Share the results with the group!

>> MENTOR PROMPT

We've all received a bad gift at some point—and most of us said “thank you,” even if we didn't like it. That's because thankfulness can sometimes be reactionary response, something we've been taught to say to be polite. We say “thank you” when someone holds the door, hands us something, or does us a small favor. Sometimes we mean it sincerely, sometimes we don't. Sometimes, like with that awkward or unwanted gift, we say it even when we don't truly feel it.

But today, we're talking about something deeper than thankfulness, we are talking about gratitude.

Gratitude isn't just a fleeting emotion or a polite response. Gratitude is an intentional attitude of appreciation. It goes beyond saying the words and becomes a way of seeing and responding to the world around us. While thankfulness might be temporary, gratitude is a posture of the heart, part of who we are.

Expressing gratitude could look like helping someone who's helped us, generously sharing with others, or simply taking a moment to recognize what God is doing in and around us.



It's easy to be grateful when things are going well—but the real depth of gratitude shows in hard moments. Like when we get a bad grade yet still appreciate the chance to learn. Gratitude in those times reminds us that God is working, even when things aren't perfect.

>> SCRIPTURE

Psalms 107:1

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Is it realistic to give thanks in all circumstances? How do we do this when life feels really hard or unfair? How can we give thanks when things are difficult?
- How do we know God's love is consistent, even when our feelings change?
- Psalm 107 says God's love "endures forever." What does that phrase mean to you personally?
- Does knowing God's love endures forever, impact your feelings of gratitude?
- How have you seen gratitude impact your relationship with God or with others? Can you share a time when practicing gratitude changed your outlook?

>> RESPONSE ACTIVITY: GRATITUDE LIST

Supplies: Paper, Writing Utensil

Let's take a moment and reflect on God's generosity. We're going to give everyone a paper with two columns. In the first column, you will list all the ways God has been generous to everyone. You can write things like God's love, God's presence, oxygen to breathe, etc. In the second column, you will list all the ways God has been generous to you specifically. You might write the love of your family and friends or snuggles with your favorite pet.

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Gratitude isn't just for the mountaintop moments in our lives. In fact, when life feels slow or uneventful, those quiet seasons can be the most important times to practice gratitude. It's in the ordinary, everyday moments that gratitude can shift our mindset and open our eyes to God's ongoing work in our lives. Of course, there are also seasons when life feels heavy or overwhelming. In those times, gratitude can feel difficult—but that's often when it's most needed. Choosing to be grateful doesn't ignore the pain; it grounds us. It reminds us that, even in the struggle, God's grace and gifts are still present.

Our lives and our faith journeys will always have a rhythm of ease and difficulty. Gratitude offers a steady, grace-filled thread through it all. When we recognize and express our gratitude, we not only enrich our own spiritual lives—we become a source of light and encouragement for others as well. But gratitude doesn't always come naturally. It takes intention, practice, and spiritual grounding. Engaging in spiritual disciplines—like prayer, worship, Scripture reading, or simply listening to worship music—can draw us closer to God and foster a grateful heart.



Even small daily habits, like writing down three things you're grateful for in a notebook or in your phone's notes app, can become powerful centering practices. These daily reminders help us shift our focus and shape our hearts to notice and celebrate the presence of God in all things.

>> SCRIPTURE

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why does Paul connect rejoicing, prayer, and gratitude? How are those three spiritual practices connected?
- How might those spiritual practices impact or change our daily life?
- Can you think of a time when being thankful/or expressing gratitude helped you shift your perspective?

How might living a thankful life make your faith more visible to others?

>> RESPONSE ACTIVITY: SHOWING GRATITUDE

Give each student a blank thank you note, have them brainstorm someone they can write a thank you note to. Someone in their life, at school, their sports team, home. Challenge them to thank someone they haven't thanked but are truly thankful for. Remind them on the card to be specific about why they are thanking them.

>> JOURNAL REFLECTION PROMPT

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.

- How can you begin to shift your mindset to focus on gratitude?
- What is something new you learned about gratitude 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 as a way 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.

>> ANOTHER ACTIVITY: FROM BAD TO WORST

How might you show gratitude for the following:

1. Grandma got me a dollar store electric toothbrush. Y'all know that thing didn't even turn on.

2. Titanic DVD, pirated copy and it didn't have a case — just had Titanic written in marker pen. Also, the DVD was SCRATCHED AND DIDN'T EVEN PLAY!

3. "A dishtowel....I was 8 years old."

4. Last year my mom bought me a can opener. Wrapped it and gave it to me when everyone was gathered around exchanging gifts too.

5. "A Starbucks gift card with a \$0 balance and a gallon-size Ziploc bag of coffee straws. The straws are at least useful, the gift card was just mean. I'm glad I had enough money when I tried to use it though. Lol"

6. "A set of miniature butter knives with ceramic fruit and vegetables as the handles. From an aunt who said that I was 'so hard to shop for.' I was 7."

7. "A comic book that was laying around the house for several months and which I read twice in that time period. I didn't know it was supposed to be my surprise present."

8. He got me a nose hair trimmer...I was 12.

9. "When I was 8 or 9, my grandma gave me a Christmas ornament. It was a little stuffed cherub with pink cheeks and yarn hair. I cried because I had saved up my allowance to buy it for her the year before."

10. "When I was 10 years old my grandparents gave me an unwrapped suitcase for Christmas. In the interests of convenience, they used that suitcase for the wrapped presents for my sisters."







YEAR TWO

SEASONAL

Advent: Patience

>> OPENER

- If you could have anyone in the world, be in our group today with you, who would it be?
- What is your favorite Christmas movie?
- What is the longest line (physical or online) you have ever waited in? What were you waiting for?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Many people in scripture who spent their whole lives waiting for the birth of Jesus. The birth of the Messiah! The one who would come and save the people of Israel. People waited hundreds of years for the birth of Jesus, and even then, no one knew when this Messiah would come, just that God promised he would. So, people spent their lives praying, hoping, and waiting. There were two people specifically that we read about, one named Simeon and one named Anna. People wait in lines for all kinds of things – even long lines. We hear about it for new shoes, new technology, new movies, etc. Maybe the lines aren't always physical, but we have to wait in online queues.

>> ACTIVITY ONE: SLOW AND STEADY SPOON RACE

Supplies: Plastic Spoons (one per person), and 2-3 ping pong balls per group

Directions: Students should do a spoon relay race. One at a time, each player must:

- Balance a ping pong ball on a spoon.
- Walk the obstacle course slowly and carefully to the finish line.
- Return and pass the spoon/ball to the next person in line.

If the ball falls off the spoon, the player must restart from the beginning – no exceptions. The team that completes the course with the fewest restarts (or in the best balance of time and patience) wins.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What was frustrating about the game?
- Did going faster help or hurt you?
- How does this relate to real-life situations where you need patience?



>> MENTOR PROMPT

Anna and Simeon immediately knew the baby born was Jesus because they knew God. They spent all the years waiting, getting to know God so the moment Jesus arrived, they would know. Having a strong relationship with God allows us to hear and see Him, even if it isn't obvious. Their patience was impressive, but it was because it was something they were so passionate about.

Discussion Questions

- Why might it be easier to wait for something you're passionate about?
- What is something that you would wait years for?

>> SCRIPTURE ACTIVITY

Directions: For this, you will read the story of Simeon, and the story of Anna. Split your group into two-four groups. Give each group one of the scripture passage (it's okay if students double up!). Give students five minutes to come up with a way to act out the scripture they have. Encourage them to have a narrator, while everyone else acts it out. If group projects don't work, assign parts for a couple of students to act it out as a mentor, or another student, reads it to the whole group. Make sure every actor takes a bow and gets a round of applause!

- Luke 2:25-35 (Simeon)
- Luke 2:36-40 (Anna)

>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is something you have had to wait a really long time for? What was that experience like for you? How did you feel when you finally got the thing you were waiting for?
 - this could be a vacation, getting a puppy, a trip to Disney World, to hear about getting on a sports team, etc...
- What would it feel like to have to wait for something, never knowing if it would come?
- Who were Anna and Simeon waiting for? Why were they waiting?
- How did Simeon and Anna react when they met the baby Jesus?
- Simeon and Anna knew God really well. What are things that they might have done to get to know God?

>> VIDEO

Why patience is a superpower | Oliver Burkeman | TEDxManchester
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=42cwiP25ChI>



>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How can impatience impact you?
- Why is patience important?
- How might patience be healthy and good for our life? What about our faith?

>> REPSONSE ACTIVITY: GOD'S COMMUNICATION

Supplies: Index Cards

Directions: Brainstorm together how God might communicate with us. Give each student an index card and have them write on it a way that God has communicated with them, or that they think God might communicate with people. Have students turn them in and have mentors read what's on their cards. Be sure to fill in with other ways God talks to people!

>> JOURNAL REFLECTION PROMPT

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.

- How can you be more intentional to practice patience?
- What is one thing you can do to improve your communication between you and God?

>> 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 as a way to "check in" on each other's mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

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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 TWO

SEASONAL

Lent: Practicing Silence

>> OPENER

- Are you the type of person who is comfortable or uncomfortable in silence?
- For those that are uncomfortable, what about it bothers you?
- For those that are comfortable, why do you think that is?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Today, we will talk about a religious leader, St. Benedict. He was a religious leader in the early 500s. He didn't set out to be a monk or a saint, but his life choices led to both. Benedict grew tired of the unruly, disrespectful behavior of society. As a result, he removed himself from that environment and secluded himself in a cave in Italy for three years. He was fed and clothed by a local monastery. People eventually began to hear about his choice to live apart and wanted to learn more about his process and what he was learning. He became the head of a group of monks in a monastery. He wasn't loved by everyone and there was an attempt to take his life. He secluded himself once more in his cave but those who wanted to follow his ministry kept convincing him to lead in their monasteries. Over the course of his life, he founded twelve monasteries! Benedict is known as the father of Western monasticism, which means he influence the culture of Christian monks in Europe and the Americas. His biggest influence is through the culture of Benedictine monks, who take their name and their way of life directly from his way of doing things. One of those influences is the practice of silence.

>>> ACTIVITY ONE: SILENT GAME

Directions: For this game there will be 1 guard, and everyone else will be 'ninjas'. The goal is to reach the guard without being heard by the ninjas. When the Guard says "Go," all the Ninjas begin to silently sneak forward. At any time, the Guard can suddenly turn around. If the Guard hears or sees someone moving, they point and say the person's name or describe their clothing. That person must go back to the start. The first person to tap the Guard on the shoulder wins and becomes the next Guard.



>> DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How did staying silent feel during the game?
- Was it hard to move slowly and with focus?
- How is this like being patient or listening to God?

>> MENTOR PROMPT

One specific tool Benedictine monks use is silence. Although they do not take an overall vow of silence, they use silence to better connect with God. They are careful to make sure that while practicing silence they are listening and reflecting on their relationship with God and because of the use of silence, when they actually do say something, it is because it's meaningful and helpful to them and others. Benedictine monks believe that practicing silence prevents them from speaking in ways that are frivolous, gossipy, and harmful to others.

Benedictine monks believe that when a person is quiet on the inside and outside, God can truly connect with them. Lent is a time where we focus intentionally on our relationship with God. It is a season where we are more intentional with spiritual practices and reflect on the sacrifice that Jesus made for us. Silence is a great way tool to help us grow our relationship with God.

>> DISCUSSION QUESTION

- Why might silence be a helpful tool in our relationship with God?

>> SCRIPTURE

Read Proverbs 18:21

- Why do you think this is one of the verses monks refer to when choosing to practice silence?

>> SCRIPTURE ACTIVITY

Directions: Assign each of these verses to a different (willing) student to read. You could also write them on an index card in advance and hand them out for students to read. After each passage, ask the corresponding question:

James 3:5-4

- How does this verse support the concept of practicing silence?

Job 15:5

- How can talking while in bad situations make things even worse?



Job 27:4

- In what situations might you be tempted to use wicked or deceitful speech? How do you avoid it?

Psalm 12:3

- Why might being silent be a better option than bragging?

Psalm 34:13

- Aside from lying, what other evil might the tongue do in various situations?

Psalm 39:1

- How can this group help each other to be accountable for the words we say?

Have the students break up into pairs and have them look up the below verses and determine what the theme of these verses are and why it's important for us to remember the theme of the verse and what it is communicating. After they are done, have each pair share what is important.

- Luke 6:12
- Mark 1:35
- Luke 4:42
- Luke 5:16
- Matthew 14:13

>> RESPONSE ACTIVITY: PRACTICE SILENCE

Directions: set a timer for 3-5 minutes and lead your students in the practice of silence

>> MENTOR PROMPT

Silence is a difficult thing to practice. It takes monks years to do this practice well. During a time of quiet, we have time to think about our experiences. It allows us time that is set apart from the people we normally communicate with – opening up time for us to communicate with God.

Practicing silence can be difficult. So, when planning to practice silence:

- Set a timer (silence isn't forever!)
- Set an intention (When you know WHY you're practicing silence, you can always refer back to this why when you inevitably get distracted.)
- Sit apart (Separation is important in silence--cut communication with those you're normally communicating with--physically move to a location conducive to silence, like Jesus.)
- Sit in silence (Shut off notification, block out distractions, quiet your mind and heart. Listen. Reflect.)



>> REFLECT (This can be individual, in pairs, or as a group)

- Was it easier or harder than you thought to be quiet for so long?
- How often are you truly quiet in a day?
- What do you think people can learn from being quiet?
- What would it look like for you to schedule daily time to listen to God? 30 seconds – 5 minutes? Maybe increasing it a little bit every time. When would you do this? Before you go to sleep, when you wake up, at a particular time (with an alarm) during the day?

>> JOURNAL REFLECTION PROMPT

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.

- How can you be more intentional to practice silence?
- What are some things that you can reflect on during your practice of silence?

>> 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 as a way to “check in” on each other’s mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

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RESURRECTION
STUDENTS