EMPOWERING YOUTH FOR EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

A Youth Leadership Training Manual for Use in the African Church
EMPOWERING YOUTH FOR EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

A YOUTH LEADERSHIP TRAINING MANUAL
FOR USE IN THE AFRICAN CHURCH

Developed by
THE DIVISION ON MINISTRIES WITH YOUNG PEOPLE
GENERAL BOARD OF DISCIPLESHIP
and
THE INTERNATIONAL MINISTRIES COMMITTEE
GENERAL BOARD OF GLOBAL MINISTRIES
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

In a working partnership with Africa youth leaders

To support the ministries of

The Africa Youth Network
and
Young People’s Ministries of the United Methodist Church
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Several years of intentional ministry to and with youth and young adults in Africa has revealed a variety of challenges. One of the most critical is the acute shortage of teaching and learning resources.

In 2007, the International Ministries Committee (IMC) of the Women’s Division endorsed and provided initial funding for the production of a contextually relevant youth leadership training manual for use in the African church. In 2005, the Young People’s Ministries Division of GBOD had begun the process of working on a Leadership Training Manual for adult workers with young people in Africa. In the fall of 2007, the two program leaders, seeing the similarity between the two projects, decided to partner and create one resource. The two project coordinators hosted a Writers’ Workshop in Accra, Ghana in September of 2007. It is the first time in recent history that these two general agencies of our denomination have intentionally partnered to develop a contextually relevant and prophetic ministry resource for youth, young adults, and adult workers in Africa.

It cannot be overemphasized that one of the greatest and most critical challenges for the African church is the need for visionary leadership. Good leadership cannot be developed overnight; it requires a heavy investment of time, energy, and financial resources. Also, leadership is about change – and change involves people. In his, “Non-Violence – The Only Way to Freedom” message, Martin Luther King Jr. said,

“To produce change, people must be organized to work together in units of power ... to protect their own interests and produce change on their behalf. This is a tedious task which takes years, but the results are permanent and meaningful.”

If the church in Africa is to respond skillfully to the galaxy of challenges it faces today, it is imperative that the whole church unites and creates opportunities for young people by equipping them with the necessary tools to react positively to the demands on them and the church. A Leadership Training Manual of this nature is a step in the right direction and covers a wide variety of issues and topics that are critical in the lives of youth and young adults in Africa.
Why Do We Need a Youth Leadership Resource?

We have decided to produce this training Manual because:

1. There is an acute scarcity of youth leadership training resources in the continent.
2. The available, but limited, resources are expensive and contextually irrelevant.
3. The lack of depth in the coverage of issues in available resources directly impacts the lives of young people.
4. There is a lack of formal training for many adults who work with young people.

What Is the Purpose of the Training Manual?

1. To equip young people, and the adults who work with them, with basic leadership skills to provide more effective, prophetic, and transforming leadership in the church and society.
2. To provide a high quality youth training resource that is not only contextually relevant and affordable but also seeks to respond to some of the crucial issues and challenges facing young people in the continent.
3. To empower churches and ecumenical organizations with meager financial resources to organize cost-effective training programs for young people.
4. To empower youth and young adults who are leaders, as well as adult workers, to teach any of the topics enclosed so that they do not have to rely on resource persons who often demand payment for their services.

_Bishop John K. Yambasu_
INTRODUCTION

This resource is intended to be a comprehensive youth-worker training manual that covers everything from practical ideas for youth group meetings to in-depth analysis of adolescent development. The resource will be invaluable to you as you work with and train youth and young adults. To get the most out of this book, we recommend that you read and study with a small group of adults who work with youth and use the group discussion questions to gain a deeper understanding of youth ministry in your context. Because youth ministry is so contextual, no matter where you are in the world, what you bring to the information matters. You’ll be the one to take the information off of the page and bring it to life in your ministry. After each chapter, ask yourself: How would I apply this information to my particular ministry setting?

Each chapter is written as a stand-alone teaching unit. Because of this, there may be some overlap of information among chapters. Take advantage of the repeated material as review and ask yourself again, How do I see this information playing out in my ministry? As you prepare for your training sessions, you’ll need to determine the length of the study that works for your setting. You may choose two or three full-day training events or teach one chapter a week in one- or two-hour classes. Longer chapters are divided into modules to give you the opportunity to focus on one topic at a time.

Before you dig in, some definitions and explanation might be helpful.

- **Youth:** for the purposes of this training manual in Africa, youth is defined as people between the ages of 12 and 35.
- **Adult Workers with Youth:** Various names are given to the title of adult worker with youth: youth pastor, youth director, youth minister, etc. Adult workers with youth are those who, paid or volunteer, give their time and passion to journey with youth on the road of discipleship.
- **Discipleship:** The goal of working with youth in a ministry setting is to accompany them as they discover the love of Christ and his call in their lives. Discipleship means that we prepare them with a knowledge of Scripture, teach them spiritual formation practices like prayer and works of mercy, facilitate mission and service opportunities, and provide opportunities to be community. These are the elements, though not exhaustive, that help connect young people to the love of God and understand what God’s love means for their lives.

Blessings to you as you learn, train, and join in ministry with young people.

*Jenny Youngman*
DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This Leadership Training Manual is dedicated to the many committed youth, young adults, and adults who are leaders throughout the United Methodist Church in Africa. Through their untiring efforts, commitment, and dedication to ministry, they have opened our eyes to the need for a relevant leadership training resource for young people’s ministries in Africa.

This Training Manual is “a dream come true”. Its production includes many years and sources of preparation, including Central Conference Youth Academies, Leadership Training Seminars, and consultations involving leaders who are young people and adult workers. In all of these settings, the major goal has been an attempt to identify the most urgent needs and challenges facing young people in Africa.

We want to express our sincerest thanks and appreciation to the following persons who voluntarily gave of their time and energies: Mr. Sammy Abbey, Executive Director, International Centre for Human Rights Analysis, Ghana; Rev. Sidney A. Cooper, Lecturer, Sierra Leone Theological College; Ms. Beatrice Fofanah, Conference Coordinator of Women’s Work, The United Methodist Church, Sierra Leone Annual Conference; Mrs. Muriel Nelson, Government Deputy Minister, Ministry of Women and Children, Republic of Liberia; Mrs. Elmira Sellu, GBGM Regional Missionary, Leadership Training With Women, East Africa Annual Conference; Ms. Joyce Larko Steiner, Program Director, HIV/AIDS Initiative, Christian Council of Ghana; and the Staff of the Division on Ministries with Young People, GBOD, USA.

Additionally we would like to thank Ms. Doris Otinkorang, Secretary, Department of Evangelism, Methodist Church Headquarters in Ghana, for painstakingly typing the manuscripts and helping with the editing of the entire manual.

We also offer thanks to the Division on Ministries with Young People of the General Board of Discipleship and The International Ministries Committee of the General Board of Global Ministries for providing the much-needed funds to accomplish this dream. We owe a great deal to these people for their ingenuity, expertise, and passion for ministry with youth and young adults. Without them, this project would not have been accomplished.

Bishop John K. Yambasu
Sierra Leone

Rev. Michelle McCorkle
Division on Ministries with Young People
General Board of Discipleship

This resource is intended as a training source for ministry and must be distributed free of charge.

To the best of our ability, the editorial team sought to verify all quotations and statistics. Readers may feel free to check these sources on the Internet and find updates.
CHAPTER 1
Ministry with Young People

The Purpose of Young People’s Ministries is to:

**Provide a Christian Foundation for Living** by offering the opportunities to integrate faith and life in ways young people may not receive at school, work, home, or other organizations.

**Create a Safe Space** by providing a place to gather with peers that is safe from drugs, alcohol, violence, and verbal and sexual abuse. This should also be a place where youth can freely ask questions, receive truthful answers, and discuss issues of faith.

**Work Intentionally on Spiritual Formation** by helping young people explore their faith, theology and the Bible (and their relevance to life and leadership) through conversations, studies, and interactive.

**Provide Insights into Daily Life** by helping young people develop the necessary skills for saying no to drugs, violence, and abuse; and by offering a trusting presence so they feel empowered to talk and learn about important issues such as death, dying, the purpose of life, and the possibility of living it well and faithfully.

**Provide Leadership Development** by encouraging youth to teach and facilitate group discussions and Bible studies; strengthening them to use their talents, skills, and spiritual gifts for the enhancement of their own lives, the community and the congregation; inspiring them to lead in worship through prayers, music, Scripture reading, messages/sermons (art, writing, speaking, dance, mime, skits, and puppetry).

**Model Healthy Relationships** by helping young people cultivate meaningful relationships in which people may disagree, but still remain friends; work together to overcome their differences rather than going their separate ways; offer Christian forgiveness, love, peace, reconciliation, caring, and respect.

Qualities of Successful Ministries with Young People

1. **Keep Young People Safe.** Your job as a youth worker is to provide a safe, caring, nurturing environment for them to grow spiritually, emotionally and physically. As the leader, you are responsible for setting appropriate boundaries and making sure you never abuse or mistreat anyone.

2. **Love Young People as They Are.** Don’t expect young people to be like you, and don’t try to make them be like someone else.

3. **Accept Young People As and Where They Are.** Some young people want to get together to see friends. Others want to engage in serious Bible study. It is important to love and respect them for whom they are and work with them whatever their stage of life and spiritual growth. (See Addendum A.)

4. **Encourage Young People in their Relationships with God.** Check to see how your young people are doing through visits, notes, email, text messages, or phone calls. Assure them that you are praying for them and ask if they have specific prayer requests (for self, family, friends, etc.). Attend sporting, music, or community events in which the young people are involved.

5. **Provide Young People a Variety of Avenues for Spiritual Growth.** Organize Bible studies, prayer groups, covenant groups, mission/service opportunities; encourage them to pray for one another, the church, community leaders, teachers, etc. during the week; invite them to write prayers for worship services; suggest the group write devotions for an Advent or Lenten devotional book for the church or for another group of young people.
6. **Challenge Young People to Participate in Service and Mission**

Give young people specific opportunities to serve and be in mission together (such as volunteering at a prison or orphanage, organizing a prison ministry, or helping elderly people with shopping or housework). Their mission and service should focus both within the community and beyond. Jesus is a great example of a servant leader (a topic discussed later in this resource).

7. **Learn the Language and Culture of Young People in your Area.** Learn some of the slang young people use when speaking and texting with one another. Adults who work with young people may not use the language frequently, but making an effort to understand it will help in conversation and show the young people you are interested in their lives. Ask about their favorite artists and music, and listen to the music. Learn what they do with their free time and about their hobbies. More importantly, get to know your young people individually, learn who they respect, what is going on in their families, what stresses they face, what sports and other activities they are involved in, what’s going on with their friends, and whether or not they are in a serious dating relationship.

8. **Give Young People Time to Play.** Young people are capable of profound spiritual learning, but they also need time to play, network, and build relationships as part of their spiritual growth. Create time and space for them to interact in an atmosphere of fun and fellowship and through organized games or activities.

9. **Accompany your Young People.** Don’t send them into ministry, study, or mission alone. Go with them as a guide and fellow pilgrim. It speaks volumes when the adults care enough to journey with them through life’s experiences.

10. **Be on Time.** When you are punctual for meetings and activities with young people, you show them honor and respect. It also sets an example for the young people to follow in their individual relationships and commitments.

11. **Encourage Young People to Live in Unity and Respect.** This principle is important both within the group and for individuals who relate to others outside the group. Unity does not mean that young people always have to agree or that there is never any conflict. To be in unity means they are united in Christ and respectfully working together to grow in faith and in service to others.

12. **Teach Young People How to Address Differences and Conflict.** A faith environment is a great place for young people to learn how to respect one another’s differences while still being in community and to resolve conflict in a caring and compassionate manner.

13. **Walk with Young People Through Difficult Times.** It is important that young people know they can depend on you to be an involved and supportive part of their lives (for example, during the unexpected death of a young person, the end of a dating relationship, the loss of a relative, the receiving of bad grades at school).

14. **Teach Young People Values and Discipline Based on Biblical Teachings.** It is important that you model good behavior and values by: putting God first in your life, following the example of Jesus, showing equal respect for both genders, honoring diverse theological views, working for justice and peace, etc.

15. **Help Young People Discover and Use their Spiritual Gifts.** God has uniquely gifted us to serve God and to budup the community. Do all you can to help young people discover and use their spiritual gifts, and to live out their faith in the world.
16. **Become Familiar with the Relationship Between the Church and Society.** How is the church viewed in your country, a county/province or community? Do people embrace it, or are they suspicious of it? Is the church a visible and active participant in the community?

17. **Evaluate the Spiritual Health of the Congregation.** Is there a grounded faith among the members and leaders? Are small groups and Bible studies offered? Is depth encouraged in one’s personal relationship with God? The strength of adult ministries in your church directly impacts the strength of young people’s ministries.

**Code of Conduct for Adults who work with Young People In the United Methodist Church**

To effectively mentor and guide young people, you need to be actively involved in a faith community along with regular Bible study and prayer. Spend time in God’s Word regularly and allow God to mold you more and more into the likeness of Christ. You can not lead youth where you are not going!

As a volunteer adult worker with young people, when you are with the group or any of the young people from the group, your first priority is these young people with whom you are working and serving.

- Help create an environment of safety, fun and learning in the presence of God.
- Help young people learn more about following Christ and living as a disciple.
- Promote the rights of young people in making their own decisions while guiding them to honor and respect the rights and decisions of others.
- Be supportive and respectful of other adults who are working and volunteering with the young people.
- Recognize professional boundaries. You are a leader and role model with the young people. You are called to be more than a friend. Acknowledge the tension of how to be supportive and caring while maintaining appropriate physical and mental boundaries.
- Plan creative, engaging and exciting lessons for the young people with their input.
- Encourage the young people to do and be their best.
- Be confidential with information about people’s lives. If it seems that a young person is a threat to her or himself, or to another person, report it to the proper authorities with the help of the pastor or other church leader.
- Enforce the rules and covenant of the group.
- Enforce the consequences of the youth group. Be consistent in enforcing and administering rules and policies.
- Do not bring your personal problems into the ministry. Share your personal life appropriately in the group.

You are a role model for the young people with whom you work and volunteer. You should strive to be a model of good, decent, Christian behavior. When you are in the presence of young people, whether at the church, on a trip, or at an event, the following behaviors should be exhibited and rules followed:

- Do not drink, smoke, or use drugs
- Use language that is respectful of all persons. Use no offensive language.
- Be on time. Your being on time shows respect for the time of others.
- Dress appropriately. Do not wear clothes that are too revealing, or that have offensive words or slogans written on them.
- Be approachable
Preventing Abuse, Creating Safety

“United Methodists are concerned about maintaining physical and sexual safety, emotional well-being, and spiritual health of children, youth, and adults. Many churches have adopted ‘Safe Sanctuaries’ procedures as one way to help keep young people from harm. Education and dialogue about sexual ethics, forms of abuse, and how to report abuse or misconduct are very important.”

A Place of Hospitality

“The United Methodist Church strives to be a place of hospitality for all persons, male and female, and we want to encourage respect, equality, and kinship in Christ. In our own belief statements, we say: ‘Unwanted sexual attention is wrong and discriminatory. Sexual harassment interferes with the moral mission of the Church’ (Par. 1611 of The Book of Discipline). We also say: ‘Sexual harassment is a barrier to hospitality. This alienating, sinful behavior causes brokenness in relationships - the opposite of God’s intention for us in human community…. Thus we are called to be stewards of God’s community of hospitality where there is not only an absence of harassment, but also the presence of welcome, respect, and equality” (United Methodist Book of Resolutions, #37).

Sexual Abuse Within Ministerial Relationships

“Those in positions of authority in the church, both clergy and lay, have been given much responsibility, vested with a sacred trust to maintain an environment that is safe for people to live and grow in God’s love. Misconduct of a sexual nature inhibits the full and joyful participation of all in the community of God. Sexual misconduct in church and ministry settings impedes the mission of Jesus Christ. Ministerial leaders have the responsibility not only to avoid actions and words which hurt others, but also to protect the vulnerable against actions or words which cause harm…. The United Methodist Church renews its stand in opposition to the sin of sexual misconduct and abuse within the church. It further recommits all United Methodists to the eradication of sexual misconduct in all ministerial relationships…” (United Methodist Book of Resolutions, Excerpts from #36).

Types of Abuse

“Physical Abuse
This is abuse in which a person deliberately and intentionally causes bodily harm to a youth or young child. Examples may include violent battery with a weapon (such as a knife or belt), burning, choking, fracturing bones, and other nonaccidental injuries.

“Emotional Abuse
This is abuse in which a person exposes a youth or younger child to spoken and/or unspoken violence or emotional cruelty. Emotional abuse sends a message to the youth or child that they are worthless, bad, unloved, and undeserving of love and care. Youth and children exposed to emotional abuse may have experienced being deprived of all parental affection, being locked in closets or other confining spaces, being incessantly told they are bad, or being forced to abuse alcohol or illegal drugs. This type of abuse is difficult to prove and is devastating to the victim.

“Neglect
This is abuse in which a person endangers a youth’s or child’s health, welfare, and safety through negligence. It may include withholding food, medical care, affection, and even education to destroy the youth’s or child’s sense of self-esteem and self-worth. Neglect may well be the most common form of abuse. Although it is often difficult to prove, reports of neglect from teenagers or children should not be ignored.
“Sexual Abuse
This type of abuse occurs when sexual contact between a youth, child and an adult (or older, more powerful youth or child) happens. The youth or child victim is not capable of consenting to such contact or resisting such sexual acts. Often, the youth or child victim is physically dependent on the perpetrator (for example, a parent). Additionally, the youth victim is often psychologically dependent on the perpetrator (for example, a teacher or a youth minister). Examples of sexual abuse include fondling, intercourse, incest, and the exploitation of and exposure to pornography and/or prostitution.

“Ritual Abuse
This is abuse in which physical, sexual, or psychological violence is inflicted on a youth, intentionally and in a stylized way, by someone (or multiple people) with responsibility of the victim’s welfare. Typically, the perpetrator appeals to some higher authority or power to justify his or her abuses. Examples of ritual abuse may include cruel treatment of animals or repetitious threats of sexual or physical violence to the youth or child victim or to people related to the youth or child victim. When reports of ritual abuse are made, they are often extremely horrifying. Such reports may even seem too gruesome to be true. However, any youth or child making such a report must not be ignored”.

Discussion Questions

1. Review the purposes of young people’s ministries and identify how you might fulfill each purpose in your ministry with youth.

2. Take each of the qualities of successful young people’s ministries and form them into a mission statement for your own ministry. How can you live out these qualities and create a healthy, effective ministry with young people?

3. What should you do if you learn that another youth leader is abusing a youth?

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1 From “Safe Sanctuaries: Reducing the Risk of Abuse in the Church.”
   http://www.gbod.org/ministries/family/safe, 15-16
2 From http://new.gbgm-umc.org/work/health/safety
3 From The Commission on the Status and Role of Women, www.umsexaethics.org/content.asp?pn=welcome
4 From “Safe Sanctuaries: Reducing the Risk of Abuse in the Church.”
   http://www.gbod.org/ministries/family/safe/faq/what_is.htm
Global Context of Young People
Because we live in a “global village,” we all share the following elements of life in today’s world, regardless of where we live:

1. Environmental Issues: We cannot escape the realities of air, earth and water pollution, or the need for conservation and proper resources stewardship. Deforestation and global warming affect inhabitants all around the planet.

2. Media and Technology: Young people today know more about the “global village” than any generation before them because of the advances in media and technology.

3. Poverty: There are still divisions between the haves and have-nots in our world. This fact is true within each country as well as across national borders.

4. HIV/AIDS: This disease is a global pandemic that must be addressed together.

5. Child Labor: Children work long hours for little or no money in many parts of our world.

6. Gender Inequalities: Throughout the world there are still salary inequalities between men and women. And there are still places that do not allow women to participate fully in the church, workplace, social organizations, and homes.

“Young People are part of God’s Creation. They have a special place in the ministry of Jesus Christ – teaching, preaching, evangelizing, serving – just as middle and older adults do.
Young people need opportunities to practice their gifts.”

Rev. Waterson Bommossee, Liberia Annual Conference
Possible Characteristics of Young People in Your Area

- Impressionable (easily molded by God and positive influences, but also easily misled and molded by negative influences)
- Present and future leaders
- Victimized and exploited
- Victims and witnesses of violence
- Aware of crime and possibly participate in it
- Orphaned because of war, AIDS, or both
- Illiterate
- Refugees
- Physically fight to get what they want
- Familiar with teen pregnancy
- Carry weapons
- Wise beyond their years about the world
- Seek to make sense of the world
- Ambitious
- Seeking forgiveness for wrongs they’ve done or seen
- Hopeful for the future of their village, country, world

Young people depend on the advice and counsel of responsible, truthful adult workers, even if they act like they don’t. Young people want adult workers to be open to their questions and concerns without condemning them.

Discussion Question

What are some other characteristics of young people in your community, region or country?
Possible Issues for Young People in the Aftermath of Crises

1. **Nightmares**

2. **Grief over loss** of parents, grandparents, pets, belongings, photos, friends due to relocation or death, school, teachers, sports teams; loss of connection to people or communities, after-school activities, credit hours at school, missed graduations, future dreams and hopes

3. **Fear the crisis will happen again**

4. **More pressures to help** out the family, not wanting to add stress to their parents

5. **Lack of trust in government** to protect or to help

6. **Suicidal thoughts** such as, I don’t want to be alive anymore; my family’s gone, my friends are some place else or are missing.

7. **Rape recovery, prompting questions such as**, Where is God? Am I a bad person? What did I do to cause this?

8. **Lack of trust in family** to protect them

9. **Lack of trust in God, prompting such thoughts and questions as**:  
   - Where was God when bad things were happening to my family, friends and pets?  
   - If there is a God, why did this happen? God is not active in my life.  
   - God, why did you allow it happen? Why didn’t you stop it? Why are you picking on me? Why didn’t you protect my family? What have I done wrong to deserve this? If you were a real God, you wouldn’t have allowed this to happen. You don’t love my family or me. I’m not important to you or you wouldn’t have allowed this to happen.  
   - I’ve been a good Christian and have tried to be faithful to God and church – and then this happens. What’s the point of going to church?  
   - Why is that person okay? He didn’t even go to church. But look at my family – we lost everything.
Adolescent Development and Abilities

“The process of development in human beings is the same worldwide. Socialization processes are different from culture to culture. For example there are instinctual responses in human babies; when they are hungry they cry.”

Dr. Oliver Duncan, Liberia

Eric Erickson (born in 1902) identified eight stages of human development.

1. **Infancy:** We begin to internalize and feel. During this time we either build trust or mistrust. From this developmental stage, we develop our sense of the world. We can become fearful, afraid, and suspicious if we are not in environments that build trust (consistent presence of parents, absence of war, regular feedings).

2. **Early Childhood:** Autonomy versus shame or doubt will develop at this stage in a child. Children begin to explore their environment (climb, walk, push, hold on, and let go). In this stage, there should be controlled freedom and movement. Normally cultural restrictions are learned at this stage, but these restrictions should not hamper growth. (If a family or society is in upheaval from war, AIDS, displacement, or famine, a child’s development can be affected.)

3. **Play Age Stage:** Initiative versus guilt. Children are often in school at this stage. They bicker with friends, learn more specific language skills and begin to feel for themselves – differentiating their feelings from the feelings of friends or family. Children pay close attention to how their parents respond to them and their self-initiated behaviors at this stage: Do my parents tell me no? Do they care? Are they present and paying attention? Do they want to know what is going on in my life?

4. **School Age:** Industry versus inferiority. Children/youth begin to find their self-worth outside the home as well as within the home setting. Awards such as those presented at school or for sports become important to them. They begin to understand that their initiative can affect their participation and recognition at school, church, clubs, and so on.

5. **Adolescence:** Ego identity (the part that develops and tells us who we are) versus role confusion. This is a very critical stage for young people. Youth (ages 13-18) begin to sort out who they are and identify their unique abilities and strengths (such as math, writing, sports, public speaking, etc.). If a youth suffers the loss of a parent or other significant adult, he or she can become confused about his or her own identity and even slow down in personal ego development.

6. **Young Adult Stage:** Intimacy versus isolation. At this point, young people begin to develop relationships at deeper levels. This drive toward deeper relationship pushes them further into intimacy or isolation. Courtship and partnerships begin to develop in serious ways. There are major transitions at this stage (such as marriage, university, career, children, death of grandparents or parents). At this stage young adults sort out how to share with and care for others at deep levels without losing themselves in the process. Young adults often begin to recognize that success and failure are no longer the responsibility of their parents. Engaging in sexual relations without considering the consequences is not uncommon at this stage.

7. **Middle Adulthood:** Generativity versus stagnation or self-absorption. Individual seeks satisfaction through productivity in career, family, and community interests.
8. **Maturity:** *Ego identity versus despair.* When an individual’s major efforts are nearing completion (possibly grandchildren, career), some reflection on accomplishment occurs. If the person feels he or she has become the person he or she planned or was created to become, there is ego identity, or self-knowing and deep, personal satisfaction. However, if that person believes he or she has not accomplished anything, the result may be despair or depression.

**Youth Development**

Adolescence (ages 12-20) is a time of exploration and experimentation. Young people are finding ways to leave behind childhood, while learning and creating ways to move into adulthood.

**Needs of Early Adolescents**¹ – (Ages 10-14)

- They are dealing with and “understanding the physical and emotional changes” that are taking place within them. This can be disturbing to young people. They need encouragement and help understanding that changes are normal and expected.

- They are beginning to look at who they are, who they want to be and who they say they are. Self-acceptance is a need during this period. Activities and Bible studies that teach self-acceptance are great ways to directly impact their lives for the better.

- They are beginning to self-reflect, though mainly in concrete, rather than abstract ways. For example, while they can understand that practicing their football technique will make them better players (concrete thinking), they may not be able to understand that this strategy can also impact their success in other areas, such as reading, writing, playing a musical instrument, singing, etc., (abstract thinking).

- They are beginning to think about life goals and developing a plan for living into the goals. (Help young people understand the goals of the Christian life and how to live out these goals.)

- They are developing relationships with peers, boys and girls, and are beginning to understand some gender differences.

- They need the acceptance of peers and important adults.

- They to accept peers and important adults

- They are moving away from self-centeredness and beginning to develop consistent self-control. They are beginning to realize they have responsibilities to others.

- They are beginning to understand consequences for their actions; learning how to make decisions and accept responsibility; using independent judgment.

- They are recognizing that others have feelings like theirs. They are learning how to deal with their personal feelings and what that means in relationship to the feelings of others.

- They are beginning to create personal beliefs/value systems.

**Needs of Late Adolescents**² – (Ages 15-19, sometimes through ages 25-27)

- **Sexuality:** … need to understand sexual feelings are normal, need to know about … reproductive capabilities, learn how sexual expression relates to … other feelings, and understand the emotional issues surrounding sexual intimacy.”

- **Status:** … need opportunities to gain competence in sports, academics, and social activities, … also must make more of … own decisions and then accept responsibility for those choices.”
• "Sociality: … need opportunities to try out different roles (teacher, helper, cook, note-taker, reader, speaker, etc.) as they continue to form their identities.”

• "Values and Morality: … as they create the frame of reference through which to view the world, they need to discuss opinions, experiences, thoughts, and feelings in an atmosphere of caring trust and acceptance with both peers and adults.”

Characteristics of Adolescent Life

The characteristics of adolescent life must be considered in the design of youth leadership development opportunities if youth are to be engaged and understand them as relevant to their lives.

1. Idealism (about families, schools, careers, churches, countries, etc.)
   • In early to mid-adolescence, young people can be angry and refuse to accept what appears to be reality for adults. Young people truly believe that somewhere there is an ideal world, family, school, or church.
   • This idealism can manifest as social activism (liberal or conservative) in later adolescence.
   • Idealism often diminishes toward the end of adolescence because young people are developing more abilities to understand and dialogue with others. They are beginning to understand that there can be more than one correct answer/response to a situation. They are also becoming capable of abstract thinking.
   • In late adolescence, individuals begin developing personal values, beliefs, and ethics.

2. Quest for Independence (in relation to parents, teachers, other significant adults, institutions)
   • They are also beginning to comprehend the consequences of their choices and actions with new depth of understanding.
   • They are beginning to separate emotionally from parents and other adults and compare themselves to other young people.
   • Internal conflict often surfaces as they seek their independence, while simultaneously realizing how much they depend on their parents.
   • Older adolescents make more decisions for themselves, especially in situations such as: with whom they spend time, their focus in school, how much time they spend doing homework, how much time they spend with friends, how clean they keep their room or body. These are crucial decisions that help young people in this stage of life make healthy separations from parents while still building and maintaining a family relationship. Making these choices also helps young people gain confidence in their abilities to live their lives according to God’s will.

3. Identity Formation
   Who they are and how and where they fit in the world and their community is crucial. This process continues into adulthood, though much of it occurs in the late teen years and early to mid-20s.
   • Younger adolescents learn appropriate behavior for social settings, identify themselves by what they can do and what they see as their abilities; continue to work on self-identity in relation to school, family, faith community (if there is one), town, community, and culture.
   • For younger adolescents, youth workers and teachers remain important, and the younger teens will often be open about this need.
• Older adolescents often identify themselves based on who they have been in the past, combined with who they want to be in the future. Future goals and aspirations are key to how they view themselves. They are forming their opinions about religion, education, politics, money, careers, and gender roles.

• In older adolescence, abstract thinking develops and young people can reflect more deeply upon the past and how it shapes their present and future. They begin to understand that their decisions and choices directly affect their lives.

4. Interconnection – Interpersonal Relationships
• Younger adolescents create connections through friendships. These friendships are often formed in their neighborhoods, classrooms and church groups. These friendships help them develop their values, interests, and social skills. Friendships also occur with others who are in their peer/age group.

• In older adolescence, young people develop relationships based more on personal interests and life goals. At this stage they have formed some of their values and know some of their interests; therefore they often seek out friends with whom they share common interests and values.

Discussion Questions
1. Think about your own adolescent development. What was happening in the world at that time? What were the trends of your generation? What was it like to be a teenager? What were your personal struggles? How did you approach life? How did you approach faith? What did your relationships look like?

5. As you apply this chapter to your ministry with young people, how can you help them celebrate and affirm their development?

6. How are their relationships (with friends, family, church, community, country, world) changing and growing? What struggles are they facing?


3 From Youth Leadership: A Guide to Understanding Leadership Development in Adolescents, Nos. 1-3; No. 4 by Michelle McCorkle, Director, Leadership Development With Adult Workers, GBOD, The United Methodist Church.
CHAPTER THREE
Leadership For Young People

Youth and Leadership
Many youth, especially younger ones, do not often think about leadership. And, if they do, they think of adults more themselves in that role. They also think of tasks to be completed rather than the process of accomplishing the tasks. They often believe that a person is either born a leader or not. The qualities they associate with leaders are often traditional: wealthy, popular, smart, extrovert/outgoing.

Part of our role as youth workers is to help youth:
• Envision themselves as leaders;
• Identify the areas in which they are already leaders
• Understand that leadership involves more than accomplishing tasks quickly
• Know that leadership development is an ongoing process

“Leadership development gives adolescents a voice in the decision-making processes that affect their lives.”¹

Van Linden and Fertman define leaders as: “individuals (both adults and adolescents) who:
• Think for themselves
• Communicate their thoughts and feelings to others
• Help others understand and act on their own beliefs
• Influence others in an ethical and socially responsible way and
• … Trust their instincts....”

Creating Leadership Development Opportunities for Youth Ages 12-18²
First and foremost it is important to remember that the most successful leadership development opportunities for young people will meet them at their four points of need and/or interest: Idealism, Search for Independence, Formation of Identity and Interconnection.

These Leadership Development Opportunities Need to:
1. Be based on their personal lives and experiences
2. Include a variety of learning methods (visuals, lecture, small-group discussion, hands-on experiences, etc.)
3. Provide follow-up and continued support in order to encourage ongoing and deeper learning about self and context
4. Include learning experiences that reach beyond the normal context of both the individual and the group (for example, serving others in a nursing home, preschool, hospital, orphanage, etc.)
5. Provide time for reflection: What did I do? What did I learn? How did my actions affect the outcome? What could I have done differently that would have resulted in a different outcome? Have them reflect:
   — As a group in conversation
   — Alone in silence and/or journaling
   — In pairs with a peer or mentor
   — Through drawing, painting, poetry writing, etc.

Van Linden and Fertman see three phases of leadership development in youth: (The four ways of acquiring leadership listed below occur in each of the three phases.)³ One begins with initial awareness of leadership, moving into practicing and experimenting with leadership styles and capacities. And, lastly, one develops some mastery of leadership skills and abilities.
1. Awareness of one’s leadership abilities and capacities
Many youth start out believing they are not leaders and often define leadership as “being the boss.”

To help youth apply leadership concepts to their individual lives, provide concrete information that’s directly related to the lives of youth (group dynamics, nonverbal communication, basic public speaking, proper treatment of peers, addressing people in formal settings, self-awareness, gathering data to make wise decisions).

2. Practice and experimentation with leadership styles that bring growth and depth to one’s abilities
In this phase, adolescents cannot necessarily work alone. They still need adult coaching and encouragement. It’s important for youth workers to focus on guidance and support, giving young people opportunities to lead, succeed, and learn from missteps. Do not set them up for failure by letting them go it completely alone.

Offering support to the youth and helping them find balance is important during this stage; otherwise they may become discouraged and think they aren’t leadership material.

Provide numerous opportunities for youth to test their skills and the information learned in phase 1 (awareness) and to reflect on the results. Possible reflection questions are:

- How often should one speak up and be assertive?
- What does body language say in small groups?
- What are some effective ways to disagree or argue fairly?

Other topics for personal or group reflection could be: future planning, how to prioritize homework, volunteer activities, time with friends. Youth could organize a service project day and plan an orphanage visit or a worship service program.

Active listening is a life-long skill that youth need to practice, and then practice some more. Lead exercises and assign youth to pairs in which one tells a story to the other. The listener then has to tell the story to a larger group. The one who originally told the story can affirm if the listener correctly heard and repeated the story.

Follow up active listening sessions with opportunities for youth to talk about and process what they learned and how these ideas relate to their lives.

3. Mastering leadership skills by working on specific areas of personal leadership development (inward journey), creating a personal vision and stepping forward into that vision!
At this stage older youth can begin to train, teach, and model leadership skills for younger youth and older children. At the level of mastery, young people:

- Begin to feel and possess some level of competence;
- Are able to talk with others about potential life plans and their need to make these plans a reality;
- Process thoughts and feelings more deeply;
- Recognize and experience adults as leadership partners, as well as resources and models;
- Can work more independently or with other youth to develop programs or plans, and interact with adults as consultants rather than as directors.
4. Strengthening Adolescent Leadership

As young people progress through the phases of leadership development, they hone their abilities to lead through five areas.

- **Information** – Knowledge about leaders and leadership
- **Attitude** – Thoughts, feelings and beliefs about leadership
- **Communication Skills** – Process of sharing knowledge, thoughts and feelings about leadership with others (send, receive, and respond to messages; verbal and nonverbal communication)
- **Decision-Making Skills** – Courses of action. Making ethical decisions that affect others as well as self. Deciding whether or not to explore the opinions of others.
- **Stress-Management Skills** – Responses to stress

Each of the phases (awareness, practicing and experimenting, and mastery) should include opportunities for youth to gather information/data; understand and possibly adapt their attitudes and feelings; practice communication and decision-making skills; and monitor and change their abilities to manage stress as needed.

Self-reflection and review are very important in this overall process. Youth can look back on their work and see what was successful, what needed modification, and what they learned from the total process that will help them improve in all five areas. This reflection helps them grow and build self-esteem.

The problem-solving method below can help young people with personal decisions as well as group processes.

**A Problem-Solving Model**

1. Identify the decision that needs to be made or the problem that needs possible resolutions
2. Research all of the alternatives
3. Identify the consequences of each alternative
4. Choose the alternative that best suits the chosen values
5. Evaluate the decision

When people are engaged in problem solving, evaluation (Step 5) cannot be omitted. It is important to review the process and how it worked. Reflective learning is a tool used to look back in order to move forward. Help young people reflect on:

- The knowledge they had before and the knowledge they have gained.
- The attitude they first had and the one they now have – how/why did it change? At what point did they notice their attitude was changing? If it didn’t change, why not?
- Their behavior during, before, and after the event. Will their behavior remain different from this point forward? Why/why not?

Journaling, conversation, drawing, sculpting, dancing, scrapbooking and meditating about thoughts/feelings can help youth express reflective learning.

**Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs**

“The next generation and the future of all depend on who each of us becomes and how each of us gets there.”

*Dr. Oliver Duncan, United Methodist University, Liberia*

It is important to note that if basic survival needs are not met, individuals are often emotionally unable to take the next step toward self-actualization – toward being all that he/she can be. When basic and physiological needs are not met, people are significantly hindered in their ability to develop and nurturing meaningful relationships and reciprocate love in a healthy way.
Description of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

Self-Actualization
Self-actualization is the summit of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. It is the quest of reaching one’s full potential as a person. Unlike lower level needs, this need is never fully satisfied; as one grows psychologically there are always new opportunities to continue to grow. Self-actualized people tend to have needs such as: truth, justice, wisdom, meaning.

Esteem Needs
Esteem needs may be classified as internal or external. Internal esteem needs are those related to self-esteem such as self-respect and achievement. External esteem needs are those such as social status and recognition. Some esteem needs are: self-respect, achievement, attention, recognition, reputation.

Social Needs
Once a person has met the lower level physiological and safety needs, higher level needs awaken. Social needs are those related to interaction with others and may include: friendship, belonging to a group, giving and receiving love.

Safety Needs
Once physiological needs are met, one’s attention turns to safety and security in order to be free from the threat of physical and emotional harm. Safety and security needs include: freedom from crime, violence, injustice; economic security; health and well-being. According to the Maslow hierarchy, if a person feels threatened, needs further up the pyramid will not receive attention until that need has been resolved.

Physiological Needs
Physiological needs are those required to sustain life, such as: Air, water, food, sleep. According to Maslow’s theory, if these fundamental needs are not satisfied then one will surely be motivated to satisfy them. Higher needs such as social needs and esteem are not recognized until one satisfies the needs basic to existence.
Discussion Questions

1. What are the three stages of leadership development? How could you incorporate leadership development into your youth ministry?

2. Why is it important to help youth and young adults with their emotions?

3. How could Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs help you create a ministry where all young people feel safe and included?

4. What impact does HIV/AIDS, war, health concerns, lack of food and clean water, etc., have on a young person’s ability to focus on church life and church activities?

NOTES


3 From Youth Leadership: A Guide to Understanding Leadership Development in Adolescents, Nos. 1-3; No. 4 by Michelle McCorkle, Director, Leadership Development With Adult Workers, GBOD, The United Methodist Church

Adult Workers and Lifelong Learning
Excellence in ministry is an ongoing journey, as is one’s relationship with God. Internal, personal development (spiritual and mental) is the single, most important aspect of leadership in ministry.

Adult Workers: Chugging Down the Track without Derailing
Working with young people can be difficult. Sometimes there is not enough time, money, or support for the work that needs to be done and we spread ourselves thin trying to make it all happen. How do we as adult workers stay on track when everyone seems to be demanding more and more of our time and energy? How do we keep the fire of our call alive in the presence of conflicting priorities and challenging situations?

In order for the various aspects of our lives to be connected and balanced, there are three “places” where we must grounded: in God, in self, and in important relationships. Being grounded in these areas is central to keeping our life and ministry on track.

1. Grounded in God
First, being firmly rooted in God is essential. When in ministry, there are many people who want to tell us what to do, how to do it, and when to do it. Our ministry is less likely to be uprooted by the winds of demand and distraction when we are deeply grounded in God. Maintaining a strong connection to God better enables us to sort through conflicting information, requests and priorities.

Personal Reflections: God
Here are a few ways to stay rooted in God:
• Regular daily devotions, such as prayer, meditation, and Bible study;
• Regular weekly prayer with a group who seriously commits to praying with and for one another;
• Regular worship experiences in which you actually worship and are not a worship facilitator or leader
• A monthly or quarterly retreat day to renew and rejuvenate the soul;
• A book study group (start one if one doesn’t exist) that reads a ministry or devotional book together and discusses its applications to life and to a range of ministry settings.

Murmurings
Some of you may want to say: “I don’t have time for this kind of stuff! I’m already putting in way too many hours as it is!” Or, “I live too far away from other adult workers to get together with them on a monthly basis, let alone weekly!” Or, “If I’m going to carve out more time in my schedule, it’ll be time to get more stuff done that’s already on my plate!”

Your cries – our cries – hold truth. We are busy, often maxed out, and need more time to do the work. And, simultaneously, if we do not create time in our schedules for personal growth and development, we will get way off track. Our levels of fatigue and frustration will cause us to work more hours, yet accomplish less. Without being grounded in God through Christ, our spiritual lives, personal lives, and our ministries will run out of steam.
2. **Grounded in Self**

Second, we must truly know ourselves. We must be aware of the parts we name as good (like our strengths, goals, dreams, passion, calling, and vision), as well as the parts we would rather deny and avoid (like our limitations, weaknesses, and personal needs). For example, if I know that I am a person who needs extra times of prayer and/or quiet reflection before or after a group gathering to allow my soul to catch up with my body, I should not plan group events, studies, or meetings without breaks. Or, if I’m not good at budgeting, organizing mission trips, or teaching short-term classes, I should enlist the help of others to take care of these matters rather than think, *It’s all my job. I must do everything.* Anytime we have a need to be the “savior” of a situation, or repeatedly drop our priorities to accomplish something new, we deny our deepest values, passion, and/or calling. This denial of self moves us closer to possible derailment.

Knowing ourselves means not only recognizing our limits and strengths but also knowing that we ARE NOT our ministry/job. Each of us needs to be able to differentiate between job and self. We fulfill many different roles: adult worker, co-worker, friend, parent, child, spouse, commuter, woman/man, a member of a particular nationality or language group, etc. Some of these roles happen simultaneously, others only in certain situations. It is the responsibility of each of us to know where the edges and boundaries of each of these roles lie and when these boundaries merge, blur, or even disappear.

Distinguishing between self and job does not mean that we cannot be passionate in the ministry setting. In fact, leading with an authentic passion which comes from the heart is crucial to vibrant ministry. However, if we lead with a passion that is not firmly grounded, we may find ourselves in dangerous space.

Living and leading with authentic passion means we live from the depth of who we are while simultaneously being open to new possibilities. This combination of strong core identity and openness means we invite a level of vulnerability into our lives. And, when we are vulnerable, “like clay in the Potter’s hands,” we are most able to learn, see situations from God’s point of view, and truly hear views that are different than our own.

At the same time, though, when we are vulnerable, like pebbles in a mudslide, we are susceptible to losing our footing. To maintain this delicate balance between strong core identity and openness, it is imperative to be grounded in who we are in relationship to God. By staying in touch with our true selves, we are less likely to think that our ministry is the sum total of who we are. We must remember and know deep within ourselves that each of us is more than any one role – even if that role is one we are engaged in because we believe God has called us to do it.

**Personal Reflections: Self**

Here are some possible questions to ask:

- What do I believe about God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit? How does my belief shape my core identity, my life, ministry and the way I articulate my faith?
- What are my personal core values? Where and how are they expressed in my life and ministry? In what ways am I different when I lose sight of my deepest self? What are some things I can do to get myself back on track?
- In what ways am I living my call from God?
- What might I do to more deeply and intentionally embrace my authentic self?
3. Grounded in Key Relationships

Third, we need to spend time and energy on the human relationships that matter most to us. The following thoughts can be dangerous in ministry: I’ll spend extra time with my family next summer because this one is so busy. I’ll just do it myself so it’ll get done quicker. When we are overworked and tired, we can easily overlook the things most important to us, like family and key friends. We assume they will always be there. We think they know, by osmosis, how much we love and care about them.

The reality is that relationships take intentional work – whether it’s a relationship with God, self, or others. Family and close friends, where unconditional love can exist, are no exception. Unconditional love is often present in a relationship because of the work that went into building trust and open communication in the first place. This trust and communication quickly deteriorate when unattended. When we are out of balance, we have little energy to juggle the emotional demands that building trust and honoring communication can ask of us.

Along with the hard work required to make relationships meaningful, each and every one of us has needs for intimacy and acceptance. When we are worn out and off track, not only are we more likely to ignore the complex conversations that deep relationships need, but we are also more likely to seek “easy” and “fun” routes to having these personal needs met. When a dear friend, partner, or spouse wants to talk about his/her work setting, kids, or politics, a worn out adult worker may regard this as simply another burden on his or her time and energy. In such situations, it is easy to be enticed by the simplicity, sparkle and newness of a budding friendship. We mistake the excitement and freshness of a new friendship for personal renewal of heart, mind, and soul. This mistake happens because we’ve lost sight of the core of who we are. We no longer are sure what we believe, what our true commitments are, and what God is doing in our lives. We are just tired and want refreshment. And, as part of being renewed, we want someone to understand and accept us unconditionally.

Handling New Relationships

New friendships are important as we meet people along the journey and work to keep our ideas for ministry fresh. However, new friendships or changes in existing friendships can become dangerous when they cause us to avoid our work/ministry environment, deny the parched condition of our souls, or engage in intimacy that should be reserved for a partner, spouse, or family. The potential chaos created by these situations can spread quickly to all parts of our lives and ministry. In fact, a derailment of key relationships is often a sign that all three areas of groundedness are off track. To bring wholeness and healing to this situation takes care and time. We need to repair and restore the lost and broken pieces of our relationship with God, ourselves, and with those people who matter most to us.

Staying on track is vital to our ability to maintain healthy, personal relationships. Always remember which relationships are most precious and indispensable. This knowledge is valuable wisdom to carry in our souls. We also need a plan for carefully tending the important relationships in our lives.
Personal Reflections: Key Relationships

Questions to ask about our key relationships:

• Do I have free time? How and with whom do I spend my free time?
• What are the key relationships I want to keep as priorities in my personal life? What am I doing to nurture these relationships on a regular basis? What does each key relationship need from me? What do I need from each key relationship? What am I doing to make sure these needs are voiced and met in healthy ways?
• What are some signs that my key relationships are getting off track? What are some ways I can intentionally work to get my important relationships back on track?
• How do I deal with relationship temptations?

It’s Not Always Easy

Being wholly grounded is not a linear process. There is no magical, “Step 1, Step 2, Step 3” formula for success. Like life itself, groundedness is a weaving together of God, self, and others into a unique and genuine fabric. Thus, the path each of us takes to healthy groundedness in our lives and ministries is different. However, the core elements of God, self, and key relationships are at the heart of who we are and how we access the best of who we are in the service of others and God.

Qualities of Adult Workers with Young People

1. Honesty
2. Accountability
3. Moral Uprightness
4. Self-Control
5. Integrity
6. Clarity about leadership role with young people

from Rev. Waterson Bommossee, Liberia Annual Conference,
The United Methodist Church

Discussion Questions

1. How is it with your soul? Are you actively seeking a deeper faith and experience of God? How does this spill over into your leadership with young people? Do they see you as a seeker?

2. In what ways will you tend to your personal spiritual growth even as you minister?
CHAPTER FIVE  
Building a Youth Group

Structure

**Frequency:** Gathering times may be weekly, biweekly, or once a month. Meeting on a regular schedule will help people remember the times, such as the second Wednesday of the month, the first and third Sundays of the month, or every Monday.

**Time:** Groups may meet from 1-3 hours, depending on how often you gather, how far people travel to attend, and how much you wish to accomplish in each session.

Some groups prefer 2-3 hours meetings that include food/snacks along with fun activities (fellowship) and a Bible study. Other groups prefer to alternate with shorter meetings (approximately 1 hour) one week that include a more in-depth Bible study, then a devotion with food and a fun activity the next week. Groups may decide what format works best for them.

Youth groups may plan service projects on a monthly, bimonthly, or quarterly basis. Some groups also plan an annual mission/service project that requires more time and may involve traveling to another town or country.

Elements of a Youth Group:

- **Worship** can be a time of prayer and singing, and/or may include a devotion, meditation, or sermon presented by a youth or an adult. A key element of worship for young people is praising and glorifying God in various ways.

- **Prayer** may include praying for requests offered by the youth and congregation. This time should include praying for world peace, world leaders, pastors and bishops, and partner churches. Listening during prayer is an important skill for young people to learn. Silent prayer during worship is one example.

- **Spiritual Formation** is an intentional time for young people to nurture themselves spiritually. This practice is deeper than listening to a devotion offered by someone else. It should be an opportunity for them to experience God through different prayer practice, engage all of their senses in their spiritual journey, and learn how faith and life are interwoven.

- **Bible and Topic Study** is a time for youth to go deeper into scripture or a topic of interest to them. (For example: alcoholism; HIV/AIDS; dating; Book of Revelation; Jesus as a servant leader; peace; justice; life after death; world religions, such as Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Christianity; child soldiers; drugs; local or world concerns, etc.).

- **Fellowship** includes time for young people to get to know one another and bond as a group. During this time people can share information about themselves, play group-building games, or team sports such as soccer.

- **Music** may be included during worship, at a separate time, or both.

- **Service** includes outreach to the community and the world. Some examples are: working at an orphanage or at the home of an elderly person, taking food to someone who is sick, visiting people in the hospital, and making toys or blankets for babies or orphans.

- **Snacks** may be served at every gathering or only for special occasions. Offer snacks or meals in ways that are appropriate for your group and context.

*Note to Facilitator:* Not all of these elements are necessary every time you meet. However, it is important to include a devotion/Scripture reading at every youth group meeting, especially if you are not including a worship time.
Suggested Typical Weekly Meeting Structure

1. Fellowship Game/Activity: Offer an activity or game that will generate some excitement. You may schedule these games at the beginning or end of group time, depending on when you want the high energy.

2. Devotion/Worship: Include Bible reading and group discussion related to the Scripture reading, or some interactive ways for youth to experience the Scripture or prayer. Some sample questions are:
   - What about this Scripture passage is interesting to you?
   - What excites you about this passage?
   - What questions do you have about this passage?
   - What about this passage is similar to our lives today?
   - How can we apply this passage to our lives?
   - Do we have to change anything in our lives as a result of this Scripture?
   - What is most difficult about applying this passage to our lives?
   - What about this passage is complicated, challenging, scary?

After a time of discussion, the leader (youth or adult) can make closing comments about the Scripture and offer a prayer.

3. Sharing Joys and Concerns: In what ways has God been present and working in your lives this week/this month? What prayer concerns do you have?

4. Prayer (offered by leader and/or youth)

5. Singing: Include singing if this is something your group is comfortable.

6. Core Activity, Service Project, Worship, or Bible Study

7. Announcements: Plan and talk about future meetings and events.

8. Closing Prayer

Asking Questions as Part of Group Lessons or Assignments

- Ask questions that are clear and concise.
- Make sure the questions are related to the lesson.
- Ask questions that are appropriate for and relevant to the age and faith maturity of the group with whom you are working.
- Ask questions that challenge and stretch the young people – but not so much that they become frustrated.
- Ask questions that further peak their curiosity about the subject.
- Ask questions that . . .
  - prompt young people to thinking about the subject/topic;
  - help the facilitator recognize if the participants understand the material. If not, review the confusing aspects;
  - keep the facilitator from doing all the talking;
  - keep the facilitator from being viewed as the only authority on the topic/Bible passage.
Factors to Keep in Mind When Working With Young People

- **Consider the age, attention span and intellectual maturity** when determining activities and lessons plans. (If the age range is too wide, it might be helpful to work in small groups instead of one larger group. Also, younger youth (ages 12-14) may have shorter attention spans and do not think abstractly as well as older youth.

- **Consider the psychological, spiritual, social, and physical needs** of the individuals and the group (for example: Do they get enough to eat at home? Are they homeless? Have they been affected by war, HIV/AIDS, abuse? Has someone experienced a recent death in the family?).

- **Review available resources and facilities.** Can you meet at the church? Is there a specific room the young people can use consistently? If the only available meeting space is outdoors, what will you do if it rains? Is there available curriculum or do you have to write your own? Does the local church have funds appropriated for this ministry? Are there trustworthy, respected adults in the church who can help teach or write teaching lessons?

- **Communicate the purpose** of each gathering or meeting to the young people. Knowing this will help young people stay more focused and make it easier for you to keep them on task and topic.

- **Keep in mind the spiritual level** of the class. Are they new to the faith? Have they been involved in church and faith a long time? Are they gathering together primarily because they want to be with other young people or do they truly want to dig deeper into God’s Word and learn how to live a life dedicated to God in Christ?

- **Contextualization is important.** Work hard to make the gospel and faith relevant to the group with whom you are working.

- **Respect the established time frame.** In doing so, you establish trust and demonstrate that you respect their time and other commitments.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Create an outline for a meeting with youth or young adults. What will you hope to accomplish? What elements will you incorporate? What information do you hope to communicate?

2. What is unique about your group of young people? How will you communicate the gospel to them in a way that they will find it relevant to their particular situations?

**NOTES**
Planning retreats are important to the growth and development of a young people’s ministry. To plan programming and prepare a budget, schedule a planning retreat every six months, once a year or every two years. If you are working with youth ages 12-18 or younger, for safety reasons, it is important to have at least two adults present every time you meet.

Planning the event several weeks or even months ahead is recommended and allows for communication with participants, as well as sufficient time to gather supplies. Meeting away from the group’s normal setting will help the group focus. Check to see if a nearby United Methodist Church would allow your group to meet in their building. Attempting to schedule six full hours of actual planning time is most helpful. Also, staying overnight will increase team building among group members.

**Program Planning**

Begin by brainstorming possible topics for upcoming programs. Here are some suggested ideas:

- **Bible-study topics** (grace, the kingdom/reign of God, friendship, Moses, David, Beatitudes, the Twenty-third Psalm, The Ten Commandments, parables, and Jesus’ identity)
- **Issues to study** (alcohol abuse, HIV/AIDS, premarital sex, dating, pregnancy, marriage, love, hunger, poverty, baptism, communion, prayer, identity, conflict management, decision-making, career choices, Christian living, United Methodist beliefs, United Methodist doctrine, identity of God, Christian symbols, violence, and stewardship). Suggest an appropriate Scripture for each theme.
- **Mission and service projects**

If youth are not regularly involved in worship leadership, it is important to implement their participation. Talk with the pastor and choose a date when the young people of the church can lead worship, including the message/sermon. Encouraging the congregation to involve young people in worship and other church leadership opportunities throughout the year is vital to a healthy congregation and ministry with young people.

As a part of the planning process, list all future meeting dates for the next one or two years (depending on how far in the future you are planning) on large sheets of paper and display where everyone can see. It is helpful for everyone participating to see the schedule as you build it, because the visual process builds energy. Next, as a group, decide which lessons, studies, service projects and fellowship events young people will include each time they meet.

When the schedule is complete, suggest that young people volunteer in pairs to help plan different lessons. Approximately two to four weeks prior to their scheduled date, pairs should consult with other young people and a leader or pastor to help develop the Bible study. The young people who are leading may also want to ask the group if there are specific ideas they would like to discuss related to a certain Scripture or topic. This involvement of young people helps create ownership on their part as well as providing opportunity to practice leadership responsibilities.

**Note for Adult Leaders and Helpers:** It is your responsibility to remind the youth of their assigned week to lead, as well as to offer help and counsel on the topic.
Budget Planning
To set the budget, the group should consider each item on the schedule and discuss the following:
- What resources and materials are needed to accomplish this item?
- Will we need special guest leaders or speakers (including honorarium, travel, housing, food, and so on)?
- What will it cost to buy these resources or to enlist special speaker(s)?
- How much advance time do we need to plan this event?
- Will we need to buy supplies in advance?

Once these questions are answered, assign a budget amount to each item. Once all the items have an assigned monetary amount, estimate a grand total. This total is the amount of money needed for the upcoming year of young people’s ministry. The final step is to determine sources of funding. How much money will the young people need to raise and how much will they ask the church to give them toward their budget? If the church has already designated an amount of money for young people's ministries, factor that amount into the budget. NOTE: Young people also need to learn the value and spiritual discipline of tithing. When the group raises money, it is important for them to decide to whom (single parent ministry, homeless family, etc.) they will give 1/10 (a tithe) of the money they raise.

What to Bring to the Retreat
Collect and bring the following: Bibles, songbooks, large sheets of paper, pens/pencils, markers, writing paper/notebooks for participants, snacks, drinks, other food as needed. Also plan devotions and worship times for use with the group (at the beginning of the retreat, before sleeping, in the mornings, and at the end of the retreat). If you are staying overnight, take food for breakfast and games to play in the evening.

Support for Young People’s Ministry in Church Budget
It is important for the congregation to show support for the young people’s ministries by including them in the church’s yearly budget. It is equally important for the young people to raise some of their own funding and to tithe a portion of this money as previously mentioned.

Encourage young people to begin their planning and budgeting process with prayer, asking God to guide their thoughts, conversation, and decision-making. Remind them to practice an attitude of gratitude toward God and all God has given them. It is also important for participants to take a mental and spiritual stance of openness to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Possible Budget Categories:
- Administration (mailings, printing, and so on)
- Sunday School
- Group Meetings (snacks, supplies such as markers, paper, teaching resources)
- Fellowship Activities
- Continuing Education for Adult Workers
- Missions/Outreach
- Small-Group Studies/Bible Studies to be held outside of the youth group and Sunday school
Finances

- The adult worker and/or pastor should not have sole control of the money. More than one person should count the money, and more than one person’s name should be on the account and able to withdraw money.
- Keep track of expenses. Enlist a group treasurer to keep a written account of all monies spent and to report during each regular meeting.
- Enlist another church to conduct an annual audit of the young people’s finances.

Fundraisers are creative ways for young people to raise money for the planned service projects and activities. Fundraisers differ from one culture to another. Some possibilities include: being paid for cleaning house or doing yard work for a church member or neighbor; selling baked goods or other homemade foods at church or in the market; washing people’s bicycles, motorcycles, cars, or pets; hosting a dinner that the youth prepare and serve (either selling tickets in advance, or collecting donations at the door); present a play or talent show and invite the church and community (either selling tickets or collecting donations); baby-sitting children while parents work or shop.

Discussion Questions

1. Describe the importance of a planning retreat?
2. Discuss why the youth worker or pastor should not possess sole responsibility for the budget?
3. What are the elements of a good planning retreat? Who would you take along on the retreat?

NOTES
Bible Study Methods with Young People

Young people often learn best when they can relate a story to their individual lives or make some key words or phrases come alive for themselves in a personal context. Below are some nontraditional ways to study the Scriptures with young people and to increase their understanding and retention of the Bible.

Role play: Allow young people to role play a Scripture passage. Or, ask them to write a short, simple theater play or skit to present for parents or during worship, if possible.

Write Modern Parables: Ask the young people to write a parable set in today’s culture and context that has a similar message as one of Jesus’ parables.

Word Search: – Using a concordance (or online dictionary or concordance if you have access to one), ask the young people to find and read passages that have include the focal word you are studying (such as love, peace, joy, patience, heart, fear, God, Spirit, and so on). In groups of 2–3, discuss one of the Bible passages. Then call on each group to report what they think their passage says about the theme word.

Poetry Writing: Ask the young people to choose a key word or words from the Scripture and to write a descriptive word or phrase that relates to the focal word’s meaning (see example below).

L – Learning
O – Openness to others
V – Very caring
E – Everlasting

Call on young people to take turns reading aloud what they wrote and explaining briefly why they chose those particular words or phrases.

Word Emphasis: Emphasize different words in the Bible passage and talk about how the change in emphasis may affect the focus of the passage. Use, for example the verse, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.” If I emphasize the word disciples, is the meaning different than if I emphasize the word go or all or nations?

Summary Overview: Ask the young people to create an overview of the Scripture passage. Suggest the following elements: key characters, key verse, a one-sentence summary or answers to the following questions:

Where is God in this passage?

What verses are difficult to understand?
What are some possible meanings for the verses?
What about this passage enriches my life?
What about this passage could help my friends in their lives?
How will I live out this passage in the days ahead?

Bible Character: Have the young people research a person in the Bible (such as Mary Magdalene, Paul, John, Ruth, Sarah, Rebekah, etc.) by consulting a Bible dictionary, concordance, or pastor or elder in the church. Suggest that young people create a timeline of the person’s life and activities, if there is enough information. Talk about the faith qualities of this person, where he or she lived, what his or her family might have been like, and how he or she might have described God. Ask the young people to create a short skit (theatrical performance) which presents the character being interviewed by a reporter from today, or in which the character has a conversation with young people today and answers questions about his or her life.
Personal Bible Study
This method is effective for both young people and adult leaders of young people.

Meditation on Scripture
Step 1: Pray for God’s presence and insight during your study time.

Step 2: Meditate on the verses you are studying. Pray over and ponder each word and its meaning. Ask yourself, If I were to emphasize one word more than another, will it change the meaning of the passage?

Step 3: List possible ways you can apply this passage to your life.

Step 4: Pick one action or practice you will implement to live out this message in your life.

Step 5: Memorize a key verse from this Bible passage.

A Format for Writing a Bible Study for Young People
1. Choose your focal Scripture or topic.
2. Read the Scripture passage several times and pray for God’s discernment of what the group can learn from this passage. Take a few minutes to silently ground yourself in God’s presence.

3. In relation to the passage, ask yourself:
   • Who are the characters in this Scripture/story?
   • What are the key words in this passage?
   • What do these words mean?
   • Are there other places in Scripture where these words are used; if so, where and how?
   • How do the key words of this passage link to one another?
   • What is the overall theme or message of this passage?
   • What are some secondary themes?
   • What theme, or themes, would be effective for use with the young people?
   • Why would this theme be helpful for the young people (asking this question helps you make sure you are not choosing a topic for yourself)?

4. Develop a study plan for using the theme with the young people.

5. Ask yourself: What are some ways that this Scripture and topic are relevant to young people here today? List the ways.

6. What are some activities that will help the young people relate the Scripture to their lives? (For example: Ask them to discuss key words, create a skit/drama, write prayers, talk about key characters, talk in pairs about what the key words mean to them, etc.)

7. Once you have answered these questions for yourself, create a study outline using the following guidelines.
   a. Determine the purpose of the lesson as it relates to the theme.
   b. Develop an introduction that explains information you think will help them appreciate the study, such as Bible background or history relevant to the passage (3-5 minutes).
   c. Write 1-3 questions to initiate discussion.
   d. Think about a conclusion to the study, including a summary of key points in the Bible passage, or a summary of young people’s conversations about the topic/Bible passage.
   e. Include a time for sharing prayer requests before closing in prayer.
Young People’s Involvement in the Local Church
Adult workers should prepare the way for young people to be involved in the congregation as well as service in other settings. One idea is to include the president of the youth group and the young adult group(s) as members of a congregation’s church council or administrative council. Young people should be encouraged by both laity and clergy to participate in these leadership roles.

Discussion Questions
1. Think of your favorite Bible passage. What techniques could you use to teach a lesson on the passage? What is the heart of the passage that you want to communicate? What does it mean to the life of a teenager?

2. What are some approaches to Bible study mentioned in this chapter? How could you encourage young people to seek spiritual formation?
CHAPTER EIGHT
Group Dynamics, Conflict Resolution and Communication

Group Development
In 1965, Bruce Tuckman created a model describing how groups/teams are developed. There were originally four stages. In 1975 he added a fifth.

1. **Forming** – When a group is first forming, there is a high dependence on the “leader.” Most rules are not followed unless they come directly from the leader. Also, it is not unusual for group members to test the boundaries of the group, the leader, and each other.

2. **Storming** – There is more clarity around purpose, but the group members are still becoming familiar with the processes used to make decisions. Cliques can form. Power struggles can occur.

3. **Norming** – The group is beginning to find ways to make decisions together and to agree upon rules by which all can live and operate together. The team/group can actually talk together about its leadership. People other than the official leader are ready to assume some responsibilities.

4. **Performing** – The group can begin to positively articulate its purpose. It is more unified as it moves forward, but it can operate independently from the official leader. Disagreements still occur, but the team or group is able to resolve them with honesty, respect, and integrity. Team members look after and help one another with projects.

5. **Adjourning** – When a group finishes its task, it dissolves to move on to other tasks (such as forming a team to plan a youth retreat or camp). When a team breaks up, various feelings may exist: sadness, regret over separation, or pride in accomplishment of the task. Or, if the team experience has been difficult, some team members may feel relief. It is important for the group to have closure, to experience a sense of finality.

Even if only one person is leaving a group, the group will be different. So, it is important to pray for that individual as he or she goes off to a new place. Such a ritual gives the group and the person departing a sense of closure.

When we experience closure, we can more readily move on to the next stage of who we are in the existing group or in a new group. If a group loses a member, the group process begins again – forming, storming, and so on.
Group Facilitation

How a leader chooses to facilitate a group can affect the way the group members relate to one another, the way the group makes decisions, and the way the group moves into the future. It is important to implement a variety of learning styles during meetings so that everyone can participate over time (such as hands on for those who learn by doing; auditory elements for those who learn by listening; visual components for those who learn by watching, and reflective activities for those who learn by reading, writing, or needing time to process what they have heard or seen).

Group facilitation also depends on one’s personal leadership style. Some examples of leadership styles are:

1. **Authoritarian:** One person makes all the decisions.

2. **Directive:** Group members engage in some discussion about what should happen or the will of the group. But then, the facilitator, leader, or authority figure makes the final decisions and assigns everyone a job.

3. **Democratic/Participative:** Group members are allowed to discuss and make decisions together. The majority opinion rules through a voting process.

4. **Shared:** The facilitator allows group members to help lead meetings, process administrative work, and help make decisions.

5. **Laissez-Faire:** The facilitator allows the group to do whatever it wants to do. Sometimes the group does different things depending on who is present. This approach may work for a few activities, but it can ultimately result in chaos.

6. **Consensus:** The group discusses issues until they reach consensus, but it does not mean that everyone agrees. It means that everyone agrees to move forward with the decision and that everyone will support the decision, even if it is not everyone’s first choice. Voting does not occur. Decisions are made through conversation. It is possible to use a thumbs up, thumbs down, thumbs sideways model. (Thumbs up means, “I concur.” Thumbs down means, “I do not concur.” Thumbs sideways means, “I need more information before I can decide.”)
Conflict Resolution
There are several ways to approach and handle conflict in groups. Encourage “I” statements. This method helps people state their opinions as opinion, rather than as fact. “I” statements also help the speaker accept part of the blame, if there is any, rather than shifting it on someone else. “I” statements also help participants understand that no one should judge another’s opinions, thoughts, or ideas. Everyone’s words are valued and respected.

1. Win-Win: Discuss options that help everyone win. This approach often involves changes in attitudes by all parties. Help people focus on the problem/situation and not on the people involved. Help those who disagree to attempt to see reality from the perspective of the other person. And help each party respect the other(s), whether or not all can totally agree with one another. Work toward finding a solution that is fair for everyone involved.

2. Creative Solutions: Work to develop a plan to change the situation, rather than simply being upset about how difficult or frustrating the issues are. Look for the best in each person and in each situation, then move forward. Look beyond the obstacles.

3. Negotiation: As a person outside the group, work intentionally to resolve conflict. Consider five basic principles [from The Conflict Resolution Network in Australia]
   • Be hard on the problem and soft on the person
   • Focus on needs, not on [political] positions
   • Emphasize common ground among the parties involved
   • Be inventive and creative about options
     • Make clear agreements with the group and help the group reach clear agreements among themselves as well

4. Map Solutions: Ask each person to write out or draw symbols of their concerns and/or frustrations. Then in pairs, suggest people compare what is similar and different in their responses. Repeat this exercise in groups of 4, then 8, and so on. Each time, group members should share summaries of what they learned from their previous pair or group. Then as a large group, talk about the common concerns and any larger issues that the group can address as they move forward together.

5. Mediation: As a third party (outside the group), it is possible to help create an environment in which two parties can sort through some difficulties. Assist by:
   • being objective
   • being supportive of both parties through your language and tone
   • withholding judgment from either side

Aid in mediation by:
   ≈ guiding the process but not the content
   ≈ encouraging participants to speak and offer suggestions
   ≈ offer suggestions as options not solutions
   ≈ work toward a win-win for both sides, encouraging group members to work together to find a satisfactory solution for everyone

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Communication

Non-verbal Communication

**Body Language:** What is my posture while I am listening and talking? Am I leaning into the speaker to show interest? As a speaker, am I leaning into the listener, and if so, is this position threatening or encouraging to him or her? How am I using my hands? What kinds of gestures am I using? Are my gestures congruent with the words I’m saying? (For example: When I talk about the whole world, do I gesture out in a circular motion, or am I pointing to myself?) What are my facial expressions? Am I smiling when I talk about a sad subject or vice versa? Am I making eye contact with people, or am I staring at the ground, or at my notes?

Verbal Communication

**Voice:** Am I clearly articulating my words? Am I speaking too softly? Am I speaking too loudly? Am I expressive in appropriate ways, using happy tones, sad tones, etc.?

Listening

**Deep Listening:** Putting aside any personal agenda and needs and totally concentrating on hearing the depth of what another person is communicating is deep listening. Some ways to listen deeply are:

- Center oneself as a listener in the presence of God and ask God to help you hear this person as God hears
- Set aside personal calendars, worries and needs so as to be fully attentive
- Refrain from judging the words, person, or his or her attitude
- Try to understand the person’s feelings and emotions as well as her or his words

**Active Listening:** Show visible interest in the speaker, the topic, and the content. Some ways to achieve active listening are:

- Focus attention on the speaker
- Make eye contact, nod in agreement, and encourage the speaker with a smile
- Ask questions for clarification without interrupting the speaker’s train of thought
- Reflect on what the person said if it does not interrupt the person who is speaking

**Deep and Active Listening** can:

- Reinforce your relationship with the person speaking
- Help the person speaking clarify her or his thoughts or ideas
- Help the person identify feelings and/or emotions
- Deepen trust in the relationship
Blocks to Listening

1. **Judgment** – If I pass judgment on another’s words, I am not truly listening to him or her.

2. **Rehearsal** – If I am rehearsing in my head what I am going to say next, while the person is talking to me, I am not genuinely listening.

3. **Advice** – If I am giving advice, or thinking of the advice I want to give, I am not truly listening.

4. **Personal Stories** – If I am thinking of my personal life stories that are similar to the stories I am hearing, I am not really listening.

5. **Daydreaming** – If I am pretending to listen, but I’m actually daydreaming or thinking about work I need to do, I am not really listening.

6. **Change of Subject** – If I change the subject, I am not really listening. Changing the subject says that I am bored or uncomfortable with the topic to the point that I want to discuss a different topic. Or, changing the subject could mean that I am self-focused.

7. **Right Answers** – If my opinion has to be the correct opinion, or if my answers have to be the ones chosen by the group, I am not truly listening to other.

8. **Argument** – If I am arguing with someone, I am probably not hearing and listening to them. I need to give the other person time to finish articulating their thoughts before I speak.

9. **Putdowns** – If I am name-calling and making snide remarks, I am judging and arguing, not listening.

**Discussion Questions**

1. What kind of leader are you? How would you describe your group process?

2. Think of some possible conflicts that could creep into youth and young adult ministries. Then, employ some conflict resolution techniques and imagine how you might overcome the conflict.

3. How could you avoid conflict from poisoning your ministry?
The Founder of Methodism

John Wesley was born in Epworth, England in 1703. His father, Samuel, was a minister in the Church of England and his mother, Suzanna, ran a disciplined but loving home where she cared for and educated their many children. At the age of five, John was saved from a house fire and from that day on, his mother declared that he was a “brand plucked from the burning,” and that he would do great things.

John received his formal education from Charterhouse School in London and then from Christ Church College in Oxford. He was ordained a priest in the Church of England in 1728. While at Christ Church College, John and his brother Charles, who also attended school there, founded a Holy Club, a small group of students committed to spiritual development, Bible study, fasting, and ministries of care and outreach. The Holy Club prayed and celebrated the Last Supper with others; taught prisoners to read; delivered medicine to sick people, garnered legal assistance for the accused; and, cared for the poor and sick. John understood that a life of holiness meant nurturing a quality relationship with God (works of piety) while simultaneously embodying faith in everyday life (works of mercy).

Because of their prescribed method of studying the Bible and for their rigid commitment to self-discipline and social justice, the Holy Club would eventually be disparagingly referred to as “Methodists.”

In 1735, John and Charles set off across the Atlantic Ocean on a missionary journey to the colony of Georgia in North America. They had big dreams of ministering to the Native Americans and the American colonists. However, their experience was a disappointing failure. Recognizing that his professional and spiritual life were in shambles, John said, “I have come to save [those who do not know Christ]; but who will save me?” John and Charles both returned to England within two years, searching for a deeper connection to God and faith.

Then, on May 24, 1738, during a prayer meeting on Aldersgate Street in London, John experienced a life-changing event. Wesley said that while reading Luther’s preface to the Book of Romans, “I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.” Three days prior to John’s “heart-warming experience”, his brother, Charles, had also felt a profound sense of God’s peace and assurance.

Newly energized by their encounters, John and Charles, along with their friend George Whitefield began preaching in earnest about God’s grace and love. Since both their message and their audience were not accepted inside the Church of England, they took to the streets. They preached outdoors to miners, laborers, the poor, and those on the fringes of society. Together they began organizing clinics and schools, fed the hungry, taught children to read and write, and spoke out against the slave trade.

As more and more people converted to Christianity and/or experienced personal renewal in their faith, Wesley organized them into Societies for prayer, support and encouragement. There were also Bands, organized by age, gender, and marital status which focused more deeply on the issues of faith and intensive accountability. If you said you were going to work on something in your life, the next time you met, you could be sure the group would ask you about it! Classes were small groups of twelve – intentional communities of believers who worked on spiritual growth and faith formation. They helped one another “go on to perfection.”

Wesley preached to people who worked in factories and fought for the rights of workers. Alcoholism and gambling ran rampant among the rural people who toiled long hours in deplorable factory conditions. Wesley worked hard to help them give up alcohol and gambling. Over the years Methodists have been committed to education for all people, prison reform, abolition of slavery, labor rights, peaceful resolutions to conflict, and medical assistance for all people.
John Wesley remained a priest in the Church of England until his death in 1791 and never intended to found his own church. However, as the Societies, Bands, and Classes continued to grow, it became evident that a new church was beginning to form.

**Fun Facts!**
- John Wesley traveled almost 250,000 miles on horseback.
- John Wesley preached more than 40,000 sermons in his lifetime.
- Charles Wesley wrote more than 6,000 hymns.

**How We Came To Be UNITED Methodist**
Though our history is long, and complicated by many divisions and mergers, the United Methodist Church was formed when the Evangelical United Brethren Church and the Methodist Church merged at a meeting in Dallas, Texas in the United States on April 23, 1968. For years these two denominations had shared a similar history and theology and now they would share the name “United Methodist.”

Today, United Methodism is a worldwide denomination comprised of people from many different cultures, races, and ethnic groups. As congregations, we gather in big churches, in small buildings, and in open fields, in cities, towns and villages around the world. We are a diverse and beautiful assembly of humanity connected by a common mission and ministry.

There are other Methodist denominations: The World Methodist Council (started in 1881) is an association of 68 Methodist or united churches (like the United Church of Canada, where a Methodist denomination has merged with another Protestant denomination) consisting of more than 29 million members. They reach out to more than 60 million people in 108 countries around the world.

**Wesleyan Quadrilateral**
The concept of the “Wesleyan Quadrilateral” was developed in 1964 by Albert Outler, a scholar and expert on the life and writings of John Wesley. In mathematics, a quadrilateral is a shape with four sides. The Wesleyan Quadrilateral is used to describe the four “principal factors that John Wesley believed illuminate the core of the Christian faith for the believer.”

1. **Scripture:** The foundation of all. We believe in the primacy of Scripture, which is first, followed by Tradition, Experience, and Reason.

2. **Tradition:** Relates to the traditions of Christianity and United Methodism.

3. **Experience:** Personal and church experiences of life and faith.

4. **Reason:** Our God-given abilities to think through difficult situations and find possible solutions that benefit everyone.

The four elements of the quadrilateral guide us as we live out our faith.

**Grace**
“Grace pervades our understanding of Christian faith and life. By grace we mean the undeserved, unmerited, and loving action of God in human existence through the ever-present Holy Spirit” (¶101, The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church, 2004). John Wesley taught that grace is overflowing and fills our lives. Wesley did not believe in different “levels” of grace, but rather he spoke about three “categories” to help explain the way God’s grace works in our individual and community lives. Those categories are:

1. **Prevenient Grace** means that there is never a time when God does not love us. Prevenient comes from the Latin word meaning “to come before.” Before we say or do anything, God loves us. Prevenient grace leads us to long for God, to be restless about our lives without God. It is the power which enables us to love and motivates us to seek a relationship with God.
2. **Justifying Grace** is the grace which causes us to repent – to acknowledge the ways in which we have strayed from God and to turn our lives God-ward. The word *justification* is a legal terming meaning to prove right or to free of blame. Through justifying grace we are forgiven completely and made right with God.

3. **Sanctifying Grace** is the grace of God which sustains the believers in the journey toward “perfection of love.” It is the life-long process of aspiring to be holy; of living in, with, and for God; of reflecting in our lives the holiness of our Creator; and, of becoming increasingly true to ourselves by being led beyond ourselves. Sanctifying grace enables us to respond to God by leading a Spirit-filled and Christ-like life aimed toward love.

**Two Sacraments in the UMC: Baptism and Communion**

A sacrament is an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. The United Methodist Church acknowledges two sacraments: baptism and communion. Baptism is a sacrament that Jesus himself received from John the Baptist in the Jordan River. Jesus instituted Holy Communion with the disciples at the Last Supper.

**Baptism:** United Methodists baptize people of all ages, including infants, because we believe that baptism is a sign of God’s grace in our lives even before we can articulate or understand that presence. Baptism is a sign that we accept God’s love and will allow the Holy Spirit to lead and guide us. When baptizing infants, parents (or other adults), along with the congregation take vows to raise the child in a supportive, nurturing environment of Christian love and action. Then, at Confirmation, the child takes his/her own vows of Christian affirmation.

United Methodists believe that one does not have to be baptized to obtain salvation. For example, if a baby dies before being baptized, the infant still receives God’s grace, love, and full acceptance. Also, if a person has been baptized in another Christian faith tradition, he/she do not have to be re-baptized to become a member of a United Methodist Church. United Methodists believe that God’s grace always surrounds us. If we stray and then return to God, the relationship is intact because of grace.

Baptism in the United Methodist Church is often done by sprinkling water on the head. Some churches practice baptism by immersion (the person is completely dipped in the water), as well as by pouring (water is poured directly on the head from a pitcher). The method of baptism is not critical for United Methodists. The presence of God’s grace and love, the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and the supportive community of faith are what are most significant in the sacrament of baptism.

**Holy Communion:** “Through Jesus Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit, God meets us at the Table. God, who has given the sacraments to the church, acts in and through Holy Communion. Christ is present through the community gathered in Jesus’ name (Matthew 18:20), through the Word proclaimed and enacted, and through the elements of bread and wine shared (1 Corinthians 11:23-26). The divine presence is a living reality and can be experienced by participants; it is not a remembrance of the Last Supper and the Crucifixion only.

“Christ’s presence in the sacrament is a promise to the church and is not dependent upon recognition of this presence by individual members of the congregation. Holy Communion always offers grace. We are reminded of what God has done for us in the past, experience what God is doing now as we partake, and anticipate what God will do in the future work of salvation.”

All Christians are welcome to partake of Holy Communion in the United Methodist tradition, whether they are members of the United Methodist Church or not. Anyone who accepts Jesus Christ or who is seeking to know Christ more fully is welcome at the communion table.

United Methodists do not believe that the bread and wine become the actual body and blood of Jesus. Rather, we understand the elements to be symbolic of Christ’s body and blood, his presence at the table. United Methodists use grape juice for communion because it shows care and concern for recovering alcoholics and encourages the UMC’s long-standing support of abstinence from alcohol.
Creeds, Doctrine, and Core Christian Beliefs
The United Methodist Church is not a creedal church, meaning that there is not one particular creed or doctrine that a person must sign or subscribe to before become a United Methodist. However, we do affirm the creeds that are relevant to the history of the church, such as the Apostles’ Creed. The roots of The United Methodist Church are deep, steeped in the spiritual disciplines and traditions of Christianity. The United Methodist Church affirms:

- The Trinity – God (the Creator), Jesus (our Lord and Savior) and the Holy Spirit are always with us and sustain us in our faith walk.
- Salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ as Savior.
- The universal church – or all Christians are part of Christ’s church, not just United Methodists, not just Protestants.
- The reign of God is here and now and yet to come (both present and future).
- Scripture is the authority in matters of faith.
- The church is one in Jesus Christ.

These are beliefs we share with other Christian denominations, though we understand, that not all denominations and, in fact, not all United Methodists always agree on the particulars of doctrine and practice. One of the blessings of United Methodism is our commitment to theological, political, and social diversity. John Wesley once said, “Though we may not think alike, may we not all love alike?” He is also credited with saying, “In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity.”

What Makes United Methodists Unique or Distinct?³
Even though there are not doctrines specifically for United Methodists, there are certain truths that United Methodists emphasize:

- God’s grace is available for all and to all. God’s love is bigger than our failures and sinfulness. If we truly repent, there is nothing, no matter how egregious, that we will not be forgiven for.
- Works of Piety and Works of Mercy. A balance of both faith and works is essential in our lives. We need to commit ourselves equally to our personal relationship with God and our service to others.
- Our salvation is both personal and social. We make a personal decision for Christ and work toward the redemption of society and the world.
- The church is a community of Christ’s disciples seeking to live out the Great Commission.
- Our intellect (knowledge) cannot be separated from our devotion to faith and its practices (“vital piety” is John Wesley’s term for this combination).
- We strive to have our hearts and lives to be congruent with each other (“holiness of heart and life”) – in alignment with each other, so that our actions, words, and thoughts match.
- “Connectionalism” is collaborative mission and ministry in the world with other United Methodists and with other people of faith.
- We acknowledge and try to demonstrate a true connection between what we believe and how we live.
Governance

United Methodists are sometimes asked where their church is headquartered, or what officer is ‘in charge.’ Deliberately, The United Methodist Church has no single central office, no archbishop, no pope. This reflects the representative nature of the church’s organization - which also provides a system of checks and balances.

The church created a system that in some ways parallels that of the U.S. government when it came to America. The church has a General Conference, its legislative branch; a Council of Bishops, somewhat like an executive branch; and a nine-member Judicial Council, the judicial branch.

It’s helpful to recognize the structure of the church, but it is the mission, ministry and love of God through Jesus Christ that is of primary importance.

General Conference
The only body that can set official policy and speak for the denomination is the General Conference. The General Conference is an international body of nearly 1,000 delegates that meets every four years. The delegates are elected by annual conferences (at annual conference sessions) to attend General Conference. They represent all annual conferences around the world. Half of the delegates are laity (non-clergy members), half are clergy.

Bishops attend the General Conference but cannot vote. Different bishops serve as presiding officers during the conference. Other bishops cannot speak unless permission is specifically granted by the delegates.

During General Conference, delegates discuss and vote on petitions and resolutions proposed by individuals, agencies, annual conferences, and other groups within the denomination. These actions result in a revision of the Book of Discipline, the denomination’s book of law, and Book of Resolutions, policies of the denomination on current social issues.

It is at General Conference where delegates wrestle with today’s issues in light of scriptural teachings and the church’s understanding of that teaching. Here is where the church’s official stands and church policies are made. General Conferences are held in years divisible by 4, such as 2004, 2008, 2012, 2016, etc.

Council of Bishops
The United Methodist Church uses an episcopal system of governance, which means bishops provide the top leadership. All bishops (active and retired) are members of the Council of Bishops, which is required to meet at least once a year.

Bishops are directed to provide oversight of the entire church but have specific leadership responsibilities in a geographical area, called an episcopal area. There are 50 episcopal areas in the United States and 18 episcopal areas in the central conferences. Both men and women can be elected bishop. The only requirement to be elected bishop is that the person is an ordained elder in The United Methodist Church.

Judicial Council
The Judicial Council is the highest judicial body or “court” of The United Methodist Church. Its nine members, comprised of both clergy and lay members, are elected by the General Conference for eight-year terms and receive no pay for their work. The five-to-four ratio of membership alternates every eight years between having a majority of clergy member and a majority of lay members.

The Judicial Council determines the constitutionality of acts or proposed acts of the General, Jurisdictional, Central, and Annual Conferences. It acts on these either on appeal of lower rulings or through requests for declaratory decisions. It also rules on whether acts of other official bodies of the denomination conform to The Book of Discipline. This is done in accordance with procedures established in The Book of Discipline. When the Judicial Council makes its decision, it is final.
More Information

If you have access to the Internet, go to www.umc.org for more information about our Wesleyan heritage, United Methodist history, beliefs, structure, and organization.

2 From www.gbod.org/worship/thisholymystery
CHAPTER 10
Religions: Encountering People of Other Faiths

The world is no longer (if indeed it ever was) a collection of distinct nations, each with its own particular language, culture, and religion. With the rise of immigration all over the globe, nations are facing major changes in language, culture, ethnicity, race, and religion. Teens today live in an environment more multicultural than the world in which their parents and grandparents grew up.

This chapter is designed to help youth appreciate what other people believe and to grapple with ways to respond, from a Christian perspective, to other religions. As our world grows more complex and diverse, youth need and want to know who they are and how they can get along in the world. As an adult who works with youth, you will want to help teenagers understand, appreciate, and integrate their Christian beliefs and actions without having to fear, criticize, change, or shun people who believe differently.

Buddhism

Buddhism is found around the world. In the 20th century, Buddhism suffered from the advance of Communism, especially in China, Tibet, North Korea, Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. At the same time Buddhism is growing across the world because of the spread of missionaries.

The Three Divisions of Buddhism

Buddhism is divided into three main groups: Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana.

Theravada means the way of the elders or monks, and it offers salvation to monks alone. People in this group seem themselves preserving the true teachings of the Buddha and transmitting them faithfully from the time of the Buddha until today, 2,500 years later. Theravada is located primarily in Burma (Myanmar), Cambodia (Kampuchea), Laos, Sri Lanka (Ceylon), and Thailand. Though Theravada is the older form of Buddhism, it is known as the Little Vehicle.

Mahayana, the Great Vehicle, developed around the beginning of the Christian era. It incorporated new beliefs and practices, added more writings to the scriptures, and expanded the community to include laity as well as monks. Mahayana elevated the figure of Buddha to a transcendent and divine being and affirmed the presence of many Buddhas beyond the early Buddha, Gautama. Mahayana developed as the human ideal the Bodhisattva, a being whose life is characterized by wisdom and compassion and who remains in the world, forgoing Nirvana to save a suffering humanity. Mahayana is found primarily in China, Japan, Korea, and Vietnam. Zen is a popular school of Mahayana Buddhism.

Vajrayana is the most recently developed form of Buddhism, and it emphasizes elaborate rituals and rigorous meditation. It is found mainly in Tibet, although its leader, the Dalai Lama, now lives in exile in India.

Although the three forms of Buddhism are quite different, they all believe in the Buddha, the Buddha’s teachings, and the community of monks and nuns.

The Beginnings of Buddhism

Who was the Buddha? His name was Siddhartha Gautama, and he lived from about 563 to 483 B.C.E. in the northern part of India. He grew up as an Indian prince in privileged and sheltered circumstances. But as a young man, he ventured out and saw the negative aspects of life, such as sickness, old age, and death. He also learned about people who renounced the world in order to search for an answer to the problem of human suffering.

Gautama was well acquainted with the precepts of Hinduism and eventually reformed it into a new movement under his leadership. At the age of twenty-nine, Gautama decided to follow the Hindu course of renunciation.
Leaving his wife and son, he spent six years wandering, begging, fasting, studying, thinking, and meditating. Finally, after great struggles and temptations and after rejecting as unsatisfactory some of his Hindu beliefs, he became enlightened; he woke up. (Buddha means enlightenment or one who has awakened.) After his enlightenment, he gathered followers and taught them until his death at eighty years of age.

Buddhists believe that because of his enlightenment, he was not reborn but entered into a new state of peace called Nirvana. Buddha was a pathfinder, an example, a teacher, and an inspiration; but he was not a god or a savior. The most holy pilgrimage sites for Buddhists are the places in northern India where the Buddha was born, where he was enlightened, where he preached his first sermon, and where he died.

**The Teachings of Buddhism**

The Buddha’s teachings are contained in the scripture called Tipitaka (Three Baskets). Buddhism is known as the Middle Way, the avoidance of extreme asceticism and self-denial on the one hand and of luxury and self-indulgence on the other.

Central to the teachings are the Four Noble Truths, which describe Buddhism’s view of the world. The first is that life in this world is precarious, undependable, changing, decaying, and temporary; it has no eternal essence. In short, life is full of suffering. Buddhists believe in seeing life realistically.

The second is that people suffer because they desire something that life can’t give. They become attached to the things of the world, which are unreliable; so people are always disappointed. The human problem is that we always want what we can’t have; and if we could have what we want, it would not satisfy us.

The first two truths are the bad news, but the third is good news. Giving up desire and attachment to the things of the world can end suffering and bring about joy. Nirvana is the state of bliss brought about by the end of suffering. Nirvana is not a place like heaven. It is the absence of desire, attachment, suffering, greed, anger, and delusion.

The fourth Noble Truth explains that by walking the Noble Eightfold Path a person can resolve suffering and attain Nirvana. The Noble Eightfold Path is divided into right beliefs or resolves, the moral life, and the mystical or meditative life.

**The Eightfold Path**

**Right Beliefs**

1. Right Understanding, which is knowing the truth, seeing the world as it really is.
2. Right Thought, which is purity of mind with no thought of hate, lust, jealousy, or illusion; but with positive thoughts of love and truth, which break the wheel of becoming.

**Right Morality**

3. Right Speech, which is purity of words and speech, avoiding lies, gossip, and meaningless chatter. (If you do not have something good to say, don’t say anything.)
4. Right Action, which is purity of behavior and involves following the five moral and ethical precepts: Do not kill (respect all life). Do not lie (speak only the truth). Do not steal or take what does not belong to you. Do not misuse sex. Do not use intoxicants.
5. Right Livelihood, which is purity of vocation and involves making sure that your job or career does not cause you to harm anyone.

**Right Meditation**

6. Right Effort, which is setting goals and striving for them with energy.
7. Right Meditation
8. Right Concentration, which means, by right meditation, purifying the mind, controlling and disciplining the mind, focusing the mind, and becoming fully attentive to everything that you do.
By following the Eightfold Path, a person can increase in wisdom, morality, and meditation and thus move closer to the experience of Nirvana. Otherwise, he or she will continue in the endless cycle of death and rebirth. Perhaps the simplest statement of the Eightfold Path is this: Avoid evil; do good; purify your mind.

As people mature in their progress on the path toward Nirvana, Buddhism calls them to four kinds of love: 1) loving kindness for all creatures (human, animal, and otherwise) and wishing well-being for all creatures and all things; 2) compassion for those who are less fortunate than they are; 3) joy and respect for those who are more fortunate than they are; and 4) equanimity in the face of upsetting and troubling situations.

Buddhism as a Way of Life
Buddhism is not so much a formal religion as a way of life, which is open to anyone who experiences suffering and wishes to find peace of mind. An adherent of Buddhism does not join an organization; he or she chooses to walk the noble path and to conform to the discipline of the noble truths. Buddhism does not believe in an almighty creator god to whom one prays for benefits. The problems people experience are their own problems; they caused them and they alone can solve them. Buddhism believes that things happen as a result of one’s past actions (karma), not because of God’s punishment and not because of fate. In addition, a person’s future is determined, at least in part, by his or her present action, not by the grace or the wrath of God. Buddhism is a radical way of self-help in which a person depends entirely on his or her own efforts to stop personal suffering.

Buddhism in the Community
There is also in Buddhism the community of monks and nuns (primarily monks today), who have given up their lives of worldly involvement (marriage, family, career, position, and wealth) and have taken upon themselves the monastic life. They have vowed to live a disciplined life dedicated to their own spiritual growth as well as to teaching and serving the laity. Because of their separation from worldly activities, they are dependent on the laity for food, shelter, clothing, and medical care. In spite of, or perhaps because of, the dedication and sacrifice of becoming a monk, one of the most meaningful events in the life of a boy and his family is his entering the monastery. He may become a monk for a short period of time or for his lifetime. The event is like an initiation into manhood, and it brings great merit to the family.

Most Buddhist festivals celebrate events in the life of the Buddha. For example, in Southeast Asia, the celebration of the birth, enlightenment, and death of the Buddha is on the day of the full moon in May.

Hinduism
Hinduism is the religion of about eighty-five percent of the people of India. Hindu is actually a name given to the religion by people who are not Indians. The people of India usually refer to it as Sanantana Dharma or Eternal Truth. As Eternal Truth, the religion is universal. Anyone who seeks the Eternal Truth is Hindu, no matter what his or her religious or national affiliation. However, the two most common criteria for identifying a Hindu are these: He or she accepts the authority of the sacred scriptures known as the Vedas, and he or she belongs to one of the castes of India.

To Be a Hindu
Hinduism is a religion, actually a way of life, that has no historic founder and has flourished in India for thousands of years. Hinduism and Indian culture are so inextricably intertwined that it is almost impossible to differentiate between them. Hinduism is not a missionary religion, and it is difficult for a person who is not an Indian to become a Hindu. Hinduism has undergone many changes in history, but it is still a strong and growing religion among the people of India.

Hinduism has no central church or authority or creed. Hindus have many different beliefs, and they worship different gods and read different scriptures; but they all affirm that the highest calling of all Hindus is to fulfill their social role to the best of their ability, to strive for liberation in the way appropriate to their disposition and needs, and to grow ever closer to the Eternal Truth.
The Concept of God

Most Hindus believe in god, but the word means different things to different people. For some philosophical mystics, god is the highest reality and the deepest truth. God is impersonal and beyond name and form. The philosophers call god Brahman. For others, god has a name, form, and personality.

Some of the most popular gods are Brahma (creator), Shiva (destroyer), Vishnu (sustainer), and Shakti (the mother goddess), all of whom appear in many forms. Shiva is a powerful, but loving god. Vishnu appears in the world in many forms for the purpose of preserving good and destroying evil. The best known human forms of Vishnu are Rama and Krishna. Rama is the ideal human being; Krishna is portrayed as an infant, a boy, a handsome youth, a husband, and a prince. Hindus worship god in female form as the goddess, for they believe that god is greater than human ideas of gender. Some forms of God are animals.

The worship of god is called puja. In worship, a priest chants scriptures; the devoted offer gifts of food and flowers, and they dress and decorate an image of god. Though they express devotion to a variety of gods, Hindus realize that all the names and forms of god they worship are really expressions of the one true reality (Brahman), which is beyond name and form.

Ultimate Reality, Karma, and Salvation

Hindus do not believe in one creation and destruction of the world; they believe in an endless cycle of creation and destruction. Each cycle begins with creation by the god Brahma. The universe is maintained by the god Vishnu, although conditions gradually decline until finally, when it is beyond repair, the God, Shiva destroys it. Then another creation occurs and the process starts all over again. The cycles have no absolute beginning and will have no final end.

Hindus believe that Ultimate Reality is one, eternal, and changeless. In the universe, the Ultimate Reality is called Brahman (world soul). The same reality in every living being is called Atman (individual soul). Hindus affirm that Brahman and Atman are not different. That is, the essence of each living being is the same as the essence of the universe.

Hindus believe that the Atman lives in a body and that a person’s Atman is reborn again according to his or her past karma. The cycle of rebirth is known as the transmigration of souls (not as reincarnation, since incarnation generally refers to the various forms taken by gods and goddesses).

Hindus believe that in the cycle of rebirth their present condition is caused by their previous actions and that their future state will be determined by the actions they take in the present. The total effect of a person’s actions is known as karma and determines his or her destiny. The ultimate goal of Hinduism is to attain moksha (freedom), when a person’s karma is perfect (all good works and no evil) and he or she leaves the wheel of life. In salvation, the Atman is set free from all limitations to be one with Brahman again. Moksha can be pursued in various ways or margas. Often the ways are meshed. People are to choose the way or ways that best suit their temperament and needs.

The Way of Activity: Karma Marga

Activity, or doing works, is practiced daily by millions of Hindus. The way of activity centers chiefly on offering gifts and sacrifices to the gods, goddesses, or spirits, through worship (puja) in the temple or at home shrines.

In the temple is the stored power of the gods. The priest, Brahmin, is in charge of temple ceremonies that feed, bathe, decorate, and commune with the deity. Brahman can set free the power of the deity. Wealthy Hindus may build their own ornate temples as signs of devotion, thus aggregating greater good works or merit.

The Way of Knowledge: Jnana Marga

The way of knowledge is a more difficult path than the way of activity, for it requires a single-minded devotion
and great sacrifice to attain the final step of becoming a holy man.

A Hindu man's life has traditionally been divided into four stages: student; householder; forest dweller; and, for a few individuals, holy man. Virtually all Hindus will take the first two steps, but the man who pursues the way of knowledge is required to take the third and fourth steps as well. The stages on the way to knowledge are somewhat blurred today, although there is still a sense in which each stage of life defines a person's attitude. The duty of a student is to study and learn the sacred literature, while the duty of a married householder is to be a responsible husband, father, and citizen. The third stage, forest dweller, is not a duty, like the first two stages, but a choice. If a man continues on the way of knowledge, he leaves his home, business, and family in the good care of his sons and becomes a forest dweller. He becomes the disciple of a guru and learns the meditative and ascetic life. The fourth stage is becoming a holy man, using the meditative techniques (yoga) learned from the guru. One of the techniques of the ascetic life is self-mortification, such as lying on a bed of thorns. Self-mortification helps the Hindu man achieve the necessary concentration for yoga. Through his intense concentration, he hones the virtues needed to attain the final level of holiness that will lead to salvation or moksha. Since the way of knowledge is so intense, not many choose to follow it.

The Way of Devotion: Bhakti Marga
The third way is through devotion and is the most popular pursuit of moksha. One need not build a shrine or enlist the aid of a priest to offer devotion. The Hindu chooses one of the gods or goddesses as his or her personal deity and the object of love and devotion. In return, the gods offer grace to provide good karma, which then breaks the cycles of transmigration of the soul. Vishnu, Shiva, Shakti, and Krishna (or one of their incarnations) are the gods most often chosen.

The Caste System
For centuries in Hindu society, caste has been the basis of social relationships. Contact between members of different castes, or social classes, is strictly controlled. At the present time, discrimination on the basis of caste is illegal in India; and in the urban areas among more progressive Indians, caste is of little importance. However, in the rural villages of India and among the more traditional people, the caste system defines the way people relate to one another, especially in intimate relationships, when people eat together or marry.

Caste also plays a significant part in the Hindu pursuit of moksha. Hindus believe that in the transmigration of the soul, a person's karma determines his or her caste. There are five castes or classes in Hindu society. The most privileged is the Brahmin or priest. The second is Kshatriya, the warrior or governing class, followed by Vaisya, the middle class of merchants and tradespeople. The fourth caste is Sudra, the peasantry, farmers, and manual laborers. The lowest caste is outcasts or untouchables, who perform the lowliest occupations and have no access to the rituals of the other castes.

Being in one caste or another is not considered unjust; a person's karma determines his or her social standing. And while there is no intermingling, a faithful Hindu, through the pursuit of moksha and the attainment of good karma, may reach a higher caste in the next transmigration of his or her soul.

Islam
With almost one billion adherents, Islam is one of the largest religions in the world. Islam is usually identified with the Middle East, the place of its origin; and most of the people in the Middle East are Muslims. But the majority of Muslims live in Africa and Asia. Indonesia has the largest Muslim population, and Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan are almost one-hundred percent Muslim. Muslims also constitute a large minority of the population in Eastern Europe, India, China, the Philippines, Russia, and the former republics of the Soviet Union. Through immigration and conversion, more and more people are becoming Muslims.
The Beginnings of Islam

Islam is both old and new. It was founded during the 7th century C.E.; but its adherents believe that Islam began with the creation of the first human being, Adam, who was also the first prophet of God. (God is called Allah in Arabic). Islam means submission, and a Muslim is one who submits. The name of the religion, Islam, refers to an action or attitude that results in the total submission of a person, in every area of his or her life, to the one true God, Allah.

Islam is the younger cousin of Judaism and Christianity. All three religions believe in one God, in Creation, in many prophets whom God has sent into the world, and in an end to human history. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David are some of the prophets revered in all three religions. Jesus is honored by Islam as a great prophet, but not as the Son of God.) Islam, while accepting as prophets Adam, Noah, Moses, and many others, firmly believes that Muhammad was Allah’s final prophet, the Seal of the Prophets, and that the Qur’an is Allah’s final book. Muhammad is a prophet; he is not Allah or the son of Allah.

The Life of Muhammad

Prophet Muhammad, the earthly founder Islam, lived from 570 to 632 C.E. in Mecca and Medina in what is now Saudi Arabia. He was orphaned early and was raised by his uncle. He married and became the manager of his wife’s trading business. He spent a lot of time in meditation and prayer; at the age of forty, Muhammad felt a call to be Allah’s prophet. At that time, Muhammad received the first revelation of the Qur’an. Revelations continued throughout his life, transmitted to the prophet through the angel Gabriel. In Mecca, Muhammad began to preach about the absolute unity of the one true God. He also preached a message of doom and judgment upon the idolaters who continued to worship gods and goddesses.

Muhammad angered the leaders of Mecca, and in 622, he was forced to flee from Mecca to Medina. (622 C.E. is the first year of the Islamic calendar). In Medina, he established the first Islamic community (Ummah); and for the next ten years, he consolidated its power. Just before his death, he took control of Mecca and established the pilgrimage to Mecca that continues today as one of the Five Pillars of Islam.

Prophet Muhammad is remembered as: 1) The final prophet of Allah or the Seal of the Prophets. Muslims believe that after Muhammad, there will be no more prophets. 2) The channel through which the Qur’an was revealed to the world. All prophets perform miracles; the Qur’an was Muhammad’s miracle. Muslims also believe that the Qur’an is Allah’s final book. 3) The founder of the first Islamic state in Medina and its ruler for ten years. It remains the model of an Islamic state. 4) The example for the behavior and lifestyle of Muslims. The writings of and about Muhammad are known as Hadith (Traditions of the Prophet), and they are memorized and imitated by devout Muslims.

Muslim Beliefs

What do Muslims believe? Traditionally, Islam has six major beliefs: (1) the absolute unity and oneness of Allah, (2) the acceptance of Allah’s Prophets, (3) the affirmation of angels as Allah’s messengers, (4) the acceptance of all the books that Allah has revealed, (5) the resurrection and judgment at the last day and (6) predestination (everything happens according to Allah’s divine decree). The main point of a Muslim’s identity is not so much what he believes as what he does or how he lives. Law is more important to a Muslim than theology.

So how should a Muslim act and live? There are Five Pillars of Islam that define how a Muslim should live. The first is to confess and affirm, “There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the prophet of Allah.” This is called the Shahada, and to say it with sincerity makes one a Muslim. The second pillar is to pray at appointed times, five times a day facing Mecca. Muslims use particular positions (bending at the waist, kneeling, touching the forehead to the floor) and recite verses from the Qur’an. Muslims pray alone, with their family at home, or with a larger group in public. At noon on Friday, the whole community (Ummah) gathers at the Mosque for community prayers and a sermon. The third pillar is almsgiving or paying two-and-one-half percent of one’s wealth to help those in need. Fasting is the fourth pillar. Muslims fast during the lunar month of Ramadan. This
means that for the whole month from sunrise to sunset, nothing is to pass through the throat. Muslims who have the means (health, wealth, and opportunity) are expected to make a pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca at least once in their lifetime. To do so is the fifth pillar of Islam.

The Jihad or Holy War
A sixth pillar is known as Jihad or Holy War. Recently it has been a source of misunderstanding and enmity between the West and the Muslim world. Jihad actually means struggle, and its basic meaning refers to a person’s struggle with evil tendencies within himself or herself. It also refers to the struggle between an Islamic state and an evil force that is set upon the destruction of Allah’s community and Allah’s word. When faced with such a situation, a Muslim is required to do everything in his or her power to prevent the victory of evil over Islam. War is required if all other steps fail.

Jihad can only be waged by a true Islamic state and only after certain conditions have been met. It should be fought in as humane a way as possible. The problem is that many would-be Muslims use the Jihad as an excuse for terrorism and war. Not everyone who shouts Jihad has the support of the Islamic community, nor does every act of terrorism or war meet the test of a true Jihad. Most Muslims are peace-loving; but they will not allow anyone to insult, threaten, or destroy their religion.

Islam as a Way of Life
Islam is a way of life rather than a religion. That is, Muslims are to submit to Allah and Allah’s word (Qur’an) and Allah’s law (Sharia) in every aspect of their family and social lives, their political and economic affairs, and even in the details of their personal lives. Every aspect of life should be lived in obedience to Allah’s will. Islam does not have priests or ordained clergy, and has no sacraments as such. But festivals are held at the end of the month of fasting. And during the pilgrimage an animal sacrifice is made to commemorate Abraham’s sacrifice of an animal instead of his son.

Islam Today: The Sects
Islam exists in many different countries and cultures throughout the world. Religious customs and traditions reflect the variety of cultures. However, Islam believes that Allah, the Prophet, and the Qur’an, which bind all Muslims together, are greater than the local cultural differences that divide them. Muslims emphasize the unity of their community.

Just as Christianity is divided into different denominations, Islam is divided by many sects. Muhammad himself warned against division among his followers. The location of these sects may help explain some of the recent conflict in the Middle East.

- About 85% of Muslims are Sunnis (or Sunnites); they follow the Sunna, the six books of traditions. Sunni believers are orthodox (traditional) Muslims.
- The Sufism movement follows the mystical and devotional teachings of Islam. Muslim monks are called Sufis; they believe that knowledge of God comes directly to the soul that loves him above all else and that waits patiently before him. They are found around the world.
- The Wahhabi or Ikhwan movement is usually described as being “Puritan” – no ornaments, music, amusements. They have also strongly opposed the Sufi movement. They are found mostly in Saudi Arabia.
- The Shi’a (or more commonly known as Shi’ite) sect is the largest minority. They believe that Muslim leaders must be descendants of Muhammad. The Shi’a brand of Islam is the state religion of Iran. Most people in both Iran and Iraq belong to the Shi’a sect. Ayatollah is title given to the greatest scholars in the Shi’a sect.
- The Ismailis, an offshoot of the Shi’a sect are considered extremists. Members of this sect are scattered throughout Asia and northern Africa.
- One of the most successful offshoots of Shi’a is now a world religion in its own right – Baha’i. The
origins of this faith date back only to the middle of the 19th century. Baha’i followers are still persecuted in Iran today.

**Judaism**

Today Judaism is numerically small; but it is one of the oldest of the world’s religions, and it has given birth to two of the largest religions: Christianity and Islam. There are about 13 million Jews worldwide: about 5 million in North America, about 5 million in Israel, and the rest primarily in Eastern Europe and Russia.

**What do Jews Believe?**

First and foremost, Jews believe that God is one. The Shema, which they often recite, says, “Hear O, Israel: the LORD is our God, the LORD alone” (Deuteronomy 4:4). In fact, monotheism, the belief in one God, is one of the great contributions that Jews have made to human culture. For many Jews, the name of God (spelled YHWH or Yahweh) is too holy to write or pronounce, so they refer to God as Adonai or Lord. They believe that God created the world and that the world is innately good.

Jews believe that God makes covenants – that is, God relates to people by promising to be their God and asking them to do certain things as their part of the relationship. God made a covenant with the whole human race, as well as with all living things through Noah (Genesis 6-9). In the covenant with Abraham and Abraham’s descendants, the Jewish people, God promised the blessing of land, progeny, and God’s presence (Genesis 15 and 17). God renewed the covenant with the Jews by giving the Torah to them through Moses (Exodus 19 and 20). Jews believe that they are God’s chosen people and that special gifts are given to them, special responsibilities are placed upon them, and special suffering is required of them.

Jews believe that people are made in God’s image and therefore are free and responsible moral agents. They believe that people are put into the world to take care of God’s creation. They are called to live lives of purity and holiness to work for the repair or redemption of the whole world.

**Judaism as a Way of Life**

Judaism is more than an ethical way of life than a system of beliefs and theology. A Jew is defined more by the way he or she lives than by the beliefs he or she holds. For example, in Judaism there is no clear belief about the nature of an afterlife. Most Jews have a messianic hope, but they differ in the nature of their hope. Some believe that the messiah will be a person; but most believe that in the messianic age, the world will be renewed and all people will live in peace.

Jews believe that although God does not enter history as a person, God does work in and through history. Since Jewish people have endured intense suffering throughout most of their history, they have often asked why God allows them to suffer. They were in bondage in Egypt and in exile in Babylon; they were separated from their sacred land from 70 to 1948 C.E. They have lived in ghettos; suffered pogroms (an organized massacre of helpless people); and most recently and most bitterly, endured the Holocaust in Nazi Germany. History has strained the faith of many, but the Jews continue to be a people and to serve God and their fellow human beings, while many of their questions remain unanswered.

**Jewish Sacred Days, Festivals, and Observances**

Jews celebrate in many ways. They consider certain times to be sacred or holy. First and foremost is the Sabbath (Shabbat). The Jews believe that God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh day. God commanded the Jews to observe the seventh day, the Sabbath, as a day of rest. Between sundown on Friday and sundown on Saturday, Jews do not work. (Work may be defined differently by different Jews, but all would agree that work is not to be done on the Sabbath.) They may pray at the temple or synagogue, but they observe the Sabbath primarily in their homes.

During the year, Jews celebrate a number of festivals, many of which began as harvest celebrations, but changed
as they were associated with historical events in which God interceded for the benefit of the Jewish people. Passover (Pesach) and the Feast of Unleavened Bread occur in the spring and are a time of remembering and reenacting the Exodus, when God set the Jews free from bondage in Egypt. The Seder meal, which recalls the hurried feast eaten before they left Egypt, is one of the high points of the year.

The Feast of Weeks or Pentecost (fifty days after Passover) originally celebrated the harvest of wheat. Near the first century, it came to be associated with the covenant and with God’s giving of the Torah to Moses.

Rosh Hashanah (New Year) occurs in the autumn, and Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) occurs ten days after Rosh Hashanah. On Yom Kippur Jews ask for forgiveness from God, and they grant forgiveness to all those who have wronged them. This is a season for making things right and starting anew. Immediately after Yom Kippur is the Feast of Tabernacles (which is also called Sukkot or the Feast of Booths). The Feast of Tabernacles originally celebrated the harvest of fruit. The ancient Jews constructed huts or tents to symbolize the vineyards and orchards and to recall the time they spent wandering in the wilderness after their Exodus from Egypt.

Hanukkah (Festival of Lights) is celebrated in December and is growing in popularity. It commemorates the reconsecration of the Temple in Jerusalem after it had been desecrated by the Greeks in the 2nd century B.C.E. Hanukkah celebrates liberty.

Jews celebrate rites of passage throughout a believer’s lifespan. When a boy is thirteen, he comes of age; he celebrates Bar Mitzvah and becomes a Son of the Law. A girl celebrates Bat Mitzvah. This is a proud moment for the family; a time of celebration for the whole community; and for the young man or woman, a time to assume adult responsibilities. Jews also have rituals for the celebration of birth (circumcision of boys on the eight day), weddings, and funerals.

The Place of Worship and Teaching
In the 1st century C.E., Jews were dispersed throughout the Roman Empire. They faced the crisis of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem (their center for sacrificial worship) and the loss of the Promised Land. While the Jews were socially, religiously, and legally segregated, synagogues replaced the Temple, and Rabbinical Judaism developed. Rabbinical Judaism emphasizes the sanctification of all life through living by Torah and Talmud.

During the last two hundred years, discriminatory laws have been repealed in Western countries and Jews have gained equality. Since 1948, Israel has become a homeland for millions of Jews from all over the world.

Tradition and Reform
Modernity has presented another crisis for the Jewish people. As Jews begin to participate fully in modern culture, a question arises: Can a person give up traditional, rabbinical, Torah- and Talmud-centered Judaism and still be a Jew?

At one extreme are the Hasidim and Orthodox who hold firmly to the tradition and who see the Torah and Talmud as God’s literal revelation. They try to live literally and exactly by the commandments. They speak Yiddish (a dialect comprised of a mix of German and Hebrew) and Hebrew in worship services.

At the other extreme are the more liberal Reform and Reconstructionist movements. The Reform Jews interpret the scriptures (mainly the Torah) as symbolic and metaphorical rather than literal. They emphasize the moral and ethical dimensions of the scripture’s teachings. They use the common language in their services and they ordain women as rabbis. Reconstructionism sees Judaism as a cultural force in world history rather than as a religion per se.

The Conservative movement takes a moderate position. Conservative Jews are less traditional than the Orthodox, especially in biblical interpretation; but they stop short of the Reform position. They use Hebrew and English in the service and have recently allowed women to be rabbis.
The Uniqueness of Judaism
What is the relationship of Judaism to other religions? Jews see themselves as having a unique covenant relationship with God, but that does not preclude God’s relating to other people. Judaism is an ethnic religion, and it does not try to bring other people into its community.

Judaism is difficult to understand because there is no central authority and no single definition of Judaism that all Jews can agree on. For some, Judaism is a religious stance; for others, it is ethnic or cultural or historical. There are secular Jews and nonobservant Jews; but in some sense, they are all Jews.

Christianity
In the first century of the Common Era, Christianity emerged from Judaism as a world religion. (We speak of the time beginning with the birth of Jesus as the Common Era rather than A.D. because this designation includes Jews.) Christianity takes its name and its central beliefs from the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus. The story of Jesus and the beginnings of Christianity are found in the New Testament.

A Brief Story of Jesus the Christ
Jesus was born of Mary in a stable in Bethlehem. He grew up in Nazareth and became a carpenter. When he was about thirty, he was attracted by the preaching of John the Baptist. He was baptized by John in the River Jordan and was tempted in the wilderness for forty days. He then began his ministry: preaching, teaching, and healing. He had an inner-circle of twelve disciples and many other followers. After about three years, he was condemned to death by religious and political authorities. On the third day after his death by crucifixion, God raised him; and after appearing to many people, he ascended into heaven. On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended on believers in Jerusalem and they began to preach and to heal, proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ. The gift of the Spirit marks the traditional birth of the Church. Many Christians believe that Jesus will return to earth at the end of time to usher in God’s reign.

The Christian Year
The Christian year begins four weeks before Christmas, or the birth of Christ, with the season of Advent. Advent, which means coming or arrival, is a time of anticipation and of preparation for the birth of Christ. Christmastide begins on the feast of the Nativity on Christmas day and continues for eleven more days. It celebrates the birth of the Messiah. Christians do not know the actual date of the birth of Jesus, but Western churches celebrate it on December 25, and Eastern churches on January 6.

January 6 is known by many Christians as Epiphany. *Epiphany* means *manifestation*. Christians observe Epiphany by commemorating the visit of the magi.

Depending on the date of Easter, there are six to nine weeks between Epiphany and Ash Wednesday. Ash Wednesday is the first day of the season of Lent, which is approximately seven weeks before Easter. During Lent, Christians prepare themselves, through penitence, for the joy of Easter. The week before Easter is known as Holy Week. It begins with Palm Sunday, which recalls Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem. Maundy Thursday commemorates Jesus’ last supper with his disciples. Good Friday recalls the Crucifixion, and Easter Sunday, the Resurrection of Christ.

The fifty days of Eastertide conclude with another day of celebration, Pentecost, which commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit onto the disciples and the birth of the church. Pentecost is the third of the three major festivals of Christian worship, Christmas is the festival of the Incarnation, God’s presence in the world as a human being; Easter is the festival of the Resurrection, the victory of life over death for Jesus and for all Christians; and Pentecost is the festival of the continuing presence of God in the church and world.
A Message of Love and Compassion
Jesus proclaimed a message of love and compassion for a lost and suffering humanity, and he called people to prepare themselves for entry into the coming kingdom of God. The message of Jesus was good news, or gospel, for people forgotten by the political and religious establishment. When asked about the greatest commandment, Jesus said, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself” (Luke 10:27).

The gospel includes justice. The love of God is not a warm fuzzy feeling, but a dynamic power that carries a prophetic mandate to care for “the least of these” as well as the greatest. Indeed the great who achieved, gained, and succeeded at the expense of the poor or the weak will be the least in the kingdom of God.

Who is Jesus
Of greater significance to the development of Christian theology is the way that Jesus is understood. He is seen as Messiah; Christ is the Greek word for messiah, which means anointed one. Furthermore, Jesus is seen as the presence of God incarnate, God embodied as a human being, and is given titles such as Lord and Son of God.

The church struggled to understand and express who Jesus was and how he was related to God. In the first centuries of church history, church founders developed doctrines about the Trinity, or one God in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Father refers to God who creates and rules the universe. The Son is God who appears in human flesh as Jesus Christ (Incarnation). Holy Spirit refers to the spiritual presence of God, who works in the church and the world to guide, comfort, and challenge people. The early church founders affirmed Jesus as both fully God and fully human, and they understood his death on the cross as the means of forgiveness and redemption for a fallen humanity (Atonement).

The Fracture of Christianity
Christianity developed in different ways in the eastern and western parts of the Roman Empire. The Roman Catholic Church, in the west, split in the 11th century from what is now the Eastern Orthodox Church. In the 16th century, it was fractured as a result of the Protestant Reformation in Europe. Protestant reformers rebelled against the authority of the Pope (the leader of the Catholic Church) and tried to correct abuses and to change church practices of their time. They affirmed the Bible as the sole authority for Christian faith and life, salvation by faith alone by the grace of God, and the priesthood of all believers (the idea that every person has direct access to God and that everyone is a priest to everyone else).

Four main traditions grew out of the Reformation: Lutheran, Reformed, Anglican and Anabaptist.

About two hundred years later, the Methodist movement, which was begun by John and Charles Wesley, appeared as a reform movement within the Church of England. Methodists affirmed the authority of Scripture and tradition and emphasized Christian experience, and the enlightened mind, Christian learning.

A Common Heritage and Beliefs
In spite of differences among Christian religious groups, they all have certain beliefs and practices in common. All agree that Jesus Christ is the center of the Christian faith, that God is triune (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), that the Bible is the authoritative Word of God, and that the church is the people of God in Christ. Human beings stand in need of salvation, and salvation is available through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The church has many sacraments and two are widely accepted: baptism and the Eucharist or Lord’s Supper.

The church is the body of Christ, God’s continuing presence in the world; the Holy Spirit works through the church to accomplish God’s will. The church is called to be an instrument of God’s love, working in the world, as Jesus did, to serve the needy. The church exists in every country in the world, and it sees its mission as nothing less than proclaiming the gospel to every human being. There are more than a billion Christians in the world.
Other Christian Groups

Pentecostal Churches
Pentecostals get their name from the experience of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended on the disciples (Acts 2).

Pentecostals believe that a person who has been baptized by the Holy Spirit will ordinarily manifest one or more spiritual gifts such as those recorded in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14; wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discernment of false spirits, unknown tongues, and interpretation of tongues. Many Pentecostal churches emphasize the gift of glossolalia, or speaking in tongues.

Tongues can either be a divine language, known only to God, or a foreign language that the speaker has not learned but speaks only by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The sign of speaking in tongues is considered by many Pentecostal churches to be normative; that is, if a Christian has been baptized by the Holy Spirit, he or she will speak in tongues.

Doctrines and Beliefs
One of the most significant doctrinal issues among Pentecostal denominations concerns the manifestations of Christian experience. Some Pentecostal denominations teach that Christian experience involves (1) conversion, (2) sanctification, and (3) baptism by the Holy Spirit, with the evidence of tongues. Denominations that teach the three stages of Christian experience have theological roots in the Wesleyan tradition, with its emphasis on sanctification.

Other Pentecostal denominations understand sanctification as a process that begins at conversion, but is not completed or perfected until death. They understand Christian experience as (1) conversion and (2) baptism in the Holy Spirit, with the evidence of tongues. A third way of understanding Christian experience was formulated in 1913 over a dispute about the baptismal formula. The question was raised, Should people be baptized in the name of Jesus or in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Believers who thought that people should be baptized only in the name of Jesus formed several smaller denominations. Most Pentecostals believe that Scripture is divinely inspired and literally infallible. Most teach premillennialism, the belief that Christ will come a second time immediately before a thousand year period of holiness, in which he will rule the world (Revelation 20:1-15).

Many Pentecostal denominations believe in and practice faith healing. Their positions on issues such as divorce, abortion, and the rights of women are usually conservative.

Worship
Worship in Pentecostal churches is usually informal. Formal ritual is frowned on as the form rather than the reality of religion and as a deterrent to the working of the Spirit. Generally services include public and private prayer; congregational singing and special singing; preaching; a time for gifts of the Spirit, including glossolalia; and an altar call.

Most Pentecostal denominations recognize two sacraments or ordinances: baptism, usually by immersion; and the Lord’s Supper. Some denominations have given special status to other rituals such as foot-washing and divine healing.

Pentecostal beliefs have influenced many other churches through the charismatic movement of the 1970s and through the development of a deeper spirituality for individual church members. The enthusiasm of some Pentecostals has been tempered over the years, but the worship of most Pentecostal churches is still filled with emotion.
Christian Science
In the late 1800s, Mary Baker Eddy worked out principles of healing based on theology and spirituality. She wrote about her work in a textbook, Science and Health with Keys to the Scriptures, which she hoped would be used for the purpose of reinstating the lost art of Christian healing. Her teaching is essential to the Church of Christ, Scientist.

The essential doctrine of Christian Science is that God is mind. As an all-knowing, loving and compassionate father and mother, God only wants what is best for God’s children. Illness, financial problems, and unhappiness are not God’s will. Christian Scientists, or students of Christian Science, will study the Scriptures and use Mary Baker Eddy’s book as a guide and commentary. They hope to achieve a spiritual mindset that will allow them to discern and enjoy God’s will for their lives and that will bring about mental, spiritual and physical health. The Church of Christ, Scientist, discourages its members from seeking medical care from physicians. Instead Christian Scientists rely on Jesus’ promises of healing.

The Church of Christ, Scientist, does not observe baptism or Communion; and it does not have an ordained ministry. Local congregations are branches of the Mother Church, the First Church of Christ, Scientist, in Boston, Massachusetts, United States. Each congregation elects lay leaders to preside at worship services and to conduct the business of the church: First Reader, who reads from Mary Baker Eddy’s works, and Second Reader, who reads from the Bible. The Mother church also trains and licenses Christian Science practitioners who help people in their studies and pray with them during times illness or distress. All offices of the Church are open to both men and women.

Worship services are the same in all branches of the Churches of Christ, Scientist. Worship includes hymn singing, special music, prayers, and readings from Science and Health and the Bible. Christian Scientists stress the quiet dignity of their services and their church buildings. There are approximately 2,500 branch churches of the Church of Christ, Scientist, in 68 countries.
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (The Mormons)
As a teenager and as an adult, Joseph Smith had visions. In 1820, angelic messengers convinced him that all contemporary churches and creeds were not only wrong, but an abomination to God. Later he received golden plates and instructions about how to interpret them; they became the Book of Mormon. (The name Mormon was given to Smith and his followers by outsiders. While they do not reject the name, Mormons prefer to be called Latter-Day Saints.) In 1829 three apostolic visitors conferred on Smith the authority to build the “true church.” So the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints was born. From the additional revelations, Smith wrote and published the Doctrine and Covenants and began to revise the Bible.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints grew quickly, but Smith and his followers encountered persecution wherever they went. In 1844, Joseph Smith and his brother were murdered. Because of further persecution and internal power struggles, most of the Latter-Day Saints moved west under the leadership of Brigham Young and eventually settled in Utah near the Great Salt Lake.

Organization
In the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, local congregations are called wards. Congregations are organized into larger groups called stakes. The president of the church is considered a prophet and a seer, as well as a source of divine revelation. Latter-Day Saints believe that God speaks directly to the president in order to guide the members of the church. The president and two counselors form the First Presidency, which is assisted by the Council of the Twelve Apostles. The Mormons have two orders of lay priesthood, into which almost all men are ordained; the priesthoods are closed to women.

Latter-Day Saints’ Beliefs
Latter-Day Saints understand their goal to be the restoring of the true church of Jesus Christ. They are one of several groups that are part of the Restoration Movement.

All over the world, Latter-Day Saints have temples that serve as the sacred centers for their communities; the temple in Salt Lake City is the most famous. Only Latter-Day Saints in good standing may enter a temple where the rituals of celestial marriage and baptism of the dead are performed.

The church recognizes marriages for time on earth and also celestial marriages for all eternity. Not everyone is required to enter into celestial marriage, but many do so. At death, men who have entered into celestial marriages, lived a righteous life on earth, and fulfilled all the ordinances (rules of conduct) of the church may become gods of their own worlds in the celestial kingdom, the highest level of heaven.

The church believes that baptism by immersion by a Latter-Day Saint is necessary for exaltation, which is the highest state of being in celestial heaven. Latter-Day Saints have become excellent genealogists because they believe that through a proxy, who is a baptized Latter-Day Saint of at least twelve years of age, they can baptize dead relatives who were not Latter-Day Saints.

The church encourages everyone to tithe and asks young men and to a lesser degree, young women, to spend two years in volunteer missionary service. About half of the men and five percent of the women enter missionary service, which they must finance themselves.

Latter-Day Saints have a firm belief in the family and in having children. Women are called to serve the church and their husbands and to share the husband’s priesthood. Mormons discourage the use of tobacco, alcohol, tea, and coffee.

Sacred Texts
The Book of Mormon is understood as another Testament of Jesus Christ. It recounts the belief that people came to prehistoric North America when the Tower of Babel was built and that others came shortly before the Babylonian captivity. According to the Latter-Day Saints, Native Americans are the direct descendants of the
Ancient Hebrew people. The Book of Mormon also says that the resurrected Jesus came to America to preach the gospel to the descendants of the people of Judah and Israel. Most Latter-Day Saints consider the Book of Mormon superior to the Bible.

Joseph Smith wrote The Doctrine and Covenants, which includes special revelations given to Smith by God, and The Pearl of Great Price, which contains the Articles of Faith and Smith’s autobiography. The president of the Latter-Day Saints can receive special revelation from God, so the interpretation of Smith’s publications can and has been changed or altered by the president.

Are Latter-Day Saints Christians?
Though they disagree with some important aspects of traditional Christianity, most Latter-Day Saints consider themselves Christians, but not Protestants. They do not interpret the Bible in a way consistent with classical Christianity; and they reject key components of classical Christianity, such as the traditional natures of God and Jesus Christ, the concept of the Trinity, the doctrine of original sin, the traditional concept of the kingdom of God, and the doctrine of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ. They claim to be the only legitimate church of Jesus Christ. Therefore, they are not Christians in the same ways as Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, and Protestants are Christians. As a rule, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints does not cooperate with other churches.

Jehovah’s Witnesses
Jehovah’s Witnesses are a twentieth century religious group founded by Charles Taze Russell. He along with Joseph Rutherford, Nathan Knorr, and Frederick Franz, formed the organizational and theological framework for what would become a worldwide religion.

Disenchantment and Prophecy
Russell came from a Presbyterian and Congregational background, but found himself increasingly disenchanted with the doctrine of his church. He was an avid student of the Bible, but came to reject traditional teachings on the Trinity, the second coming of Christ, and the existence of hell. What claimed his attention was biblical chronology and prophecy. Russell and the other three leaders regarded both Protestants and Catholics as apostate and declared that Jehovah’s Witnesses were the only true Christians.

They created a religion fired by prophecies of the second coming of Christ, complete with specific dates and requirements for salvation. When the dates passed without incident, the prophecies were reinterpreted to show the errors in calculation and to project the next date.

The Work of the Few and of the Many
 Witnesses believe in governance by a few. Their world headquarters in Brooklyn, New York, is governed by fourteen to eighteen men who preside over decisions that affect all Jehovah’s Witnesses worldwide. Since they speak for Jehovah and Jehovah cannot be questioned, their authority is not to be challenged in any way.

Not only is governance by the few, but so is salvation. Witnesses believe that only 144,000 people (including the Governing Board) will achieve heavenly salvation. [They base their projections on a literal reading of Revelation 20]. Other faithful Witnesses, the other sheep, will receive a restored and cleansed earth at the end of time, but will not reside or reign with King Jesus in heaven.

The way to achieve salvation is to be an active and effective missionary. All Witnesses have an obligation to evangelize door to door, to distribute the Witness writings, and to bring in new members. They are trained for this ministry.

Careful records are kept at the New York headquarters to keep track of every hour of each person’s missionary activity. Ten hours a month is the required minimum. An auxiliary pioneer will work sixty hours a month and a
regular pioneer about ninety. The time spent in proselytizing has a direct bearing on the quality of a Witnesses afterlife.

Witnesses and the Bible
Jehovah’s Witnesses are discouraged from reading the Bible by itself. Charles Taze Russell was a prolific writer; his works included *Studies in the Scriptures*. Russell concluded that if a person read the Bible alone, he or she would be destined to find only the darkness. By reading *Studies in the Scriptures*, with or without a Bible as a companion piece, a Christian could find the true light.

Witnesses believe that the Bible is the ultimate source of authority for life, and they accept their own translation, *The New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*. They consider the Bible to be an organizational book that can be understood only in light of the organization of Jehovah’s Witnesses. *Studies in the Scriptures: The New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*; and other publications of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, such as *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* provide the basis for study.

Witnesses’ Beliefs
Jehovah’s Witnesses believe that Jehovah, the one and only person of God, created Jesus as the Archangel Michael, who created everything else. Jesus’ life force was transferred from heaven to Mary, and he was born a perfect human being. Unlike traditional Christianity, Jehovah’s Witnesses do not believe that Jesus was the incarnation of God or the messiah. Rather, he was anointed, at his baptism, as Jehovah’s high priest. At the Resurrection, Jesus who was now a spirit Son, was raised to heaven; his physical body was removed by Jehovah, and he returned to his identity as Michael.

The end times claim much of the Witnesses’ attention. Through a complex series of biblical interpretations, they have predicted the dates of the beginning of the heavenly era and the chronology of the end times; the reign of Jesus Christ after the Resurrection, the victory of Jesus over Satan at the heavenly battle of Armageddon, the presence of the 144,000 elect who will exist forever with Jehovah and Christ in heaven, the existence of the faithful Witness in paradise on earth, and the total destruction of all other people.

Witnesses believe that Satan is to be feared, especially while he is in control of sinful earth. Witnesses reject false religions (any religion other than their own), political involvement of any kind, honoring national symbols, military service, sexual temptation, and blood transfusions. Prohibitions against honoring national symbols and military service have led to their persecution in many countries.

Witnesses tend to think of themselves over against other religious groups. They focus on being a close-knit group and on taking care of one another within the family and the Kingdom Hall. They operate no hospitals, nursing homes, or educational institutions. Although Witnesses will go to doctors and hospitals for care, they refuse blood donations and transfusions even if they would die without them.

Jehovah’s Witnesses are interracial, interethnic, and deeply committed to ministry. Witnesses are strongly encouraged to maintain a healthy lifestyle and are discouraged from using alcohol, other drugs, and tobacco, or from yielding to any influence that might prompt immoral sexual behavior.

Seventh-Day Adventist Church
Adventism is the belief in the imminent return of Christ to earth. The Adventist movement has appeared several times in the history of the Christian church. Most people who emphasize the imminent return of Christ belong to conventional Christian churches. However, in the first half of the nineteenth century, Adventism became a strong force in religious thinking.

William Miller, a lay Bible student, began the first Adventist movement. The movement began in existing congregations with people who took a renewed interest in the advent of Christ. It was not Miller’s intention to
form a separate church.

Miller calculated from Scripture the precise time of Christ’s return; he set the date between March 21, 1843 and March 21, 1844. When the year came and went with no Day of Atonement, a second date was calculated; and it too passed quietly. Many followers were disappointed and left the movement after March 21, 1844. More returned to their former churches when the second date passed. However, some of the Adventists continued to meet for further Bible study and ministry. The largest and most successful groups became the Seventh-Day Adventist Church.

The Seventh-Day Adventists are known for conducting their worship services on Saturday, but the Saturday observance is not unique to them. The Jewish Sabbath or day of rest is on Saturday (from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday). There is a Seventh-Day Baptist tradition as well, and many Roman Catholic and Protestant churches conduct services on Saturday evenings.

The Seventh-Day Adventist communities stress obedience to all of God’s laws in both the Old and New Testaments. They adhere to many Old Testament regulations such as some of the dietary regulations, in addition to the Ten Commandments. Seventh-Day Adventists abstain from coffee, soft drinks, tobacco, and alcohol. Otherwise, the doctrines and practices of the church are similar to conservative evangelical Protestantism.

Faithful Adventists believe in tithing, giving the church ten percent of their income. Tithes support both the day-to-day administration and the missions of the church. Government of the denomination is connectional. Local congregations are organized into conferences that appoint local pastors.

**Protestant Churches**

**Lutheran Churches**

On October 21, 1517, a German monk named Martin Luther wrote ninety-five essays describing points of disagreement he had with the teachings and practice of the Roman Catholic Church. He nailed the essays on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg. Luther intended that the essays be used for discussion and debate. But he was eventually branded a heretic and was excommunicated by the Roman Catholic Church.

Martin Luther sought refuge in Wartburg in the castle of a German prince, Elector Frederick. There Luther translated the Bible into German. His translation and commentary further challenged the Roman Catholic Church, its interpretation of Scripture, and its ecclesiastical control.

In Germany and in the Scandinavian countries, which are today Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden, the Reformation continued in ways suggested by the beliefs of Martin Luther. The reformers focused on preaching the gospel and administering the sacraments in the native language of the people rather than in Latin. Central to Luther’s thinking was the idea that people are saved, or made right, by the grace of God alone, not by gifts to the church, manipulation of the clergy, or good works. This concept is called justification or salvation by faith.

Scripture, for Luther, was the ultimate authority in matters of faith and practice; by affirming Scripture alone (sola scriptura), he challenged the authority of the clergy. He also challenged their power by asserting that Christians are bound together in a priesthood of all believers and that all Christians are responsible for discipline and service. Luther and his associates wrote several documents that helped explain their beliefs: the longer and shorter catechisms (1529), the Augsburg Confession (1530), Samlcald Articles of Faith (1537), and the Formula of Concord (1577).

The word Lutheran does not refer as much to Martin Luther as it does to an era or school of thought within Christianity.
Presbyterian Churches
The family of churches called Presbyterian, Reformed, and United have a common heritage in the Calvinist tradition. John Calvin was a Frenchman who helped lead the Protestant Reformation from Geneva, Switzerland. As a young man, Calvin was influenced by the teachings of Martin Luther. He broke with the Roman Catholic Church and systematically worked out his beliefs. In 1536, at the age of twenty-seven, he published the first edition of *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, one of the most influential works of the reformation.

The reformed tradition, which includes the Presbyterian Church and some United churches, is based on Calvin's theology. Calvin accepted many of Luther's teachings. He believed in the authority of Scripture and in salvation by the grace of God alone. Calvin's unique contribution to the Reformation came in his emphasis on the sovereignty (the supreme, independent power) of God and also on the redemption of the social order. Calvin was especially concerned that the social, political, economic world be aligned with God’s purposes; he spent years in Geneva trying to reform the city so that it would be run as a theocracy, a government ruled by God.

Calvin's whole thought revolved around the concept of God's sovereignty and justice. God, according to Calvin, was the sovereign and eternal ruler of the world. Other people have summarized his theological system in five main points, sometimes called the TULIP system.

- **Total Depravity** – Calvin believed in original sin. Human beings are completely incapable of being the creatures God expects them to be; people can't help sinning.
- **Unconditional Predestination** – Salvation is unconditional. It is not based on merit, but only on the grace of through Jesus Christ. Predestination means that God saves up front, before we can even try to save ourselves.
- **Limited Atonement** – Christ’s death and resurrection is for the saved, the people chosen by God to be united or reconciled with God.
- **Irresistible Grace** – Because God is sovereign, people cannot reject or resist God’s grace.
- **Perseverance of the Saints** – Perseverance of the saints simply means hanging in there, trying to live as the people of God in a sinful world.

Presbyterians believe in two sacraments: Baptism and Communion. Presbyterians also put a strong focus on education and have founded a number of colleges and universities around the world. The Presbyterian Church is governed by a presbytery. Presbyter comes from a Greek word that means elder. Each church elects lay people to be ruling elders. They serve on the session, which makes most of the decisions about the life and ministry of the congregation. Elders also represent the congregation in the presbytery, a governing body that is composed of ministers and elders representing all the churches in an area. Synods serve large areas.

Anglican Churches
The Church of England remained intact after the Reformation, and grew as the British Empire expanded overseas and as missionary activity stretched into lands and cultures whose people did not speak English. (In fact, most Anglicans in the world today do not speak English as their first language).

The Anglican Tradition
The Anglican Church was originally the Church of England (Anglican means English). Until 1543, the English church was part of the Roman Catholic Church. At that time, it recognized the English king, Henry VIII, instead of the pope, as the head of the Church of England; and the English church became the Church of England.

The Anglican Church uses the term Protestant to distinguish itself from Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy. Although it has retained much of the liturgy and the lines of authority of the Roman Catholic Church, it has embraced its own particular beliefs and practices regarding the Lord's Supper and the priesthood.
Of particular importance is the Anglican understanding of apostolic succession of bishops, which is also called the historic episcopate. Like the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches, Anglicans believe that their bishops maintain a direct and unbroken line of succession back to the original apostles. While the importance of apostolic succession is debated, Anglicans tend to consider it an asset because it gives the ordained ministry or priesthood a symbolic meaning and dignified character. It also allows the Anglican Church to serve as a bridge between other Protestant denominations and the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches. In recent years, most Anglican churches have authorized the ordination of women as priests and bishops. The relationship between the Anglican Church and the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches has been disrupted because the Roman and Orthodox Churches resolutely deny the possibility of ordaining women into a ministry of apostolic succession. One of the reasons offered is that all the apostles were male and their successors must also be male. The role of bishops is so important in the Anglican Church that many denominations, which are often organized along national boundaries, are called Episcopal. Other churches are referred to as Anglican churches.

**Anglican and Episcopal Organization**

In the Anglican and Episcopal Churches, the priest is vested with the pastoral oversight of the congregation. The priest is called a rector, which means a ruler or vicar, a representative of the bishop. With the help of the vestry, the local administrative body, he or she administers the local affairs of the congregation. Churches, called parishes, are clustered in a regional diocese, under the spiritual and administrative leadership of an elected bishop. Each diocese is autonomous, but representatives from all the dioceses meet every three years to deliberate and to cooperate on common ministries and administration, such as denominational education, mission, communication, and stewardship, as well as social and financial programs.

**Anglican and Episcopal Liturgy and Beliefs**

The Anglican and Episcopal Churches are highly liturgical, profoundly influenced by the Book of Common Prayer, which contains the liturgy and prayers for both corporate and private worship.

The Lord’s Supper is one of the two sacraments that Jesus Christ commanded his followers to continue. The Anglican and Episcopal Churches and the Roman Catholic Church differ significantly in their understanding of Communion, particularly concerning the real or the symbolic presence of Christ in the bread and wine. Roman Catholics believe that when the elements are consecrated, they become the actual body and blood of Christ. Anglicans believe that the elements exist together with the body and the blood of Christ.

Anglicans and Episcopalians also celebrate the sacrament of baptism for both infants and adults. Baptism can be administered by pouring, in which the water is poured, usually from a pitcher; by sprinkling, in which the priest dips his or her hand in the water and sprinkles it on the person’s head; or by immersion, in which the whole person is submerged in the water. Many other Protestant denominations permit all three ways of administering baptism.

In addition to baptism and Communion, Anglicans, like Roman Catholics, recognize as sacraments, confirmation, penance (confession and pardon), orders (ordination), marriage, and unction (prayers for healing). Sacraments other than baptism and Communion are commanded by Scripture or tradition, but not by Jesus.

The liturgies of the Episcopal Church are either high or low. High refers to highly traditional, formalized worship. High church worship tends to involve the congregation’s senses; priests use music, chimes or bells, incense, pageantry and vestments (special clothing) to communicate and symbolize the meaning of the liturgy. Low church worship has a more evangelistic flavor and is more informal.

The Anglican and Episcopal Churches are creedal churches; they accept both the Apostle’s Creed and the Nicene Creed as the basis for belief. In addition, Anglicans accept the Bible, the tradition of the church, and human reason as sources of authority for faith and life.
Methodist Churches

The family of churches called Methodist is distinct from other Christians partly because of its roots in the English culture of the 1800s. At that time, the Church of England had grown away from the common people, who were victims of poverty and corruption.

John Wesley was born in Epworth, England in 1703. He was so deeply religious, disciplined, and methodical in his spiritual and practical life that in his youth, earned the nickname that would identify a tradition in the Christian church: Methodist.

Wesley was an ordained priest in the Church of England and engaged in an active ministry. After he returned from a depressing and ill-fated trip to the American colonies, Wesley had a spiritual experience that brought to him a deep assurance of salvation by and in Christ. The experience brought a new zeal to his commitment to Christ.

The excitement and vitality of Wesley’s preaching offended staid and formal church officials, and soon John Wesley was kept from preaching in church pulpits. He began to preach outside in streets and fields, where thousands of commoners heard the good news of Jesus Christ.

The people, many of whom stood outside the ministry of the Anglican Church, hungered for more. Wesley organized them into small clusters, called classes and societies, for the purpose of study, prayer, and spiritual support. Lay groups remain a vital part of ministry in the Methodist tradition.

In the Methodist tradition, the range of theological beliefs is diverse. Methodist, Methodist-related churches, and most other Protestant denominations have in common the conviction that God is merciful and loving; that God is three-in-one (God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit are one God, yet distinct); and that there are two sacraments, baptism and Communion.

The Methodist tradition emphasizes an understanding of God’s grace, which is evident in our lives in three ways. Prevenient grace is the love of God that surrounds all of humanity, even before we are aware of God. Through God’s justifying grace, people truly repent, change, and are transformed by God’s forgiveness into what the Bible calls a new creation. In new birth, God’s sanctifying grace draws us toward Christian perfection, which Wesley described as being filled with the love of God. Some Methodist and Methodist-related groups emphasize sanctifying grace. These groups are known as Holiness churches.

Methodists, to one degree or another, are known for their willingness to understand and accept different theological points of view. While there is a diversity of belief within the tradition, Methodist Christians rely on Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience as sources of authority in faith and practice.

- **Scripture** – The Bible is the record of God’s acts in creation and in life. Scripture is the most important source of guidance for the Christian life.
- **Tradition** – The community of faith checks and reexamines its traditions by returning to Scripture. The people called Methodist look at the history and practice of the church and at the biblical message in light of contemporary experience.
- **Reason** – Methodists believe that God has given people the capacity to think and that their minds are an asset in formulating and affirming their religious beliefs.
- **Experience** – Methodists respect the spiritual experience of individuals and congregations and recognize that experience can convey new insight into the will of God. Methodist Christians believe in regular prayer, devotion, and Scripture reading.

See Chapter 9 for more about United Methodism.
Baptist Churches
Of all the families of Protestantism, Baptists are the most difficult to describe because Baptists consider each local church an autonomous unit.

History
Some Baptists believe that the Baptist Church has no founder but Christ and that Baptists have been preaching and practicing the faith since the days of John the Baptist. However, Baptists churches as we know them first appeared in Holland and England in the early 1600s. Even then, there were many different churches in the Baptist family. The Pedobaptists baptized children (pedo means child). The Antipedobaptists, who thought that infant baptism was unscriptural, rebaptized adults who had been baptized as infants.

Many Baptists fled to England because of persecution, largely at the hands of continental European Protestants, and merged with early English separatists. Together they established the roots of modern Baptist churches. Many later fled England due to religious persecution.

Different Beliefs and Practices
Although Baptist belief and theology covers a lot of ground, there are core principles of faith that are held by most Baptists.

• Baptists believe in the inspiration of the Bible and in its trustworthiness as the sole rule of life. Conservative Baptists adhere to the literal truth of the Bible, while moderates believe that the Scriptures are open to personal interpretation and that some passages in the Bible may be symbolic.
• Baptists confess Jesus Christ as the Lord of life.
• Baptists affirm the right and freedom of every individual to approach God without an intermediary, such as a priest.
• With other Protestant denominations, Baptists believe that salvation is the province of God. We are saved by God’s grace and by the power of the Holy Spirit, and not by any merit of our own.
• Baptists practice both baptism and Holy Communion, but many consider them ordinances, commands of Christ, rather than sacraments. Today, virtually all Baptists would be considered Antipedobaptists because they regard infant baptism as unscriptural. Baptism by immersion takes place when the individual accepts the lordship of Jesus Christ.
• Baptist theology says that all people stand in need of redemption from sin and that redemption is possible through the law of God and through the expectation of God’s final triumph over the power of sin.

Baptists also have in common principles about Christian life and practice. Moderate churches allow women to hold church offices; some will even ordain women. Conservatives often oppose women in positions of authority.

Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches
The Christian church began in New Testament times with the evangelizing work of the disciples and apostles of Jesus Christ. As the good news spread, converts formed fellowship groups in their homes; then they formed congregations and eventually church groups with leaders called presbyters, or elders, and deacons. By the end of the 2nd century, the pastoral offices became part of a structured ministry, in which ministers were ordained, or set apart, and bishops, overseers, presided over the churches in particular areas.

In 325 C.E., bishops from all over the Christian world met at Nicaea, a small town in what is now Turkey, and hammered out a statement of beliefs about the nature of God and the church. Their statement became the Nicene Creed.

The Christian church grew for nearly one thousand years before significant cultural and political differences led to a major breach. The church was so large that it crossed many nations and included many different peoples,
languages, and cultures. The church in the West, centered in Rome, used Latin in worship and in the conduct of business. The church in the East was centered in, but not ruled from, Constantinople (now Istanbul, Turkey); it employed the Greek language. The cultural differences, in addition to political and theological differences, brought the tension between the two ancient Christian traditions to a breaking point.

The church in the West insisted on strict organizational unity and was led by the pope in Rome. The word pope comes from the Latin word meaning papa or father; sometimes the pope is called the Holy Father. Obedience to Rome and to the pope was a condition of legitimacy; the true church was the Roman Church. In deference to the supremacy of the pope in Rome, the western church became known as the Roman Catholic (universal) church.

On the other hand, bishops in the East believed that true unity was found not in rigid compliance with Roman authority, but in the continuity of belief. Teaching and being faithful to the historic doctrines of the church would be the foundation of Christian unity. Orthodoxy means correct belief. Christianity in the East became known as the Eastern Orthodox Church.

The Great Schism, the first formal breach between the western and eastern churches, occurred in 1050 C.E. Worldwide Christian unity came to an end. In the West, now Europe, the pope's control and authority increased in matters of organization and faith. The Eastern Orthodox Church, while insisting on a common framework of belief, allowed independent government of the churches within the nations or among ethnic groups. Eastern Orthodox Churches were in the area that is today Greece, Turkey, Russia, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Georgia, and Albania. So within Eastern Orthodoxy there emerged the Greek Orthodox Church, the Russian Orthodox Church, and so forth.

**Roman Catholicism: Built upon Peter the Rock**

Jesus said to Peter, “You are Peter and on this rock I will build my church” (Matthew 16:18). The name Peter means rock. Roman Catholics believe that Jesus intended the Christian church to be built on Peter’s leadership. Tradition holds that Peter journeyed to Rome and became bishop of the Christian church there. The Roman Church teaches that when Peter died, his successors, the bishops in Rome who followed him, possessed the same authority and responsibility for leadership of the universal or catholic church.

Roman Catholics think of themselves as members of the original, undivided church. They have a sense of belonging to one another across national boundaries and of having a distinct history. While recognizing other Christians, the Roman Church believes that it is the core of the whole people of God and that the church is united under the authority of the pope.

Eastern Orthodoxy also understands itself to be the continuing presence of the original, undivided church. While it recognizes the pope as the successor to Peter, the bishop of Rome, it rejects the claim that the pope exercises authority over all Christians throughout the world. Protestants do not recognize the pope’s jurisdiction either and generally hold that the rock Jesus talked about refers to Peter’s faith rather than to his office of bishop in Rome.

The government of the Roman Catholic Church is a hierarchy, a chain of command headed by the pope. Moreover, since 1870, it has been an official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church that when the pope speaks ex cathedra, he is infallible in matters of faith and morals. Ex cathedra means from the chair or from the authority of his office. Infallible means incapable of error. Neither Eastern Orthodox nor Protestants accept the view that the pope is infallible at any time.

The national or ethnic churches of Eastern Orthodoxy are governed by bishops. The bishops of Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria, Moscow, and Jerusalem have authority over other bishops and are known as patriarchs or fathers. The Ecumenical Patriarch, the patriarch of Constantinople, is the honorary head of the Eastern Church; but he does not function with the same authority that the pope does.
Sacred Scripture: Written Tradition

Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, and Protestants all teach that the Bible contains the word of God. Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox believe that not all the truths delivered by God to the church are contained in the Bible. Some of the teachings of Christ have been passed on to us through the traditions of the church, through the interpretation of the bishops and other church leaders. The recorded traditions of the church are considered to be revealed by God and are regarded as sacred scripture.

In addition to the sixty-six books of the Bible that are accepted as canon or authoritative by most Protestant churches, the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches also accept the Deuterocanon (second books), which is also called the Apocrypha (hidden books). Many of the books of the Apocrypha are thought to be additions to books in the Old Testament and seem to echo its themes and literature. Many Protestants have used the Apocrypha for study, devotion and preaching. Anglicans and Lutherans continue this practice. None of the books of the Deuterocanon appear in the Jewish Bible.

Mary: Mother of God

Like most Christians, Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox honor the saints, the holy ones and heroes of the faith. But they single out one saint for special veneration: the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus. Because they believe that Jesus Christ is God, they refer to Mary as the Mother of God. Since the church is the body of Christ, Mary is seen as the mother of the church. She is also called the Queen of Peace and the Queen of Heaven. Venerating Mary is not the same as worshiping God, but it does represent a kind of devotion that is unfamiliar to Protestants.

Roman Catholics believe in and teach the doctrine of Immaculate Conception, that Mary was conceived and born without the stain of original sin. Neither Eastern Orthodox nor Protestants subscribe to the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox believe in the Perpetual Virginity of Mary, that Mary refrained from having sexual relations even after Jesus was born.

Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox also believe in the Assumption: When Mary died, she was not buried; instead her physical body was taken up into heaven. Eastern Orthodox believe but do not accept as official dogma Perpetual Virginity or the Assumption. Protestants accept the virgin birth, the idea that Mary was the virgin mother of Jesus; but they reject the notions of Immaculate Conception, Perpetual Virginity, and Assumption.

Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox, with many Protestant denominations, believe in the communion of saints, the idea that the Christian community spans every time and place and includes those in Christ who have died, as well as those who are still living. Because the saints who have died are still members of the church, Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox believe that requesting prayers of a saint is as natural as asking any other church member for prayers.

The Seven Sacraments

Sacraments are outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual works of grace or God’s favor. In the Eastern Orthodox Church, the sacraments are often called mysteries. Most Protestant churches celebrate two sacraments because Scripture records only two that Jesus instituted himself and command his disciples to observe: Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, Communion, or the Eucharist (thanksgiving). Some churches, like the Baptist churches, use the term ordinances, which mean commands, rather than sacraments. Most Christians believe that baptism washes away the stain of original sin and seals the individual in the body of Christ, the church. It is the one sacrament that practically all Christians practice.

Christians understand the Lord’s Supper in a variety of ways. Many Protestant churches teach that the giving and receiving of bread and wine (the juice of the fruit of the vine), the elements of Communion, accompanied by Christ’s words, is a sign or symbol of the self-giving of Christ as the suffering and Living Lord. By sharing
a meal in the Lord’s name, we remember the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus. Roman Catholics usually call the Lord’s Supper the Mass, and Eastern Orthodox usually refer to it as the Divine Liturgy. Both believe that when Jesus said, “This is my body; this is my blood: he actually gave himself to the disciples. The Last Supper was true communion with Jesus. The elements of the Eucharist are not symbolic, but the actual body and blood of Jesus.

Penance, which includes confession and absolution, or forgiveness of sins, is often called the reconciliation of the penitent, the person who is sorry for what he or she has done. While Protestants do not generally consider penance a sacrament, reconciliation is practiced in a variety of ways in Protestant churches – for example, through pastoral counseling and through corporate prayers of confession and works of pardon. In the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches, penance is the sacrament through which God heals and forgives people for sins committed after baptism.

Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox also celebrate as sacraments anointing the sick, confirmation, and marriage. Although many Protestant churches do not regard them as sacraments, many think of them as sacred or sacramental moments.

Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox make more of ordination (which means to set apart) than most other Christian churches. They believe that when a person is ordained, he is marked with a character that allows him to act as a representative of Christ. In Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches, only males are ordained. Women may participate in other ministries. They may be nuns or lay leaders, but they may not be deacons, priests, or bishops. The Protestant understanding of ordination differs among the churches, but is generally understood as setting apart and empowering a person for ministry to the people of God. Most, but not all Protestant churches ordain women.

Orthodox Christianity: Heaven on Earth

Because Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy were one church for a thousand years, they have a number of elements in common: the Deuterocanon, the veneration of the Virgin Mary, the sacraments, and a male priesthood. But they also have a number of important differences, most of which are differences in degree or emphasis.

First, in the Eastern Orthodox Church the language about God is mysterious, that is, it conveys the majesty and transcendence of God in terms that more often describe what God is not. For example, the Eucharistic prayer speaks of God as inconceivable, invisible, and incomprehensible, yet God is known and present.

While most Christian churches are Trinitarian (they believe that God is one and three: Father, Son and Holy Spirit), the Orthodox emphasize the role and work of the Spirit. God acts throughout all time to bring people to salvation. The aim of the Orthodox Christian’s life is to acquire the Holy Spirit.

Second, Orthodox Christians stress the Incarnation, God’s coming to humankind in the person of Jesus. They believe that God became human so humans could become divine. The Eastern Church believes in deification, the idea that people have personal access to God and through prayer and participation in the Eucharist, they can become unified with Christ, who is himself a union of humanity and divinity.

Third, Eastern Orthodoxy is best understood through its elaborate and ancient tradition of worship. Music, chanting, colorful icons (two dimensional representations of saints and windows into heaven), and clouds of incense involve all five sense in the Divine Liturgy. The Orthodox achieve in worship a feeling of the presence of God. To participate in the Divine Liturgy is to experience the beauty and majesty of God’s heavenly court. The church is heaven on earth. It is the otherworldliness of worship that makes evident God’s presence.
Animism
The term animism is derived from the Latin word \textit{anima} meaning \textit{breath} or \textit{soul}.

“In anthropology, animism can be considered to be the original human religion, being defined simply as belief in the existence of spiritual beings. It dates back to the earliest humans and continues to exist today, making it the oldest form of religious belief on earth. It is characteristic of aboriginal and native cultures, yet it can be practiced by anyone who believes in spirituality but does not proscribe to any specific organized religion. The basis for animism is acknowledgment that there is a spiritual realm which humans share the universe with. The concepts that humans possess souls and that souls have life apart from human bodies before and after death are central to animism, along with the ideas that animals, plants, and celestial bodies have spirits.

“Animistic gods often are immortalized by mythology explaining the creation of fire, wind, water, man, animals, and other natural earthly things. Although specific beliefs of animism vary widely, similarities between the characteristics of gods and goddesses and rituals practiced by animistic societies exist. The presence of holy men or women, visions, trancing, dancing, sacred items, and sacred spaces for worship, and the connection felt to the spirits of ancestors are characteristic of animistic societies.’

Scriptures of the World’s Religions
Scripture is a writing, or more usually, a collection of writings that a religious community declares to be its holy book. Scripture may tell about the beginning and end of time or about the life and teachings of a variety of holy people, but especially the founder of the tradition. It may also define what people in the religious community believe and how they should live.

Some faith communities believe that their scriptures are divine revelation, that they were given directly by God or that the people who received them were divinely inspired. Other religions believe that their scriptures were written by wise and holy people who had special insight into truth and reality. Whether received through revelation or from holy people, scripture is often the supreme authority for worship, doctrine, and behavior. It is read and recited in public worship; and it is studied, read, memorized, and meditated on by individuals looking for devotional and spiritual edification. Scriptures are often revealed in a sacred language and must be maintained in that language. Other scriptures can be translated and disseminated.

Scripture is usually canonized – that is, its content is determined in a fixed form by the community. Most scriptures are a closed canon; once the community makes a decision about the content of scripture, nothing can be added to or taken away from it. Many scriptures were transmitted orally long before they were written down.

Scriptures need to be interpreted by the community so commentaries and theories of interpretation develop and are used by the community to understand and apply the scriptures. In recent times and primarily in Western traditions, theories of interpretation, such as historical and literary criticism, have been developed and applied to the study of scriptures. Some people, liberals or modernists, accept the new ways of interpreting scripture; but others, conservatives or fundamentalists, reject them and affirm traditional interpretations.

Judaism
The collection of thirty-nine books that form the Jewish canon of scripture is known by the acronym TANAKH. The consonants in TANAKH stand for the names of the three parts of scripture: Torah (Law, the five books of Moses), Navi’im (Prophets, twenty-one prophetic books), and Kethuvim (Writings, thirteen books of various literary genre). The books of the Tanakh were written over a period of more than a thousand years and were accepted as a single canon early in the Common Era. Tanakh is also known as the Written Torah, and its Hebrew texts are treated with great respect. Torah scrolls are still handwritten by scribes, they are kept covered in the ark in the front of a synagogue or temple, and they read as the high point of the prayer service. The reader uses a special pointer so as not to touch the page.
In addition to the Written Torah, there is the Oral Torah, which Jews believe was revealed to Moses at Mount Sinai and was passed on in oral form until it was gradually recorded in the Mishnah (3rd century C.E.) and then in the Gemara (7th century C.E.). The Mishnah and the Gemara form the Talmud (Learning) which has been the basis for legal, philosophical, and ethical teaching in Judaism. Over the centuries, rabbis, Jewish teachers, have developed and are still developing the Midrash, Codes, Responsa, and Commentaries for the purpose of interpreting and applying the Torah to daily life. Studying the Torah is one of the main activities of any serious Jew.

Modern interpretations of the Hebrew Bible vary. Orthodox Jews are concerned with observing, without omission or compromise, all the teachings and laws of both the Written and the Oral Torah. In contrast, the Reform position is that not all of the laws are binding on contemporary Jews in the same way the ethical teachings are. Reform Jews give more weight to the Written Torah over the Oral Torah. The Orthodox always read the Torah in Hebrew, whereas the Reform will read it in their native language.

**Christianity**
The Christian Bible is composed of two parts: the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament is the same text as the Hebrew Tanakh, although the books are in a slightly different order. Early Christians understood themselves as belonging to the Jewish tradition which held the books of the Torah, Prophets, and Writings as scripture. It should be clear that the term *Old Testament* is a Christian designation and is not accepted by Jews. Many Christians now refer to the Old Testament as the Hebrew Bible.

The New Testament contains twenty-seven books, produced by the early church as a testimony to Jesus Christ. It contains four gospels or accounts of the life and teachings of Jesus; Acts, a history of the early church; and twenty-two letters, about half of which are attributed to the apostle Paul.

Christians agree that the Bible is the Word of God and that it is the highest authority in matters of faith and practice, although interpretations of its meaning may vary widely. Orthodox Christians and the Roman Catholic Church have affirmed both that the Church has the authority to interpret Scripture and that the Bible needs to be interpreted by the Church. Protestant reformers stated that the Bible is the sole authority for Christians and that it should be interpreted by each individual. Today, understandings of biblical interpretation are more apt to be divided between a fundamentalist position of inerrancy and an acceptance of literary-critical methods for the study of Scripture.

**Islam**
Islam sees itself as the fulfillment of revelations given earlier to Jews and Christians. Islam believes that God gave scripture to particular prophets: the Torah to Prophet Moses, the Psalms to Prophet David, the Gospel to Prophet Jesus, and finally the Qur’an to Prophet Muhammad. The Qur’an admonishes Muslims to believe in all the Prophets and all the sacred scriptures given to them. However, Muslims claim that the original Torah, Psalms, and Gospel of the Prophets no longer exist and that the present ones contain errors and misinterpretations. Therefore, Muslims do not accept the Jewish and Christian Scriptures as they now stand. In contrast, they affirm that the Qur’an is true in every detail; that it has experienced no corruption; and that in its Arabic version, it is exactly like the original copy that is with God in Heaven.

The Qur’an (Recitation) is composed of 114 Surahs (chapters), some of which are long and some quite short. Its sacred language is Arabic; and although it has been translated, it is the true Qur’an only in Arabic. When it is recited in prayers and worship, it must be recited in Arabic. Among Muslims, public recitation of the Qur’an is a highly developed and prized skill.

The content of the Qur’an was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad through the Angel Gabriel beginning in 610 C.E. and ending with the Prophet’s death in 632. Within a decade after Muhammad’s death, the present text was established and authorized and the Surahs were arranged in their present order, from the longest to
the shortest. The Qur’an contains short versions of many of the stories in the Hebrew Bible; references to the Prophet Jesus and Mary, his mother; moral exhortations; and laws. Many commentaries have been written to interpret the Qur’an even though Islam has steadfastly rejected criticism of the text, especially by non-fundamentalists. Qur’aranic schools for young children, where the Qur’an is memorized, are found throughout the Islamic world.

**Hinduism**

In Hinduism, there are two types of sacred writings: *Sruti* and *Smriti*. *Sruti* is revelation; its texts were heard in ages past by *rishis* or wise men. *Smriti* is tradition; it contains ideas and teachings of religious value that were conceived by humans and have been passed on from generation to generation.

The best known texts of the *Sruti* are the Vedas and Upanishads. There are four Vedas, which contain hymns and poems dedicated to various gods and to the seed of all later religious knowledge and wisdom. The Upanishads are the culmination and completion of the Vedas. They are philosophical treatises that describe the way to enlightenment and liberation through wisdom. There are about a dozen major Upanishads, and they are even now the pinnacle of Hindu thought and the basis of all later philosophical interpretations. The *Sruti* can be dated from 1200 to 400 B.C.E.

The *Smriti* is larger and more diverse and is not a closed canon. Although its content is not precisely delineated, most Hindus agree that it contains two great epics, *Mahabharata* (the longest book in the world) and the *Ramayana*. Within the *Mahabharata* is perhaps the most popular and influential book in Hinduism, the *Bhagavad Gita* (Song of the Lord [Krishna]). It teaches the way of liberation through disciplined activity and devotion to God.

*Smriti* also contains legal codes, *Puranas* (stories of gods like Krishna and Shiva), sectarian scriptures, and the writings of the six schools of philosophy. The Vedas are written in Sanskrit and in many other Indian languages and dialects. The Vedas are the highest authority in Hinduism, but most people cannot understand their archaic language. The priests and scholars know the language and use it in their worship. The epics and *Purana* are more popular, although they lack the formal authority of the Vedas.

**Buddhism**

Each of the three branches of Buddhism – Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana – has its own canon. Each is actually more like a library than a single text. At the Fifth Buddhist Council in Burma, in 1871, the Theravada scriptures were engraved on 729 stones. The Chinese canon contains nearly 100,000 pages of printed text.

**The Three Baskets of Theravada Scripture**

The Theravada scripture is known as *Tipitaka* (Three Baskets), and its sacred language is Pali. It has three parts or “baskets”: *Vinaya, Sutta,* and *Abhidhamma*. *Vinaya* contains rules and regulations for the organization of the Buddhist community (Sangha) and for the lives of monks and nuns. The *Sutta* contains sermons and discourses of the Buddha and is the most important text. Theravadins believe that the *Sutta* contains the actual words of the Buddha. The *Abhidhamma* is a later part of the canon and gives philosophical and psychological interpretations of the Buddha’s teachings. The *Tipitaka* is authoritative for Theravada life and practice; worship consists primarily of monks’ recitation of the scriptures in Pali.

**Mahayana Scripture**

The Mahayana accept the *Tipitaka* as scripture, but they believe that other later writings are equally meaningful and true. The Mahayana canon includes many other sutras (later teachings of the Buddha) and shastras (commentaries and explanations of the Buddha’s teachings), which are written in Sanskrit rather than in Pali. As Mahayana moved into East Asia, many Chinese and Japanese works were added to the canon. Theoretically, the Mahayana canon is not closed, so other writings can be added as truth continues to be discovered.
Vajrayana Scripture
Vajrayana accepts both the Tipitaka and most Mahayana writings as introductory, for people at the early stages of Buddhist truth. Vajrayana accepts a third body of texts, called *Tantra*, which were written in or translated into Tibetan. The Vajrayana canon consists of two parts, the Kanjur (sutras) and the Tanjar (commentaries). In Vajrayana, they are believed to contain the highest and most esoteric teachings of the Buddha.
Glossary

Judaism

GEMARA is one of the early (7th century C.E.) records of the oral tradition of the Torah. The Mishnah and the Gemara form the Talmud (Learning), which has been the basis for legal, philosophical, and ethical thinking in Judaism.

KETHUVIM is the Writings, thirteen books of various literary genre that form the Hebrew canon of scripture known as the TANAKH.

MISHNAH, written around the 3rd century C.E., is the first codified version of the oral tradition of the Torah. It contains ethical and ritual teachings.

MIDRASH is the interpretation of and commentary on the written scriptures.

NAVI’IM is the writings of the Prophets, twenty-one prophetic books in the TANAKH.

RABBI is a person who heads a synagogue or a temple and leads its worship and study. The Jewish faith has no priesthood.

SYNAGOGUE is a house of worship for Orthodox, Conservative, and Reformed Jews.

TALMUD is a sacred book of the Jewish faith. It contains the traditional interpretations of the Jewish laws, which are found in the Hebrew Bible.

TANAKH is the thirty nine books of the Hebrew Bible. The consonants in TANAKH stand for the names of the three parts of scripture: Torah, Navi’im, and Kethuvim. TANAKH is also known as the written Torah, and its Hebrew texts are treated with great respect.

TORAH is the first five books of the Hebrew Bible. The Torah teaches about the covenant and contains the fundamental principles of the faith: hope, justice, love, purity, thanksgiving, and virtue. It is believed to have been revealed to Moses at Mt. Sinai.

Christianity

APOCRYPHA, which means hidden or Deuterocanon, which means second law, is a collection of writings that date from about 300 B.C.E. to about 200 C.E. in the intertestamental period.

ASSUMPTION is a Roman Catholic and Orthodox belief. When Mary, the mother of Jesus, died, she was not buried but was taken bodily into heaven.

BAPTISM is a sacrament, a sign of God’s grace. The person baptized is recognized as a member of the church of Jesus Christ. Many Christians believe that the person baptized receives the gift of the Holy Spirit.

C.E. means Common Era, the period of time after the birth of Jesus. B.C.E., Before Common Era, refers to the time before the birth of Christ.

CHARISMATIC refers to a person who has an experience of God’s grace and has been given gifts of the Holy Spirit, such as speaking in tongues.

EPIPHANY means manifestation, especially the manifestation of God in Jesus Christ.

EPISCOPAL and EPISCOPACY refer to the leadership of bishops or a form of government in which bishops lead the church in particular geographic areas.

EUCHARIST means thanksgiving. It is one of the sacraments celebrated in Christian churches and uses bread
and wine as symbols of the broken body and shed blood of Jesus Christ. The Eucharist is also called Holy Communion or the Lord's Supper.

GLOSSOLALIA means speaking in tongues, a spiritual gift given during prayer or a personal experience of God. Glossolalia is part of Pentecostal worship.

GRACE is the undeserved favor and blessing of God, freely given and received.

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION is a Roman Catholic belief that states that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was also conceived and born without bearing the original sin of human beings.

MARY, Mother of God, is the title Roman Catholics and Orthodox Christians use to refer to Mary, Jesus’ mother. Since Jesus is the Son of God and equal to God, Mary is therefore the Mother of God and deserves special veneration.

ORDINANCES are a part of the ritual and worship of religious groups but are not considered sacraments. Ordinance means command.

PERPETUAL VIRGINITY is a Roman Catholic and Orthodox doctrine that states that Mary remained a virgin throughout her life.

SACRAMENTS are signs or means of grace that Jesus commanded his disciples to continue. Almost all Christians observe Holy Communion and Baptism. Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox include five other sacraments: Penance, Anointing the Sick, Confirmation, Marriage and Ordination.

SAINTS, in the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches, are regarded as holy people who have the power to intercede with God on our behalf. Most other Christians think of the saints as the faithful members of the church.

SOLA SCRIPTURA is a Latin phrase that means Scripture alone. Martin Luther, John Wesley and other reformers taught that Scripture was the final authority in matters of faith.

TRINITY refers to the idea that God is one in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Generally, the Father is identified as the Creator; the Son is God in the flesh, Jesus Christ; the Holy Spirit is the abiding presence of God in and for the Christian community.

Islam
IKHWAN means Brothers and refers to the Puritan movement in Islam.

JIHAD is Holy War. In the first few centuries of Islam’s history, Jihad was understood as the war against heretics and infidels. Today, the word has a spiritual meaning: the war against sin and evil. Some regard Jihad as the sixth pillar of Islam.

MOSQUE means kneeling place and refers to the house of prayer for Muslims.

MUHAMMED was a human being chosen by God to be the last and greatest prophet.

MUSLIM means submitter, a person who submits to the will of Allah and an adherent of Islam.

PILLARS OF ISLAM are the five major practices of the faithful Muslim: Confession that Allah is the only God and that Mohammed is his messenger; prayer according to a particular ritual; fasting; giving, especially Almsgiving; and the pilgrimage to Mecca if health and other circumstances permit.

QUR’AN, or Koran, means recitation. It is the holy book of Islam, which is true only if printed and read in Arabic. To translate the Qur’an into another language is an affront to Islam.
SHI’A or SHI”ITE, means partisans of Ali. It is the largest minority sect of Islam and the state religion of Iran. Shi’ites believe that all leaders of Islam should be descendants of Muhammad. Ismailis, who are members of a branch of Shi’a, are considered extremists. Baha’i, another offshoot of Shi’a, is now a religion in its own right. Baha’i teaches that all religions have the same source, that there is truth in all religions, and that religion must work with science to make a better world. Baha’i also emphasizes the importance of education and free thought.

SUFI is the mystical and devotional side Islam that teaches the possibility of union with God.

SUNNI is the branch of Islam that accepts the Sunna, the tradition and the way of life that is normative for Muslims.

**Hinduism**

BRAHMA is Brahman revealed as God the Creator.

BRAHMAN is the one, true, All Reality, the impersonal All Soul. Brahman is known to us in the form of gods and goddesses.

KARMA is both the evil and the good a person does. Karma determines destiny. If a person has done too much evil, he or she cannot escape the wheel of life or the transmigration of souls. If a person’s karma is good, he or she will attain moksha or Nirvana. Both Hindus and Buddhists believe in karma.

SHIVA is the Destroyer, a god associated with both death and birth or rebirth. He is second only to Vishnu in popularity.

TRANSMIGRATION OF SOULS refers to the cycle of the soul through birth, suffering, death, and rebirth. It is caused by the inability of the soul to become one with Brahman. It is often incorrectly called reincarnation.

UPANISHADS are the Hindu writings in which the doctrines of maya and Brahman are explained.

VEDAS are the hymns and poems of the Hindu scriptures.

VISHNU is the savior god of the Hindu religion. Vishnu, the most popular of all the Hindu gods, often appears on earth as Krishna.

YOGA is the practice of a religious discipline for the purpose of achieving union with Brahman. The most popular is bhakti yoga. One who practices yoga is a yogi.

**Buddhism**

BODHISATTVA is a Mahayana saint who postponed entry into Nirvana in order to help mortals in their search for salvation.

BUDDHA is the title of Siddhartha Gautama in Theravada. In Mahayana, Buddha is the title of any enlightened deity.

EIGHTFOLD PATH is a way of believing, being, and behaving that provides the answer to alleviating the suffering of all humankind and leads to sainthood in Nirvana.

ENLIGHTENMENT is sudden insight into true understanding of the Four Noble Truths.

FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS were discovered by the Buddha through enlightenment. These truths form the basis for a Buddhist worldview; all people suffer from unfulfilled and inappropriate desires, but suffering can be overcome by following the Eightfold Path.
MAHAYANA means great vehicle and refers to the majority of people following Buddha. In Mahayana, the community includes not only monks but laity; and the laity can also achieve Nirvana.

NIRVANA is a state of peace and enlightenment that involves being unaware of one’s self. It is freedom from desire and the sufferings desire causes. Nirvana can be attained by following the eightfold path.

THERAVADA refers to the minority of the followers of the Buddha, who are also the closest to his teachings.

TIPITAKA is the name given to the Theravadan scriptures, which, along with two others, are also accepted by Mahayana.

VAJRAYANA is a name for Buddhism in Tibet.

**Activity**

Divide participants into small groups. After discussing the following questions, ask each group to give a three-minute report to the larger group and to name one specific experience the group discussed, along with one or two ways young people in the community can respond or augment positive relations.

1. What are the religions that are practiced in your family? For example, is everyone in your family Christian? What other religions are practiced in your home, in your community, in your country?

2. From your experience, how do the various religions relate to one another, understand one another, and work together on community issues?

3. What are some ways young people can help these conversations become more meaningful for the future of all faiths, the community, and individuals?

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1 The information in Chapter 10, unless otherwise noted, is from Hambrick, Charles and Joy Lawler. Religions: Encountering People from Other Faiths. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995. Used with permission.

2 The information on Animism comes from http://www.mnsu.edu/emuseum/cultural/religion/animism/beliefs.html
CHAPTER ELEVEN
Leaders and Leadership

Introduction
Much of the world today is experiencing trauma. This trauma has a variety of causes and symptoms, such as economic and political malaise, social or cultural amnesia, moral and leadership bankruptcy, and others. The symptoms of this trauma have eaten into all facets of our society, the church notwithstanding.

The youth leaders of today and tomorrow may be confused and perplexed by all that is happening in the world. If the church is to continue to serve as a haven of rest, refuge, and solitude – and if the church is to continue to speak the truth – then the church must develop effective leaders. Governments, schools, colleges, offices, and homes must all work to train effective leaders, leaders who will channel the thoughts and vision of their groups into positive, achievable goals to benefit others. A democratic society or church cannot work efficiently without strong leadership at all levels; effective leaders provide direction, encourage teamwork, and inspire people to give their best.

Biblical Examples of Leadership

• In the story of Moses and the burning bush (Exodus 3), God called Moses into a life of leadership and service. Moses, however, was afraid he would not be able to find the right words with which to confront Pharaoh and lead the Hebrew people out of slavery. God, knowing that Moses was the right person for the job, assigned Moses’ brother, Aaron, to be Moses’ mouthpiece. Together, Moses and Aaron became great and faithful leaders. When God calls us to lead, God also provides, enables and empowers.

• In the Book of Esther, King Xerxes approved a plot to kill all the Jewish people in Persia. After praying, fasting and consulting with others, Esther took a risky and courageous step. She confronted her husband, told the truth about her own Jewish identity, and persuaded him to end the persecution and death. Esther’s daring act saved the lives of many people. Surely she was emboldened for leadership “for just such a time as this” (Esther 4:14b).

• Deborah was a prophet and a discerning judge. Many people came to her for counsel and instruction. Deborah’s example reminds us that women, when given the opportunity, can be strong, wise and effective leaders.

• With the help of his teacher, Eli, Samuel was able to attune his ears to the call of God and respond to God’s voice, saying, “Speak, for your servant is listening” (1 Samuel 3:10b). Samuel was entrusted with many difficult tasks, but with God’s help and guidance, he quickly became a faithful prophet who spoke about God’s ways.

• Humbled by a vision of God and angels, Isaiah confessed that he had not always spoken the truth or lived a godly life. As an angel’s touched his mouth with a live coal, Isaiah felt God’s grace and forgiveness. And, when God called for someone to witness to God’s wondrous love, Isaiah found himself saying, “Here am I; send me” (Isaiah 6:8). Isaiah did not need to know the details of God’s call because he knew that God cared more about his availability than his abilities. Mother Teresa once said: “God is more interested in our faithfulness than in our successes.” This visionary moment empowered Isaiah to become one of the most outspoken and effective prophets in Israel.

• Jesus washing his disciples’ feet (John 13:1-9) is a powerful image of spiritual leadership. We are reminded of the need for humility among leaders, coupled with the willingness to serve all people.
Paul tells us in Romans 12:2-4, “Do not conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” These verses remind us of the need for transformational qualities in today's leadership. Current leaders are called to explore new and uncharted avenues for service. The story of Jesus calling his disciples to be “fishers of [people]” reminds us of the importance of transformation. The model of leadership in ministry exemplified by Jesus includes three main components:

- Jesus calls people with particular gifts
- Jesus trained the people he identified and gathered
- Jesus discipled (sent out to serve others) the people he called, thus perpetuating the process of leadership development

The Bible also provides examples of leaders who did not have compassion and respect for those they served. In Micah 3:2-4, the prophet reminds the rulers of all the injustices they have perpetrated. Micah explains that when they face trouble and then call out to the Lord, God will not answer because of their wicked deeds toward others.

This Scripture reminds us that God is not a switch to be turned on only as needed for our personal benefit. Instead we should seek to do God's will at all times and trust God for God’s grace and strength.

**Jeroboam and Rehoboam** are two examples of leaders who did not use their power and influence wisely. Their actions were beneficial to them, but not to the people they were supposed to be serving (1 Kings 12:1-19). Rehoboam divided the nation and Jeroboam's turned the people away from God.

Good leaders place the interests of those they serve in equal position to their personal interests, and sometimes even above their personal interests. As leaders, we are called to emulate Christ’s example of leadership. Jesus told his disciples and he tells us:

- “I have set you an example that you shall do as I have done for you” (John 13:12b-15).
- “You are my friends if you do as I command” (John 15:14).

**Activity**

1. Are the biblical images of leadership different from your personal experience of leadership? In what ways are they similar or different?
2. In what ways is it helpful to consider the biblical perspective of leadership?
3. Why are biblical examples of female leaders so often ignored today?
4. What difficulties do you have with women in leadership positions? How will you overcome them?
Leadership and Power

Leadership is often interpreted as having power – political, religious, spiritual, social, etc. Although a person may have power, she or he is not automatically a leader. As we have seen in the biblical examples, as well as in today’s world, people can and have, used their power both for good and for evil.

In our world today, vulnerable groups (especially women, children, minorities, and youth) often experience power as an oppressive force which causes suffering. “Oppressive force” is not the way to be a positive leader. We must remember that power comes from God. The Bible clearly states: King David blesses the Lord, proclaiming that God is the source of power (1 Chronicles 29:11); Revelation 5:12-13 talks about the worthiness of the Lamb to receive power, wisdom; and wealth; God pours out power on us (see Acts 1:8; Acts 2:1-4; and Luke 24:48). Many leaders tend to forget that their power to lead is a gift from God to be used for the building up of the church and community (see Ephesians 4:11-10).

People who desire power usually outnumber those who are able to use that power wisely once it is attained. Power has a way of controlling and corrupting people. This change is especially true in cases of inherited but unmerited power. A good example is Abimelech (see Judges 9). His life reveals what happens when good judgment is impaired by hunger for power.

It is important for leaders to remember that leadership, and the power that often accompanies it, are God-given gifts (see Romans 12:8). These gifts should be recognized and authenticated by the church community. Therefore, leadership and power must be exercised responsibly in the sight of God.

As Christians, we have a model in Jesus Christ. As a leader, Jesus possessed all the power yet he “made himself nothing” (Philippians 2:7). He humbled himself and became a servant leader.

Activity

1. Like many of God’s gifts (money, knowledge, sex, beauty) power is often abused or misused. Why? How?
2. Why is it difficult to understand power as a gift from God?
3. What are some examples of how hunger for power corrupts judgment?
4. How can we best affirm and support the people we choose to be our leaders? How does one balance being a leader while at the same time recognizing the need to be led and to learn?
**Styles of Leadership**

The **VIP Model** of leadership calls for:

- **V** – Vision and vitality
- **I** – Interaction and involvement
- **P** – Persistence, perseverance, principles, and performance

A leader must possess a clear vision and mission; the wisdom to dream, discern and act; the courage to take risks and to persevere. A leader must always be willing to lead by example.

Pay attention to leaders in your community, church, and schools. It can be interesting and informative to observe how they adopt different leadership styles depending upon their personalities, the people around them, and the context in which they lead and live. Let's take a look at some leadership styles from the voices of various leaders.

**Autocrat:** I define a problem, consider the alternatives, choose the action, and then tell the group what we are going to do. I do not consult the group.

**Persuader:** I, too, identify the problem and make the decision without involving the group. The difference in my style is that I attempt to persuade the group that the decision I've made is the best one for them and for the organization.

**Benevolent:** I have the members of my group at heart and hopefully know what is best for them. I oversee what they do and what happens to them and I try to care for them. Some people say I am an autocratic leader, but my personal intentions are benevolent.

**Laissez-Faire:** I like the group to do what it pleases. I try to reflect what I believe the members think, and I try to keep the group united. Sometimes I am called a "do-nothing" leader.

**Consultant:** I like to come to a group with tentative plans, but, from the beginning, the group has a chance to influence my decision. Sometimes I simply provide the problem and some background and then ask for possible solutions. Though the final decision is mine, I have an increased number of possibilities for a workable plan after consulting with the group.

**Democrat:** I encourage individuals within the group to participate in and react to the necessary decisions. I believe that my role is not to wield power but to motivate. I use persuasion and conciliation rather than force in order to move the group. I relate to group members as a friend and not in a distant, authoritarian way. My main function is to act as a catalyst.

**Delegator:** As a leader I sometimes leave the final decision for others to make by delegating responsibility. I define the problems, set the boundaries, and leave it to the delegation/group/team to come up with the solution. Whatever they decide I accept, as long as it falls within the defined limits.

**Servant:** As a servant, I lead from behind, empowering the group to move ahead, giving help only when needed. I place the needs of the group/team before my personal needs.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Think of situations in which each of the styles could be useful. Discuss scenarios in small groups.
2. As a leader, you can’t do it all alone. You can get the job done better and faster if you involve others. What are some ways to involve others in leadership and decision-making?
3. The goal of leadership is to help people do better things for themselves as a group or team, so why do we leave all the responsibilities to the leaders – the ones with power or authority?
4. List what you believe to be the qualities and responsibilities of a good leader.
5. What do you think are some causes for the leadership problems in Africa? Is it the system of leadership we adopted, the individuals we put in place, or something else?
Attitude
It is important to discuss attitude before talking about specific leadership skills.
• Attitude is your state of mind as you approach a situation. It can be a positive attitude (“I will pass my exams in flying colors!”). Or it can be a negative attitude (“My exams are going to be horrible!”).

Personal attitude is something only you can control. Here are some suggestions for developing a positive attitude:
• Be cheerful
• Keep others informed through effective communication
• Use polite words/phrases, such as “Please,” “May I?” and “Do you mind?”
• Be punctual
• Be helpful and patient
• Read the Scriptures and pray without ceasing
• Affirm yourself and others

Remember, negative attitudes make life difficult for everyone. Positive attitudes help everyone get the most out of life.

Leadership Skills and Group Development

A. Building the Group
To build the effectiveness of a group, it is important to:

1. Understand Yourself
To develop as a leader, you must begin by asking yourself: What are my strengths and weaknesses? What do I like and dislike? God has given each of us natural talents. Often we are unaware of these abilities or fail to recognize how they could be used positively. When you have an honest understanding of your abilities, gifts, talents, and limitations, you can use them effectively to contribute meaningfully to developing the group.

Self-Reflection Exercise (20-30 minutes)
Ask each member to answer the following questions on a piece of paper:
• List all the skills, abilities, and gifts you believe you bring to your group.
• When working in a group, what tasks do you enjoy? Which do you avoid or dislike?
• Working in a group provides opportunities for learning new skills. What do you want to learn as a result of working in this group?
• What do you enjoy about working in a group?
• What aspects of working with other people do you find difficult?
• How would others in the group describe you?

Group Discussion Exercise (30 minutes)
• If the individuals gathered for this training are familiar and comfortable with one another, post the answers to the self-reflection questions and allow participants to read them.
• Encourage members to add comments to each other’s answers, especially for “Skills I enjoy” and “How others in the group would describe me.”

Now ask and discuss: What does this information tell us about our group? How can we build on the talents within the group?
2. Identify the Skills and Spiritual Gifts of Group Members
This can be accomplished with a Group Assessment Exercise (30 minutes) to help identify the gifts of each member of the group. Pair up and interview each other using such questions as:

• How long have you belonged to the group?
• Why did you join?
• What do you hope to gain from this group?
• What does believing in Jesus Christ mean to and for you?
• What do you love to do?
• What are your favorite free-time activities?
• What talents, skills, and experiences do you bring to the group?

After a few minutes, regroup and:
• Ask each person to introduce his or her partner and to highlight the partner’s skills and experiences. List the skills on a large sheet of paper.
• After everyone has been introduced, discuss the skill list: (If they have completed spiritual-gift inventories, discuss spiritual gifts at this time. Or, spiritual gifts inventories can be introduced at a later time.)

As a leader, begin to think about:
• Information the list reveals
• Areas of strength for the group
• Additional skills that are needed

3. Create a Sense of Purpose
A group works best with a clear sense of purpose. One responsibility of the leader is to help the group understand who they are and what their mission/ministry is about. Divide the group into teams of 3-5 people. Ask each team to discuss the following questions:

• Why did we join this group?
• What is this group’s unique ministry?
• What do we hope the group will contribute to the work of the church?

Ask for a volunteer from each team to present a summary for the large group. Then talk about and compile the key points from each team’s report to determine the group’s overall purpose.

Discuss: How often should a group review its purpose? What happens if the group’s purpose conflicts with other groups in the church? What should we do if we can’t agree on one overall purpose?

4. Delegate Constructively
A leader can develop the skills of the group by delegating responsibility when possible. Allowing others to use their gifts for the benefit of the group helps create a sense of shared leadership. Leaders should not delegate in order to simply hand off work they do not want to do.

Skills Match-up
• As a leader, make a list of the tasks that you would like youth to help you accomplish or that the group needs to accomplish together. Note those tasks that match the skills of individual group members.
• Decide whom you could ask to do each task or have the group work together in choosing a contact person for each task. What are some factors to consider when making his decision? (availability, time, willingness, maturity, disposition, gifts…)
Delegation has two components – preparation and support.

**Preparation Involves:**
- Identifying the tasks that need to be accomplished
- Explaining the reasons for delegating
- Providing clear instructions – making sure all know what they are doing, a completion date, and to whom or where they can go for help
- Encouraging people – renewing their spirits, providing fresh energy and courage to pursue the common course of action

**Support Involves:**
- Checking on progress regularly
- Providing coaching or support, as needed
- Giving praise and acknowledgement when a task is completed well
- Providing guidance on how a task can be accomplished differently next time to meet deadlines and standards (if it is not completed in a satisfactory manner the first time)

**Discussion Questions**
1. What are some ways to help members accept tasks more easily?
2. How can a leader best use the group’s skills and experience?

**5. Coach and Learn from Experience**
Leaders can maximize learning and benefit from experience within a group by:
- Asking all office holders to list their responsibilities. For continuity, the lists may be given to successors when there are changes in leadership. These lists, or job descriptions, can be reviewed and modified by the group at any time (for example, to change structure or process).
- Keeping good files and/or records.
- Allowing previous office holders (who were effective) to act as mentors.
- Identifying those in the group who are “experts” in certain skills and asking them to train new members.
- Providing coaching for all group members.

Good coaching is:
- Positive and encouraging
- Non-judgmental
- Matched to the pace of the person being coached

**Discussion Questions**
1. Should we always work the same way as a previous group, or should each new group determine its own way of working?
2. What are some ways for a group to discern a new way of working?
B. Organizing the Work
Effective leaders must be able to organize tasks or enlist people who can organize the tasks. Organizing involves identifying, planning, and monitoring the project.

1. Identifying What Needs to Be Done
   a. Make a list of all possible projects or jobs, asking for ideas from the group.
   b. Discuss the following questions:
      • How do you define priority?
      • How many items should be on our short list given available resources?
      • What do we do with the ideas that aren’t on the short list?
   c. Narrow down the first list to a “short list” of priority items by asking each member of the group to select his or her top three to five items.

2. Planning a Project
   Whether a project is large or small, the same planning methods are essential for making the best use of the time/effort of your group. Answer these questions:
   • What are the objectives of the project?
   • What process will we use to complete the project?
   • What resources do we need?
   • Who will do the necessary tasks?

   Discuss: What are some options if the project falls behind and the plan, or parts of the plan, is no longer relevant?

3. Monitoring a Project
   Monitoring allows the group to identify delays or problems in time for individuals to receive the additional help or resources needed to finish. The group has a collective responsibility to make sure that projects and tasks are completed. Therefore, the whole team needs to agree on ways to monitor its work in a sensitive and supportive way.

   Discuss some ways to positively monitor the project and decide together on a process before beginning.
   • How often should we check on progress?
   • To whom will the group and individual members be accountable for completing their portion of the project?

C. Organizing Effective Meetings
The following will help ensure your group meetings are efficient and effective:
• Plan for the meeting ahead of time
• Facilitate the meeting, or enlist someone to facilitate the meeting
• Enlist a volunteer to take minutes or notes
1. Planning a Meeting
A well-planned meeting creates energy and momentum and allows the group to draw on the skills of its members in order to reach its goal.

- Before the meeting, list all the necessary items/issues to discuss.
- Prioritize the items to make the best use of time. If there is not time to address all the issues, schedule them for a later meeting.
- Assign a flexible time increment to each item.
- Create an agenda, indicating in order the items to be discussed.
- If possible, send the agenda out before the meeting, including any necessary background reading or minutes from a previous meeting so that people will arrive prepared.

Discuss: How can we ensure that we will use our time wisely in meetings?

2. Leading/Facilitating a Meeting
Without the proper facilitator, a meeting can become sidetracked from the agenda. Chairing a meeting need not to be the sole responsibility of one person. Instead, consider other ways to lead a meeting, such as:

- Rotating the role of chairperson so that different people chair meeting
- Assigning joint chairpersons, or co-chairs
- Suggesting the group take the responsibility for leading the meeting (enlist a different person to introduce each item on the agenda, or divide the tasks so that one person introduces the items, another watches the time, another summarizes, and so on)

3. Taking Minutes/Notes
As a leader, make sure there is a written record of your group’s meeting, including decisions, action points, information points, and items to carry forward. Minutes should be complete, but concise.

Suggestions for Facilitating an Effective Meeting:
- Start and end on time
- Create an agenda and try to follow it
- Present minutes from previous meetings for review and/or approval
- Summarize discussion points and decisions to keep the group focused
- Listen to everyone’s voice and opinions
- Record decisions, assigned tasks, and follow-up items for the next meeting

Group Work and Personal Reflection for Leaders:
- What are some ways you can facilitate an effective meeting?
- What can each person contribute to make the meeting more productive?
- How does the group want to handle the chairperson’s role?
- How does the group want to resolve issues of disagreement?
D. Relating to Others

- Listen: A good listener places him or herself in the other person’s shoes by empathizing and setting aside all preconceived judgments about the person or the situation.
- Listen without interrupting.
- Pay attention to nonverbal clues. Does the person seem stressed, anxious, tired, scared, and so on?
- Ask questions to draw out the complete story.
- Check your understanding of what’s been said by summarizing or paraphrasing.

Group Discussion

1. What can group members do in meetings to facilitate better listening?
2. How would people like for others to listen to them?

E. Handling Tensions and Differences Constructively

Tensions and disagreement are inevitable and sometimes even positive aspects of a group. Without disagreement, no new ideas are likely to emerge. Without differences, most groups will not change or grow. How can we approach the challenge of tensions and disagreements in a positive way? Here are some suggestions:

- Have ground rules
- When people disagree, focus on the problem and not the individuals
- Use a problem-solving approach (see page 26)

In summary an effective leader should:

- Gain the trust of others
- Create and maintain team cohesiveness
- Define the tasks and review performance
- Monitor group dynamics, being sensitive to members’ strengths, weaknesses, and needs
- Willingly adopt and practice new leadership skills in a variety of situations and circumstances.

Group Discussion

1. What other skills or qualities might you add to the list? Could these be learned? Are they transferable to others, to the young people with whom you work?
2. Can a team of individuals working together, sharing ideas, and responsibilities accomplish more than an individual working alone?
3. What are some ways we can develop team spirit and cooperation?
F. Remaining Spiritually Grounded

Jesus demonstrated qualities associated with leadership. Find passages in the Bible where Jesus exemplified the following qualities. Beside each write at least one Bible passage and the context. Then answer the questions below.

Shepherd ____________________________________________________________

Teacher _____________________________________________________________

Impartial _____________________________________________________________

Compassionate _______________________________________________________

Merciful _____________________________________________________________

Good Listener _________________________________________________________

Humble ______________________________________________________________

Just __________________________________________________________________

1. What were some responses of the people when Jesus showed these qualities?
2. How did these qualities help Jesus bring change to people’s lives?
3. List what you consider to be qualities of an effective leader.

Qualities of Adults Who Work With Young People

In addition to the qualities of spiritual leaders (Chapter 12), here are qualities of adult leaders who work with young people:

1. **Visionary:** Helps youth think about and plan for the future of the youth group, discover possible ways to reach other youth, and share God’s love with others. Visionary leaders often accomplish this by asking questions. Questions help youth focus without giving them the answers. For example, What are some ways God might want us to express God’s love to others? How can we invite others into our fellowship? What are some actions we can take to help bring God’s justice to our community, to the elderly, to an orphanage?

2. **Hopeful and Positive:** Finds the positive in whatever is happening. If adults are uplifting and encouraging, the youth will often follow their lead. Remember though, there are times to be sad, angry, frustrated and confused. It’s important that young people see their leaders authentically and appropriately express a full range of emotions (such as sorrow after the death of a friend, anger at injustice, frustration at theft…). This modeling will help young people recognize and properly express their own emotions.

3. **Strongly Committed:** Demonstrates loyalty to the mission and vision of young people’s ministries and to the spiritual development and growth of young people. It is important for adult leaders to do their best in every situation. Adults are models of leadership, responsibility and Christian behavior. Young people observe the behaviors and attitudes of adults and they notice when adults do not invest time in planning programs and meetings. When they realize adults are not doing quality work, they may become disillusioned.
4. **Willing to Learn and Improve the Ministry:** Embraces change, rather than fears it. Adult workers need to learn from the Bible, study materials, and the example of others which leadership styles work best for them.

5. **Courageous:** Trusts God to be his or her guide as he or she embarks on bold leadership; is confident that God will create in him or her the leadership skills needed to accomplish the task. There is truth in the old Christian proverb: “God doesn’t call the gifted, God gifts the called.”

6. **Humble:** Claims confidence in God, but does not behave arrogantly, thinking that she or he has all the answers. Leaders need to be willing to work without always receiving credit for all the good they have done. Adult workers must show respect to every person as a beloved child of God.

7. **Helps the Group Build New Relationships:** Welcomes new people to the group. Makes sure everyone has an opportunity to speak, lead, and share.

8. **Works to Grow in Understanding of God and Scripture:** Reads and studies the Bible daily. Prays daily. Talks with the youth about faith and its importance. Does not judge the faith of others as immature or inadequate. God works with each person individually and at that person’s pace. Yet, adult workers need to encourage the young people to be studying more about God in order to grow deeper in relationship with God.

9. **Keeps the Big Picture in Mind:** Remembers that all his or her work happens in the larger context of church, community, and world. Being attuned to the big picture helps guide the ministry and prevents becoming too bogged down in the frivolous and irrelevant.

10. **Takes Risks:** Moves forward even if he or she is unsure of the path. Sometimes it is possible to create the right “time,” rather than waiting for it to appear. Don’t be afraid of failure; there are opportunities to learn in, and from, every situation.
Personal Leadership Development

1. **Practice Congruence:** It is important that words, actions, and beliefs are congruent. Leaders should constantly strive to “walk the talk.”

2. **Know Personal Limitations:** Leaders shouldn’t attempt to be God or to convince others that they are God. If leaders attempt to do everything alone, they keep others from living out their giftedness! Being aware of personal flaws and limitations allows leaders to approach tasks realistically and genuinely.

3. **Schedule Intentional Devotional Times:** Daily Bible study and prayer keeps leaders grounded in their sense of self and in their personal relationship with God. Such groundedness promotes essential growth for deeper service and understanding. Personal devotional time also allows leaders to listen to God about God’s vision for the work of the group/team.

Leadership is fundamentally about facilitating change within people, groups, and organizations. Change is not a one-time event; change is an on-going process in and among us. As John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, said, we are all “going on to perfection.” As we grow and change in our personal relationships with God, we share our learnings with others and thus bring God’s transformation to our communities.

Cultivating Awareness, Skills, and Competence in Self and Others

- **Awareness** of self, environment, context, leadership, and people who are group members.

- **Skills** that help leaders: share their vision in such a way that others can “catch” it; challenge the status quo when necessary; empower others to do their best work; and, be models of servant leadership.

- **Competence** in facilitating groups, leading through vision, empowering others, and managing and mediating conflict.

Creativity

Creativity is an important part of leadership, and a good leader is flexible and open to creativity in oneself and in others. Creativity opens us to new possibilities we may not have considered. Creativity is not problem solving (taking what we know and applying it to a problem so that the problem can be “fixed”). Instead, creativity welcomes ambiguity and imagination as part of the process and encourages out-of-the-box thinking. Creativity transforms problems into opportunities for change and/or growth, by allowing new ideas to inspire new responses for action.
Ways to Stifle Creativity

1. Thinking that we don’t have time to be creative. Creativity is not about linear time. Creativity is about being with and in the moment so that time becomes part of the process rather than pushing the process.

2. Thinking that being creative, or that a creative process, is not logical.

3. Looking for a “right” answer. Often there is more than one way to accomplish a task. Allow a group to consider various options and then develop a plan that makes sense for who they are and where they want to go.

4. Thinking that we have to play by a certain set of rules. Rules such as “use the same format we’ve always used,” are not set in stone. Traditions are not rules.

5. Believing that mistakes can slow us down or defeat us. Mistakes are actually great opportunities for learning! Take a risk; try something new. If it doesn’t work out the way you expected, then revise the plan based on what you learned.

6. Thinking that we don’t have time to play. Playing and joking can actually increase our capacity to be creative. Allow time and space for people to play and relax (mentally, physically, and spiritually), as well as to work.

7. Fear of looking silly. God’s perspective on your lives is more important than what other people think of us. The Scriptures talk about being “fools for Christ.”

Discussion Questions

1. Are you creative?
2. How might you inject fresh creativity into your ministry with youth or young adults?
CHAPTER TWELVE
Qualities and Expectations of Spiritual and Servant Leaders

Spiritual Leadership for the 21st Century
Leadership in the 21st century, particularly in Africa, will be quite different from what we have come to expect. Many leaders in the past (even spiritual leaders) have been greedy, dictatorial, and self-serving. 21st century spiritual leadership must work to empower free and equal people to be effective in ministry. The task rests on us all to reinvent spiritual leadership in a way that serves the common good.

While spiritual leadership involves many of the same principles as general leadership, spiritual leadership has certain distinctive qualities that are necessary for success.

One of the best ways to embody discipleship in general and spiritual leadership in particular is by adhering to John Wesley’s General Rules: Do no harm; do good; and, attend upon all the ordinances of God. In 2007, Bishop Reuben P. Job, wrote a small book entitled, *Three Simple Rules: A Wesleyan Way of Living*, in which he makes Wesley’s rules understandable and relevant for contemporary United Methodists1. Here is a synopsis of his work:

**Do No Harm**

“The first simple rule is ‘Do no harm.’ It is not that complicated. Even a child can understand what it means, and it is applicable to everyone at every stage of life. And when practiced, it works wonders in transforming the world around us…”

“I have found that this first simple step, when practiced, can provide a safe place to stand while the hard and faithful work of discernment is done. When we agree that we will not harm those with whom we disagree, conversation, dialogue, and discovery of new insight become possible. When our words and actions are guarded by this first simple rule, we have time and space to think about consequences before a word is spoken or an action taken.

“This act of disarming, laying aside our weapons and our desire to do harm, is revealing in other ways as well. We discover that we stand on common ground, inhabit a common and precious space, share a common faith, feast at a common table, and have an equal measure of God’s unlimited love. When I am determined to do no harm to you, I lose my fear of you; and I am able to see you and hear you more clearly. Disarmed of the possibility to do harm, we find that good and solid place to stand where together we can seek the way forward in faithfulness to God.”

“… To abandon the ways of the world for the way of Jesus is a radical step. While this step is very simple and easily understood, it is not easily achieved…”

“… It is a challenging path to walk. Yet, even a casual reading of the gospel suggests that Jesus taught and practiced a way of living that did no harm.” (22-27).

**Do Good**

“The words of Jesus and John Wesley suggest that doing good is a universal command. That is, doing good is not limited to those like me or those who like me. Doing good is directed at everyone, even those who do not fit my category of “worthy” to receive any good that I or others can direct their way. This command is also universal in that no one is exempt from it.

“Doing good, like doing no harm, is a proactive way of living. I do not need to wait to be asked to do some good deep or provide some needed help. I do not need to wait until circumstances cry out for aid to relieve suffering or correct some horrible injustice. I can decide that my way of living will
come down on the side of doing good to all in every circumstance and in every way I can. I can decide that I will choose a way of living that nourishes goodness and strengthens community.

“This way of living will require a careful and continual assessment of my life and the world in which I live. It will require an even more bold and radical step that not doing harm to those who may disagree with and even seek to harm me. For now I am committing myself to seeking good for everyone in my world and everyone in God’s world … Every act and every word must pass through the love and will of God and there be measured to discover if its purpose does indeed bring good and goodness to all it touches.

“The truth is that my gift of goodness may be rejected, ridiculed, and misused. But my desire to do good is not limited by the thoughts or actions of others. My desire to do good is in response to God’s invitation to follow Jesus…” (37-40).

Stay in Love with God

“Ordinance is a strange word to our ears. But to John Wesley, it was a word that described the practices that kept the relationship between God and humans vital, alive, and growing. He names public worship of God, the Lord’s Supper, private and family prayer, searching the Scriptures, Bible study, and fasting as essential to a faithful life. While we may have different names for our essential spiritual disciplines, these practices can become a life-giving source of strength and guidance for us. Wesley saw these disciplines as central to any life of faithfulness to God in Christ. He saw that the consistent practice of these spiritual disciplines kept those who sought to follow Christ in touch with the presence and power of Christ so they could fulfill their desire to live as faithful disciples…

“Living in the presence of and in harmony with the living God who is made known in Jesus Christ and companions us in the Holy Spirit is to live life from the inside out. It is to find our moral direction, our wisdom, our courage, our strength to live faithfully from the One who authored us, called us, sustains us, and sends us into the world as witnesses who daily practice the way of living with Jesus. Spiritual disciplines keep us in that healing, redeeming presence and power of God that forms and transforms each of us more and more into the image of the One we seek to follow.

“We may name our spiritual disciplines differently, but we too must find our way of living and practicing those disciplines that will keep us in love with God – practices that will help keep us positioned in such a way that we may hear and be responsive to God’s slightest whisper of direction and receive God’s promised presence and power every day and in every situation. It is in these practices that we learn to hear and respond to God’s direction. It is in these practices that we learn to trust God as revealed in Jesus Christ. It is in these practices that we learn of God’s love for us. It is where our love for God is nurtured and sustained. Incorporating these practices in our way of living will keep us in love with God and assure us of God’s love for us in this world and the world to come” (53-55).

Additional Qualities for 21st Century Spiritual Leaders

1. Nurture Companions, Not Followers – The concept of leader suggests there will be followers. Sheep, goats, and cows are more or less programmed to follow, which explains why they are so easily led. People are inclined to follow also. Being rational, though, we more often exercise reason or judgment so as not to follow blindly. The intelligent, educated, skilled, highly technical, and competent people of today are not likely to view themselves as followers. Instead a good spiritual leader will tend to think of people as colleagues, companions, and partners.

What does the idea of companionship imply?
• Bringing people together
• Moving beyond any barriers that exist
• Encouraging people to share resources, ideas, and skills for the common good
• Sharing responsibilities
• Providing others the opportunity to exercise God-given talents
• Encouraging participation

**DISCUSS:** What items would you add to this list? Which of these are your strengths? Which are your growing edges?

2. **Have a Vision** – Spiritual leadership in our global village requires vision. The Bible says, “Without vision the people perish” (Proverbs 29:18). Spiritual renewal often begins with one person’s vision from God that is passed on to others. An effective spiritual leader will help people move off their own agendas and onto God’s agenda for a more loving and equitable world.

Leaders frequently underestimate people and do not challenge them with dreams for God’s work in the church and nation. Spiritual leaders should not regard themselves as the only ones through whom God is working. It takes everyone, working together, to receive, share, and carry out a vision.

**DISCUSS:** Give example of spiritual leaders who have shared their visions? What are some of the effects of sharing your vision?

3. **Disciple the Young** – Today, particularly in Africa, some spiritual leaders prefer to keep power and knowledge to themselves and are not willing to prepare others for a smooth transition in leadership. To minimize leadership gaps, current leaders should intentionally disciple and train others to carry on in the event of their sudden or eventual leave-taking. Good leaders prepare people to function without them by seeking out others with leadership potential, providing the necessary training, and looking for ways to encourage them.

4. **Serve Others** – 21st century spiritual leaders are people who delight in serving others. Some leaders today (and in the past) are selfish and arrogant, concerned only about their own accomplishments and prominence. Leadership is not a platform for personal power; instead it is a stewardship of spiritual resources. Servant leaders work for the good of others and understand that they are not above any job or deed. Spiritual leaders today must heed the words of Jesus who counseled his disciples to be committed to servant ministry, not worldly greatness (Luke 22:24-27). Spiritual leaders do not lord their authority over people but instead work with others. By his example, Jesus showed that his disciples ought to be characterized by humble service (“The son of man came not to be served but to serve,” Matthew 21:28). Through his ministry and teaching, Jesus consistently demonstrated important servant leadership principles (for example, the washing of the disciples’ feet in John 13:1-17) and made clear that humble service does not jeopardize the dignity of any leader.

5. **Be Flexible and Take Responsibility** – Today’s leaders must be flexible and adapt their leadership styles to the changing needs and dynamics of the world. Paul demonstrated the need for flexibility by being Greeks to the Greeks and Jews to the Jews (1 Corinthians 9:19-23).

The first step toward effective leadership is the willingness to take responsibility. When King David realized his sins and mistakes, he took full responsibility, admitted he was wrong and asked God to forgive him (2 Samuel 12). Leaders of today must take full responsibility for their actions as David did. Because leaders are vocal and visible, they can often be vulnerable to lots of criticism. It is important to listen to and respect those who voice constructive criticism, without spending valuable time and energy worrying about opposition.
Group Activity
1. Who are some spiritual leaders in your community?
2. What qualities do you observe that mark them as spiritual leaders?
3. Read 1 Corinthians 3:5-9. How is this an example of good spiritual leadership?

Servant Leadership
“Servant Leadership” was coined by Robert K. Greenleaf in The Servant as Leader, an essay that he first published in 1970. In that essay, he said:

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?”

Jesus as Servant Leader
1. **Jesus used power responsibly.** Power is not bad in and of itself. In fact, power comes from God as a gift. It is irresponsible not to use the power we’ve been given. At the same time, it is irresponsible to misuse or abuse our power. While Jesus possessed the fullness of all power, he didn’t exercise his power in ways that were self-serving, abusive, or dominating. He used his power to serve others and to lift them up (healing, saving, teaching). At times Jesus even gave to and shared power with others. A good leader recognizes his or her power and uses it responsibly, even giving it up or sharing it when appropriate. Jesus was a “servant leader.” He modeled self-sacrifice for the good of the whole, without relinquishing the core of who he was. The Gospel of Mark says, “Whoever would be great among you must be your servant … The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (10:43-45).

2. **Jesus was aware of his gifts.** Good leaders acknowledge their gifts and put them to good use. 1 Peter 4:10 says, “As each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.”

3. **Jesus delegated tasks.** He asked the disciples to carry out certain duties. A good leader delegates tasks with clear instructions.

4. **Jesus made sure there were others to lead after him.** He trained the disciples to carry on the work after he was gone. A good leader makes sure there are well-trained leaders to continue the ministry.

5. **Jesus extended personal invitations to join him in his work.** He handpicked the disciples, saying, “Come, follow me.” A good leader personally invites help rather than making blanket or anonymous invitations.

6. **Jesus prayed prior to major leadership moments.** Before beginning his public ministry, Jesus spent forty days in the desert. Before calling his apostles, he prayed all night on the mountain. Before being crucified, he prayed in the garden of Gethsemane. A good leader prays before, during and after decision-making.
7. **Jesus set high standards for his followers.** He instructed the rich young man, “Go, sell your possessions … then come and follow me” (Matthew 19:21). On another occasion, Jesus said to his disciples and the gathered crowd, “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me” (Mark 8:34).

8. **Jesus respected the freedom of his followers.** He didn’t force people to follow him. He gave people the freedom to choose. On more than one occasion Jesus said, “Let anyone with ears listen” (Matthew 11:15).

9. **Jesus engaged in self-care.** Prayer, solitude, rest, food, and time with friends were all important parts of Jesus’ life. Balanced lives help us stay healthy, focused, and energized.

10. **Jesus understood and lived out his mission.** At the beginning of his public ministry, Jesus stood up in the synagogue and read the words of Isaiah, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor” (Luke 18-19). This was Jesus’ mission. Throughout his ministry, he offered people wholeness and dignity – without exception. He loved those whom society had dismissed and judged unworthy. He lived and died preaching love and nonviolence, grace and forgiveness.

**Bible Study Outline (John 13:1-17)**

- **Read John 13:3b** – Jesus knew that he was from God and would return to God. He was deeply rooted in God and connected to God at all times.
- **Read John 13:4a** – Jesus rose from supper, leaving what was comfortable and easy.
- **Read John 13:4b** – Jesus put aside his outer clothes, demonstrating that he was putting aside his needs and his identity as Lord and teacher.
- **Read John 13:4c** – Jesus put on a towel and took on the role of servant, showing that he was ready to work.
- **Read John 13:5** – Jesus poured water into the basin, showing that his work was that of cleansing and pouring out healing waters for all who would accept them.
- **Read John 13:5b** – Jesus washed their feet, doing the actual work of a servant or lowly person. He didn’t just talk about it, he did it.
- **Read John 13:5c** – Jesus dried their feet with the towel. He did all the work of a servant, not just the work he wanted to do. Jesus completed his work.
- **Read John 13:14** – Jesus charged the disciples to wash others’ feet. Anything we do that helps to wash away the pain, brokenness, discouragement, and disappointment of the world is washing the feet of others.

Our humility does not begin with our willingness to serve others. It begins with our willingness to receive love and blessings from God and from others. This Bible passage teaches us two very important things about the work of Christ in our lives:

1. In humble, graceful, and endless love, Jesus showers us with grace. He forgives our sins and we are given a clean, fresh start.
2. Jesus challenges us to go out into the world and offer the same purifying grace and love to others.
As Christians in our church, communities and world, we are called to lead as Jesus led – as a servant. As servants, we should:
1. Seek first to understand and then to be understood
2. Promote others before self
3. Respect everyone and treat everyone as equals
4. Communicate constantly with God
5. Make sure no one is left behind. Jesus worked to help all the disciples understand God’s love and grace.

**Characteristics of Servant Leaders Today**

1. **Listens** – Listens to all people
2. **Feels Empathy** – Relates to others from the heart; shows genuine concern and care for all people
3. **Promotes Healing in Relationships** – Acts as a bridge builder in the group to help others show respect for and honor to one another
4. **Exhibits Awareness** – Knows the limitations of self and others; willing to ask for help; pays attention to the group’s needs and helps meet them
5. **Uses Persuasion Graciously** – Does not force people to agree; talks with people to help them understand the possibilities of an idea
6. **Conceptualizes** – Dreams and helps others recognize how these dreams might be fulfilled
7. **Has Foresight** – Remembers and learns from the past to better understand the future
8. **Practices Stewardship** – Holds faith, wisdom, spiritual knowledge, and physical space in trust for young people as they grow and learn to hold and nurture these for themselves.
9. **Commits to the Growth of People** – Believes in the potential of each person and works to build them up
10. **Builds Community** – Links people to one another and makes space for them to gather and grow

— by Larry Spears

**Activity**

In your own words define a spiritual leader: ____________________________
Conclusion
The prophet Micah said, “What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with God (6:8). Surely, this is the mandate all spiritual leaders must live into and out of.

Because of what we experience in the world today, we are yearning for leaders who, among other things, are committed to proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ. Many in the world long for leaders who …

- Are capable of mobilizing others to confront and resist injustice in the church and state
- Are able to weather the different storms of life with faithfulness and grace
- Are seasoned and dedicated
- Are fearless and willing to challenge the forces of evil
- Take seriously the enormous tasks of leading people to work for peace, unity, hope, and reconciliation in a world plagued with grave inhumanity
- Demonstrate courage, patience, and endurance in the midst of trials, tribulations, difficulties, and challenges
- Will step up and say “yes” or “no” when necessary
- Rely on the power of God to work with others in building the kingdom of God here on earth.

1 Job, Reuben P. *Three Simple Rules: A Wesleyan Way of Living*.

2 From http://www.greenleaf.org/whatissl/
CHAPTER THIRTEEN
Program Planning and Implementation

This lesson can be taught in approximately three hours. The goal is to help participants learn to plan and effectively implement programs.

Definition of Program
Allow participants to brainstorm and suggest definitions for the word program. Compile individual definitions to create one group definition, and then observe if it is in line with the following definition. Emphasize the key words.

A program is an activity or series of activities designed by an individual, group, or organization to be implemented at a particular place and in a specific time frame in order to achieve a given purpose.

Types of Programs
1. Short-Term/Quick-Impact Programs – Normally planned and implemented within a few days to approximately three months.
2. Medium-Term Programs – Normally planned and implemented within three to six months
3. Long-Term Programs – Normally take more than six months for planning and implementation

Seven Steps in Program Planning
When planning and developing programs, it is important to keep in mind the following key questions:
1. For whom is the program planned? Who is the target group? Who will be the audience: the community, youth, other?
2. Where will the program be implemented? What is the venue? In what country, town, neighborhood? Is it indoors or outdoors? In deciding the venue, take stock of available facilities. Are they adequate for the size of group and the activities that are planned?
3. When? Timing is important. Schedule the program so that it does not conflict with other activities. And especially ascertain that the date works for those for whom the program is designed (participants, resource persons, and so on).
4. Why? What is the purpose of the program? The program must provide and meet the needs of the target audience; respond to problems; amplify/share wisdom; comply with the mission priorities of the group; address the appropriate contexts.
5. What are the goals? A goal is the clearly stated purpose of the program. What specific needs of the target audience are being met?
6. For what? What is the objective? An objective is a declaration or affirmation that identifies the details of the anticipated results or the specifics of the goal(s).
7. How? What steps or process will you follow in order to attain the objectives? Develop an assignment calendar and timeline for projects. Carry out evaluation before, during, and after the program.

Note: Goals and objectives must be SMART – Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Tangible (The SMART acrostic was developed by Peter Drucker.)
Planning and Implementing a Program

The following chart helps us define what we want to do and how we need to do it. This chart is an effective tool, especially when managing a project for the first time. By carefully adding the appropriate information to the chart, we can easily identify and recognize the available resources to support the success of the project. The chart also indicates the resources that are still needed.

An effective leader must be able to help the group assess the critical resources that are available and those that are necessary to implement any program or activity. The group must be able to provide clear answers to the following critical questions before embarking on any activity: (1) What resources do we have? (2) What resources do we actually NEED? (3) How can we obtain these resources?

In situations where there are a number of projects to be implemented, it is helpful to complete a separate page for each project, making it easier to prioritize the projects that should be attempted first. The chart helps to answer the question: Of all the things we could do, what must and should we do to address our critical mission priorities?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESOURCES</th>
<th>WHAT DO WE HAVE</th>
<th>WHAT DO WE NEED?</th>
<th>HOW WE CAN OBTAIN IT?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
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<td>Skills/talents, knowledge</td>
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<td>Confidence, determination</td>
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<td>Organization, leadership</td>
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Important Factors That Ensure a Successful Program

1. The Quality of Leadership: Teamwork is very important in planning programs for a group. One person can possibly provide the vision for the group, but no one person can plan and implement everything else. The more people involved, the more likely the success of the program.

2. The Effectiveness of the Planning: It has been said, “prior planning prevents future problems.” It’s also been said, “If we fail to plan, we plan to fail.” Programs are already partially implemented when they are well planned. The more time invested in the planning, the greater the chances for success.

3. The Quality of the Team: Though the most efficient way of planning programs is through teamwork, sometimes having too many people involved in the process can hinder effectiveness. Five committed, dedicated, and passionate members can more readily produce high quality results than ten, lazy, talkative, and carefree persons.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation: Establishing necessary processes and accountability measures help to ensure the plan is implemented correctly. However, because the plans we make don’t always work, leaders must be flexible and adaptable. Important questions leaders need to ask are:
   • Is everybody doing his/her assigned portion of the job? If not, why? How can I empower all group members to fulfill their commitments?
   • Is everything working as planned? If not, why? What can I do to help the plan work more smoothly? Does it need to be adapted? If so, how and by whom?
   • Can other strategies or resources be used to make the event successful?
   • What are some ways to ensure that all those with assignments will be present? (Follow-up is one idea.)
   • Is there any task that is not complete? If so, what is it and what can I do to help finish the task?
   • Does this plan achieve the intended goal? What can the leader and the group do to ensure the achievement of the intended goals and objectives?

Group Activity

1. Assign participants to small groups of about five (the number of groups will depend on the size of the class). Allow 45 minutes to 1½ hours. The segments are assigned time increments to help in the execution of the activity.
2. Allow each group to choose a program/project to plan and possibly implement in the church (30-45 minutes). Groups will determine:
   • the goal of the project
   • the objectives
   • the target audience
   • the venue and schedule for implementation
3. Each group must use the previous chart to record relevant details related to the goal and implementation.
4. Reassemble as a large group and call on each small group to report on its plans. Allow time for the class to respond to individual group plans and ask questions to help each small group clarify and improve its plans (45 minutes).
5. Return to small groups and make any necessary changes (20 minutes).
6. Reassemble as a large group and discuss (30 minutes):
   • What did you learn from this process about planning events and programs?
   • In what ways can you utilize this process in your church or youth group?
Defining and Building Self-Esteem

What Is Self-Esteem?

Note to Facilitator: Allow time for participants to develop their individual definitions of self-esteem. List definitions on chart paper around the room. Use individual definitions to compose a group definition. Notice if the group definition agrees with the following:

“Self-esteem is the collection of beliefs or feelings that we have about ourselves, or our ‘self-perceptions.’ How we define ourselves influences our motivations, attitudes, and behaviors and affects our emotional adjustment.” (see http://www.kidshealth.org/parent/emotions/feelings/self_esteem.html)

Your self-esteem is how much you value yourself. Almost all of us have days when we value ourselves highly, feel confident, and believe in ourselves. Likewise, most of us have other days when we have doubts and are unsure of whether we have value to our families, our communities, and even to God.

Elements of Healthy Self-Esteem:

• Accepting yourself as worthy of God’s love and the love of others
• Looking toward the future with excitement
• Knowing your role and purpose in life
• Making individual decisions without stressing too much about what others think
• Dressing in ways that fit your style and personality and not imitating others
• Being willing to speak up for what’s important to you
• Respecting others and expecting others to respect you
• Feeling good about your body
Self-Esteem Can be Affected Negatively By:

1. How you feel about yourself and your life
   • You believe you are not okay as a person.
   • You see yourself as having little value: “I am useless,” “I am stupid,” “I always fail.”
   • You have low confidence in yourself and what you can do: “I will never be able to …”, “I can’t do ...
   • You think you are less happy and successful than other people.
   • You see yourself as nasty or ungrateful when you have resentful and disappointing thoughts about others.
   • You punish yourself for being “so horrible.”
   • When you look at yourself you see only flaws, weaknesses, and/or the results of abuse by others or yourself.
   • When you look in the mirror, you are ashamed.

2. How you respond to stress
   • You feel tense, empty, and anxious.
   • You are silently annoyed, resentful, or disappointed with those people.
   • You stop in your attempts to be successful.

3. How you cope with situations that arise unexpectedly in your life
   • Relocation to a new community
   • Death of a loved one
   • Learning you are HIV positive

4. How you respond to peer pressure
   • You participate in activities you know are wrong because you want to “fit in”
   • You set aside your own values, ethics, and convictions
   • You are more interested in pleasing others than following your own conscience
   • You allow yourself to be used and mistreated because you think that’s what you need to do in order to belong

5. Level of confidence in your words, actions, abilities, and financial situation
   • You have little trust in the things, people, or situations in your life.
   • You believe the world can’t meet your personal needs and desires.
   • You view other people as more capable or powerful than yourself. You allow them to do things for you or to take advantage of you.

6. How you see your future
   • You lose confidence and the future appears bleak and hopeless.
Positive and Negative Effects on Self-Esteem:

• **Social Life** – Your friends, your family, the music you listen to, your hobbies and activities, the books you read, the people you trust

• **The Environment in which You Live** – Your home, school, workplace, study places, and where you hang out with friends

• **Biological Make-Up** – Your body as formed and influenced by your genetics

• **Patterns of Thinking** – The way your mind processes information, events, situations (this is related to both genetics and environment)

• **Self-Care** – The way you take care of your physical and emotional self

Hurting One’s Self-Esteem

*Note to Facilitator:* Allow participants to talk about their views on this topic by asking the question, “What are some of the ways in which our self-esteem can be damaged by others?” Some examples are:

• Being frequently put-down or humiliated (at home, at work, at school…)

• Being blamed for situations or actions that are not your fault

• Not having your basic emotional, social, or physical needs met

• Being abused in some way (physically, sexually, verbally, or mentally)

• Experiencing other kinds of violence, such as rape, harassment, or discrimination

• Being “labeled” by other people, such as schizophrenic or disabled

• Receiving inconsistent messages related to expectations (this can be significant for people who grow up with parents who have alcohol problems)

• Listening to strong messages from the media (TV, movies, advertising) or community about expectations (body image and size, sexual orientation, or employment status)

These are just some examples of situations/influences that can lower self-esteem. Individuals may be responsible for some of the examples, but some may have occurred as the result of others’ actions, and some may be the result of life in a certain culture or community. You can’t change other people; you can nurture and protect yourself. You also have control over the way you think, feel, respond, and behave in your life.
Helping Youth Develop Healthy Self-Esteem

Healthy Eating – What you eat affects your mood. A healthy, balanced diet will provide all the essential nutrients needed for your brain to function well. Vegetables and fruits are especially healthy.

Exercise – Studies have shown that after only thirty minutes of exercise, people experience a boost of good feelings. Thirty minutes of moderate exercise at least three times a week is a reasonable goal. Walking, playing soccer, and riding a bike are all good ways to exercise.

Prayer and Relaxation – Relaxation and prayer are helpful way to reduce stress and to more clearly discern appropriate ways of addressing situations.

Recreation – Engaging in activities you enjoy can help build self-confidence. Congratulate yourself and be proud of your achievements.

Lifelong Learning – Develop personal skills which will help you address people and situations thoughtfully and responsibly (for example, assertiveness training, conflict resolution, anger management, and negotiation). Learn new methods for coping with everyday problems. In what areas of your life would you like to make changes? What are some steps you can take to actually make these changes?

Social Involvement – Participate in volunteer work, organize a service group, play a sport, go for walks with friends. Doing things for others can help you feel good about yourself.

Building Positive Self-Esteem

Note to the Facilitator: Divide participants into small groups of five to ten, depending on the size of your class. Allow 30 minutes for each group to answer and discuss the following question: “How can we build positive self-esteem?” Reassemble and call on groups to present their responses. Use the following as additional discussion points:

- Do not compare yourself to others. Each one of us is a unique creation of God and God has gifted each of us differently.
- Believe you are a loved child of God.
- Believe in your future. If it looks bleak, work to create a more hopeful one.
- Ask two or three trusted friends to help you sort through your feelings, thoughts, and future plans.
- Ask several adults (1-3) whose faith is strong, whom you admire, and with whom you can talk and pray to be your mentor.
- Stay close to God! Engage in prayer, personal and group Bible study, worship.
- Find creative ways to do things you want to do – even if they seem impossible.
- Take care of yourself physically, emotionally, and spiritually.
- Believe you can succeed!
- Challenge yourself.
- Dream – think about things you would like to do.
- Practice new skills.
- Try new ways of doing things. Modify the processes to make them your own.
- Say “Thank you” and “You’re welcome” to others.
- Be true to yourself.
- Participate in activities that you enjoy doing and that you are good at doing.
- Trust yourself.
- Protect yourself.
- Celebrate when you are successful.
- Don’t expect yourself to be perfect.
- Allow yourself to make mistakes.
Creating Self-Esteem in Young People

- **Connectiveness** – Do the young people feel connected to family, friends, church, other activities, God? Do they have a sense of ownership about something? Do they feel a sense of belonging somewhere?

- **Uniqueness** – Do the young people know they are special and have unique abilities? Do they respect themselves? Do they enjoy feeling different at times? Are they affirmed for who they are? Do they have various opportunities for self-expression?

- **Power** – Do the young people believe they can accomplish individual goals? Are they confident, in charge of their lives overall? Can they confidently say, “No,” when they are in disagreement or do not want to participate?

- **Models** – Are there adults the young people know whom they admire and want to emulate? Are they surrounded by consistent beliefs and values? Do they have a sense of order and purpose in their lives?

These four elements are lived out in three arenas:

1. **Personal**: Behavior and feelings
2. **Interpersonal**: One-on-one relationships with adults and peers
3. **Group**: Any time two or more engage in an activity

Ways Adults Can Build Self-Esteem in Youth

- Show them they are valued by giving them your time.
- Point out that although they may not be perfect, neither is anyone else.
- Show (through kind words, thank-you notes, prayer cards) that you appreciate their efforts.
- Provide opportunities for responsibility so that they can demonstrate their reliability and trustworthiness.
- Listen when they talk; don’t finish their sentences for them.
- Remind them of successes when they are experiencing bad times.
- If a young person complains and mentions that you are too bossy or grumpy, think about it! He or she may be correct.
- Help young people develop the previous seven habits.

Resources
Any of the following are places and people who will work with you to help build healthy self-esteem in youth and young people.

- Local community health center
- Doctors
- Pastors
- Sunday school teachers
- Bible study leaders
- Prayer partners
- Trusted school teachers

The following books are also helpful as you work to build self-esteem in young people:

- **Understanding Young Children’s Behavior**, by J. Rodd (Australia: Allen and Unwin, 1996)

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1 The Four Conditions of Self-Esteem: A New Approach for Elementary and Middle Schools, by Reynold Bean (Santa Cruz, California: ETR Associates, 1992)
CHAPTER FIFTEEN
Youth: Relationships, Dating, and Sexuality

Websites from which to find more information:

http://www.arsrc.org/
The Africa Regional Sexuality Resource Centre.
The ARSRC promotes informed public dialogue and opportunities for
learning and advocacy on human sexuality to ensure positive
changes in policies and programmes on sexuality issues in Africa.

http://advocatesforyouth.org/
Advocates for Youth is dedicated to creating programs and advocating for
policies that help young people make informed and responsible decisions
about their reproductive and sexual health. Advocates provides information,
training, and strategic assistance to youth-serving organizations, policy
makers, youth activists, and the media in the United States and the
developing world.

Introduction
Regarding relationships, marriage and sexuality, the United Methodist Church says, “We affirm with Scripture
the common humanity of male and female, both having equal worth in the eyes of God. We reject the
erroneous notion that one gender is superior to another, that one gender must strive against another, and that
members of one gender may receive love, power, and esteem only at the expense of another. …We call upon
women and men alike to share power and control, to learn to give freely and to receive freely, to be complete
and to respect the wholeness of others. We seek for every individual opportunities and freedom to love and
be loved, to seek and receive justice, and to practice ethical self-determination” (The Book of Discipline of the

On the matter of marriage, the United Methodist Church says, “We affirm the sanctity of the marriage covenant
that is expressed in love, mutual support, personal commitment, and shared fidelity between a man and a
woman. We believe that God’s blessing rests upon such marriage, whether or not there are children of the
union. We reject social norms that assume different standards for women than for men in marriage. We
support laws in civil society that define marriage as the union of one man and one woman.” (The Book of
Discipline of the United Methodist Church 2008, Para. 161B, p102)

Youth sexuality is an important issue for dialogue and reflection by both young people and adults. By age
20, at least 80 percent of sub-Saharan African youth are sexually experienced and most who continue to be
sexually active do not practice proactive, safe sexual behaviours. Adults have the responsibility of providing
accurate and candid sexual health information to youth. The most imperative message is that sexual intimacy
should not occur until youth are ready, and then, only within a caring, mutually respectful relationship such as
marriage. This chapter supports the effort in educating and empowering youth to behave responsibly when
they decide to have sex.

Youth will have questions about sexuality and they need answers. Many adults want to help but do not know
how or where to begin. This is the challenge for 21st century youth ministries – especially in Africa. Against this
backdrop, it is vital to create among youth, their peers and the adults in their lives opportunities for authentic
conversations, storytelling and reflections about sexuality.

Sexuality is much more than sexual feelings or sexual intercourse; it is an important part of every person’s
identity. Youth are sexual beings. They naturally have sexual feelings and thoughts, and may engage in
experimentation. Developing healthy sexual behaviours during the adolescent years is a primary concern. For many youth and young adults sexual intercourse is not a part of healthy sexual development because it is too often linked to other problems such as involuntary sex, sexual abuse, negative peer pressure, drug and alcohol use, and/or violence. Early initiation to sexual intercourse may also expose young people to a number of harmful consequences, including sexually transmitted infections (STIs), HIV-AIDS, and pregnancy.

Many persons assume that there is only one kind of sexual intercourse. But many youth are engaging in oral and/or anal intercourse, believing that this is not sex. It is necessary to be clear with youth that all of these types of intercourse are sexual intercourse and they are behaviours that necessitate protection. The surest way to avoid transmission of STIs is to abstain from sexual intercourse or to remain in a long-term, mutually monogamous relationship with a partner who has been tested and whom you know is uninfected. For youth whose sexual behaviours place them at risk for pregnancies and STIs, correct and consistent use of the male latex condom can significantly reduce the risk of teen pregnancy and STI transmission. In order to achieve the protective effect of condoms, they must be used correctly and consistently. Youth, and all sexually active people, need to think, know the facts, and protect themselves and others.

**For Youth: Dating and Relationships**

We know that we are beloved children of God – created, claimed and loved unconditionally. And so, as people of God and as United Methodists, we are called to model the grace of God and the love of Jesus Christ in all our relationships. As adult leaders of young people, it is imperative that we help those in our care develop and mature in faithful and life-giving ways. Helping youth critique the health of current relationships, and become discerning about future relationships will aid in achieving this objective.

We all have relationships with many people in our lives and all of these relationships are different. Whether it is with friends, family, significant others, partners, acquaintances or anyone else, it is important to know how to have healthy relationships with the people in our lives. Healthy relationships increase our self-esteem, improve mental and emotional health, and help us have fuller lives. Surely, such wholeness is God’s intention for all people.

This section focuses mostly on significant others, partners, spouses, girlfriends, boyfriends, and intimate relationships. However, most everything found here can be applied to any relationship.

**Communication**

Most people agree that the ability to effectively communicate with others can have a huge impact on interpersonal relationships. Learning how to say what you mean in a way that others will understand can eliminate many stresses on relationships.

**In General Communication**

1. **Be Aware of Non-Verbal Signals.** Our body language, facial expressions, posture, and eye contact all change the meaning given to our words. Our voice, expressions, tone, volume, and rhythm all show the feeling in our words. Work to match your non-verbal communication with what you are saying so that your message carries the meaning that you want.

2. **Listen.** Indicate that you are paying attention by nodding your head or using brief statements. Do not interrupt when you are listening. Let the speaker finish before you start talking. Keep an open mind and be non-judgmental.

3. **Paraphrase and Ask Questions.** Repeat back what you think you’ve heard someone say and use summary statements. Ask questions to clarify statements. These techniques help you to avoid misunderstandings.
In an Argument or Disagreement
1. **Delay Your Reactions.** Don’t jump to conclusions. Give yourself time to process what was said and understand the speaker’s feelings before you respond. Wait until you have all the information so you don’t make inaccurate assumptions.

2. **Don’t Make Generalizations.** Be specific and direct. Concentrate on the particular personal issue. Do not change the subject, stick to the issue until it is resolved.

3. **Use “I” Statements.** “I” statements help to express your own feelings, attitudes, and desires. Using these types of messages will avoid putting the other person on the defensive. Saying things like “I am feeling unhappy…” allows you to express your feelings without criticizing the other person.

About Sex
1. **Discuss Abstinence, Sex, and Safer Sex.** You have the right to decide whether or not you want to have sex, and you should discuss this. It is best to wait to have sex until you are in a long-term committed relationship like marriage. If you decide not to have sex, talk about this with your partner. Even in a marriage relationship, you have the choice. If the other person does not respect your decision, then he/she is not respecting you. If you decide you might want to have sex, plan a time to talk about what you want before you are intimately involved. Be honest about your sexual history and your sexual health. Discuss and make mutual decisions on your safer sex options. Go together to get tested for sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

2. **Seek Clarification.** If you are getting mixed messages about what another person wants, especially if it is during sex, ask about these messages. If someone isn’t sure whether they want to do something or not, assume the answer is no and stop. It is okay to wait until you are sure.

3. **“NO” Can Be Said Many Ways.** “No” never means “maybe” or “yes.” Silence is not consent – if your partner is not responding, stop and ask whether what you are doing is okay. To give consent, a person must be physically and mentally capable of making the decision – if a person is unconscious, intoxicated, or under the influence of drugs, she/he cannot give consent.
Communicating with Your Partner about Sex
Worldwide, over 50% of new HIV infections occur among people aged 25 or younger. Moreover, in 2008, one out of four sexually active youth contracted an STI (sexually transmitted infections), and one out of five sexually active girls became pregnant.

It’s time we use the most powerful tool we have to protect ourselves – communication! Remember, communication is key. Discuss safer sex. Ask about your partner’s sexual history. Being open and honest about your and your partner’s sexual history shows that you care about one another’s health and well-being.

Yet, communicating with your partner/spouse about sex can be difficult. Some tips:
• To reach mutual understanding and agreement on sexual health issues, choose a convenient time when you will both be free of distractions.
• Choose a relaxing environment in a neutral location where neither of you will feel pressured.
• Use “I” statements when talking. For example, I feel that abstinence is right for me at this time. Or, I would feel more comfortable if we used a condom.
• Be assertive! Do not let fear of how your partner might react stop you from talking with him/her.
• Be a good listener. Let your partner know that you hear, understand, and care about what she/he is saying and feeling.
• Be “ask-able” – let your partner know you are open to questions and that you won’t be angry or offended by questions.
• Be patient, and remain firm in your decision that talking is important.
• Recognize your limits. You can’t communicate alone or protect you both alone, and you don’t have to know all the answers.
• Understand that success in talking does not mean one person getting the other person to do something. It means that you both have said what you think and feel respectfully and honestly and that you have both listened respectfully to the other.
• Get information to help you each make informed decisions.
• Avoid making assumptions. Ask open-ended questions to discuss relationship expectations, past and present sexual relationships, contraceptive use, and testing for STIs, including HIV, among other issues.
• Ask for more information when unsure. Ask questions to clarify what you believe you heard. For example, I think you said that you want us to use both condoms and birth control pills? Is that right? Or, I think you want us both to wait until we are married to have sex? Is that right?
• Avoid judging, labeling, blaming, threatening or bribing your partner. Don’t let your partner judge, label, blame, threaten, or bribe you.
• Do not wait until you become sexually intimate to discuss safer sex with your partner. In the heat of the moment, you and your partner may be unable to talk effectively.
• Stick by your decision. Don’t be swayed by lines like, If you loved me, you would have sex with me. Or, If you loved me, you would trust me and not use a condom.
Healthy vs. Unhealthy Relationships

**Being in a Healthy Relationship means...**

Loving and taking care of yourself, before and while in a relationship.

Respecting individuality, embracing differences, and allowing each person to “be themselves.”

Doing things with friends and family and having activities independent of each other.

Discussing things, allowing for differences of opinion, and compromising equally.

Expressing and listening to each other’s feelings, needs, and desires.

Trusting and being honest with yourself and each other.

Respecting each other’s need for privacy.

Sharing sexual histories and sexual health status with a partner.

Practicing safer sex methods.

Respecting sexual boundaries and being able to say no to sex.

Resolving conflicts in a rational peaceful, and mutually agreed upon way.

There is room for positive growth and you learn more about each other as you develop and mature.

**If you are in an Unhealthy Relationship...**

You care for and focus on another person only and neglect yourself or you focus only on yourself and neglect the other person.

You feel pressure to change to meet the other person’s standards, you are afraid to disagree, and your ideas are criticized. Or, you pressure the other person to meet your standards and criticize his/her ideas.

One of you has to justify what you do, where you go, and who you see.

One of you makes all the decisions and controls everything without listening to the other’s input.

One of you feels unheard and is unable to communicate what you want.

You lie to each other and find yourself making excuses for the other person.

You don’t have any personal space and have to share everything with the other person.

Your partner keeps his/her sexual history a secret or hides a sexually transmitted infection from you or you do not disclose your history to your partner.

You feel scared of asking your partner to use protection or s/he has refused your requests for safer sex. Or, you refuse to use safer sex methods after your partner has requested or you make your partner feel scared.

Your partner has forced you to have sex or you have had sex when you don’t really want to. Or, you have forced or coerced your partner to have sex.

One or both of you yells and hits, shoves or throws things at the other in an argument.

You feel stifled, trapped, and stagnant. You are unable to escape the pressures of the relationship.
Dating Violence

Some Warning Signs:
Are you going out with someone who...

- Is jealous or possessive toward you? Won’t let you have friends? Checks up on you? Won’t accept breaking up? Tries to control you by being bossy? Giving orders? Making all the decisions? Doesn’t take you seriously?
- Is scary? You worry about how s/he will react to things you say or do? Threatens you? Uses or owns weapons?
- Is violent? Has a history of fighting? Loses temper easy? Brags about mistreating others?
- Pressures you for sex? Thinks of you as a sex object? Tries to guilt trip you by saying “If you really loved me you would…”? Gets too serious about the relationship too fast?
- Abuses drugs or alcohol and pressures you to take them?
- Has a history of bad relationships and always blames other people for their problems?

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- Believes that in a relationship one person should be in control and have all the power and the other person should be submissive?
- Your friends and family have warned you about the person or told you they are worried about your safety?
Activity

1. To begin the session, ask participants to form two teams. Team A will discuss the consequences and dangers of making uniformed choices regarding relationships and sexuality. Team B will discuss the consequences and wisdom of making informed choices regarding relationships and sexuality.

Allow teams 15-20 minutes to organize their thoughts and determine arguments for a 10-minute debate. Each team will have 5 minutes to make its points and the audience will have 3 minutes to ask questions. Encourage participants to create a poster or write a song, poem or story that represents their thoughts.

2. Conclude by discussing the following questions with the large group:
   - What are effective ways for a couple to discuss abstinence? The use of condoms? The use of condoms and another method of contraception?
   - What should a person do if his/her partner will not agree to a chosen method of risk reduction?
   - What skills or information do you need in order to protect yourself against unintended pregnancies and STIs, including HIV?
   - Where should information about sexuality be taught (at home, school, faith community, others)? What kind of information should be taught to youth (abstinence, birth control, how children are conceived, etc.)?
   - Should this include information about pregnancy prevention and STI’s? Why or why not?
   - What is God’s desire for humanity as sexual beings?
Adolescent Sexual Health in Developing Countries

There are over one billion young people between the ages of 15 and 24 worldwide. The reproductive and sexual health decisions these young people make today will affect the health and well-being of their own lives, their country and their world for decades.

In particular, two international issues have a profound impact on young people’s lives: family planning and HIV/AIDS. Women in less developed countries are 30 times more likely to die from reproductive health-related causes than women in industrialized countries. And, teenage women are twice as likely to die from pregnancy-related health complications as are women in their twenties. HIV/AIDS respects no borders, no economic class, no gender and no age. Current statistics on HIV/AIDS indicate that one-half of all new HIV infections worldwide occur among young people ages 15 to 24. Every minute, five young people worldwide become infected with HIV/AIDS. This is over 7,000 young people each day. The socioeconomic and political consequences of the HIV epidemic place these youth at further risk as the infrastructure in their countries comes under enormous strain.

Sexually active youth in developing countries need access to confidential, low-cost, and youth-friendly contraceptive services to delay too-early childbearing and protect themselves from sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV infection.

Characteristics of Effective Sexuality and HIV Education Programs

The most effective programs share characteristics. These programs:

• Focus on reducing one or more sexual behaviors that lead to unintended pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.

• Deliver and consistently reinforce a clear message about abstaining from sexual activity and/or using condoms or other forms of contraception. This appears to be one of the more important characteristics distinguishing effective from ineffective programs.

• Provide basic, accurate information about the risks of sexual activity and about ways to avoid intercourse or to use methods of protection against pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections.

• Include activities that address social pressures that influence sexual behavior.

• Provide examples of and practice with communication, negotiation, and refusal skills.

• Incorporate behavioral goals, teaching methods, and materials that are appropriate to the age, sexual experience, and culture of the students.

• Employ teaching methods designed to involve participants and have participants personalize the information.

• Are based on theoretical approaches that have been demonstrated to influence other health-related behaviors and identify specific important sexual antecedents to be targeted.

• Select teachers or leaders who believe in the program and then provide them with adequate training.

• Last a sufficient length of time (i.e., more than a few hours).

Abstinence

Abstinence is the only 100 percent effective method for avoiding unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. Adolescents should be encouraged to delay sexual initiation. Youth leaders should acknowledge the importance of abstinence and provide youth with the knowledge, attitudes, and skills necessary to make abstinence work. However, even youth who pledge to remain abstinent need information about contraception and condoms to help them prevent unintended pregnancy, HIV and other STIs when they do become sexually active.
Condom Effectiveness
When used consistently and correctly, latex condoms are highly effective in preventing the sexual transmission of HIV (during vaginal, oral, or anal intercourse). A recent study of declining HIV prevalence in Uganda found no evidence that abstinence or monogamy had contributed to the decline. Findings identified the increased use of condoms in casual relationships as important in Uganda’s declining HIV infection rates. Latex condoms are also effective in preventing pregnancy and several sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Using condoms lowers women’s risk of developing cervical cancer, a disease associated with HPV (Human Papillomavirus).

Sex and Condom Use
When you do decide to have sex, practice safer sex. Using a latex condom each and every time you have vaginal, oral, or anal intercourse will lower the risk of pregnancy and of contracting an STI, including HIV. (Remember if you have an infection with open sores, the infection may be transmitted through the area that is not covered by the condom.)

DO’s and DON’Ts of Condom Use!
- **DO** use a condom each and every time you have sex.
- **DO** check the expiration date.
- **DO** use water-based or silicone-based lubricants.
- **DO NOT** use a condom more than once.
- **DO NOT** use two condoms at the same time. The friction between the condoms may cause them to tear.
- **DO NOT** use oil-based lubricants (like petroleum jelly or baby oil). They can cause the condom to break.
- **Do not** use a condom if the individual condom packet is ripped.
Sexual Orientation and Youth

Sexual orientation as a subject is highly controversial and hotly debated. While it is important to be sensitive to a community’s attitude and traditions, it is equally important to note that youth need and deserve accurate information, and opportunities to discuss, reflect on, and dialogue about difficult issues. Because of fear of stigmatization, violence, and rejection, homosexual persons, including youth, are often afraid to reveal their sexual orientation to others and are forced to keep aspects of their identity secret. Gay youth may struggle to find a safe place where and safe people with whom they can talk about this important facet of their life. In an effort not to isolate anyone from this discussion, it is appropriate for us to use inclusive language such as we, some people, many persons and so on. Also do not assume that everyone participating in the conversation is heterosexual.

Desmond Tutu, the former Archbishop of Cape Town in South Africa and a Nobel Peace Prize winner, has taken a public stand against homophobia and heterosexism. Archbishop Tutu says that homophobia is a “crime against humanity” and “every bit unjust” as apartheid. “We treat them [gay and lesbian people] as pariahs and push them outside our communities. We make them doubt that they too are children of God – and this must be nearly the ultimate blasphemy. We blame them for what they are. A parent who brings up a child to be a racist damages that child, damages the community in which they live, damages our hopes for a better world. A parent who teaches a child that there is only one sexual orientation and that anything else is evil denies our humanity and their own too.”

As Christians, we are called to be respectful, accepting, and compassionate to all people. Although people of faith are not of a common mind on homosexuality, the Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church clearly asserts, “We affirm all persons as equally valuable in the sight of God. We therefore work toward societies in which each person’s value is recognized, maintained, and strengthened. We support the basic rights of all persons to equal access to housing, education, communication, employment, medical care, legal redress for grievances, and physical protection. We deplore acts of hate or violence against groups of persons based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, or economic status. Our respect for the inherent dignity of all persons leads us to call for the recognition, protection, and implementation of the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights so that communities and individuals may claim and enjoy their universal, indivisible, and inalienable rights (The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church 2008, Para. 162, p. 108).
INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Many interrelated topics concerning youth sexuality are being debated around the world. Conflicts occur mostly in local communities and some churches. There is no magical solution. There is probably not even a compromise related to the above issues that will satisfy the majority of parents, youth, and other adults. Still, it is important to find ways for young people and parents of young people to engage in healthy, open conversations about sexuality. Parents and youth must cultivate honesty and trust in their relationships so that young people have a safe place to seek help and counsel when necessary.

10 Tips for Talking about the Facts of Life

Initiating conversations about the facts of life, sexual intimacy, may be difficult for some parents because they did not grow up in an environment where the subject was discussed. Some parents may be afraid they do not know the right answers or feel confused about the proper amount of information to offer. To help, here are 10 tips:

1. Encourage communication by reassuring your children that they can talk to you about anything.
2. Take advantage of teachable moments. A friend’s pregnancy, news article, etc., help start a conversation.
3. Listen more than you talk. Think about what you’re being asked. Confirm with your child that what you heard is in fact what he or she meant to ask.
4. Don’t jump to conclusions. The fact that a teen asks about sex does not mean they are having or thinking about having sex.
5. Answer questions simply and directly. Give factual, honest, short, and simple answers.
6. Respect your child’s views. Share your thoughts and values and help your child express theirs.
7. Reassure young people that they are normal — as are their questions and thoughts.
8. Teach your children ways to make good decisions about sex and coach them on how to get out of risky situations.
9. Admit when you don’t know the answer to a question. Suggest the two of you find the answer together.
10. Discuss that at times your teen may feel more comfortable talking with someone other than you. Together, think of other trusted adults with whom they can talk.

Tips for Talking with Sexually Active Young Adults about Contraception

Each year hundreds of thousands of young people experience pregnancy, mostly unintentionally, and millions more contract sexually transmitted infections (STIs). A critical issue in reducing these numbers is encouraging them to use contraception consistently and correctly.

Parents can play an important role in helping young people utilize their own values, aspirations, and expectations in deciding the appropriate time in life for initiating sexual intercourse. Parents can also provide important information about the availability and proper use of contraception. The following tips can help parents talk with their youth and young adults about the effective and consistent use of contraception.

1. Educate yourself about the specifics of contraception and STIs. Learn about contraception, including what, if any, emergency contraception is available in your area, and about condoms. Learn how contraceptives work, the cost of various methods, side effects, pros and cons of each method, and where young people can go for information and services. Learn also about STIs — gonorrhea, syphilis, herpes, genital warts, and HIV — including ways they are transmitted, symptoms, risks, and treatment options.
2. Carefully explain your own feelings and values about sexual intercourse and contraceptive use. Include personal memories and values. Values that are related to contraceptive and condom use include respect for self and partner, responsibility, and trust. Other values pertinent to discussing contraception
may include, but are not limited to, those related to life, children, and future aspirations.

3. **Listen carefully.** Only by listening to your child’s feelings and values will you understand how he/she approaches decisions, including sexual decisions. When you understand your young person’s values, you can ask questions that help him/her clarify how to act consistently with those values. For example, a young person might say, “I believe that too many children need homes and there are too many people in the world.” This is an opportunity to ask what actions related to preventing pregnancy would be consistent with that value.

4. **Avoid assumptions.**
   - Do not assume that your child knows everything he/she needs to know about contraception and condoms. Assure him/her that knowledge is power and that you want him/her to have the power that comes from knowledge. Assure your youth that you will not make assumptions based on his/her questions or concerns.
   - Do not make assumptions about the youth’s sexual orientation or about his/her sexual behavior based on that orientation.
   - Do not assume that there is only one kind of sexual intercourse. Many young people are having oral and/or anal intercourse, believing that this is not “sex.” Be clear with your child that all these types of intercourse are sexual intercourse and are behaviors that necessitate protection.

5. **Arm your young person with information.** Talk with your child about what you have learned about contraception, including condoms and emergency contraception (EC). Encourage him/her to seek out further information. Say that being prepared in advance is always the intelligent, mature choice. Make sure your young person knows where he/she can go for confidential sexual health services, including contraception and STI testing and treatment.

6. **Discuss using condoms as well birth control.** Youth and young adults need to know that contraceptive methods don’t protect against STIs. They need to know that they can contract STIs, including HIV, from unprotected vaginal, anal, or oral intercourse.

7. **Make sure your youth and young adults know about emergency contraception (EC), if it’s available in your area – which can be taken to prevent pregnancy up to 120 hours (five days) after unprotected intercourse or when a contraceptive method fails.**

8. **Encourage your teen to take equal responsibility with a partner for using condoms and birth control.** Just as a male should not be the only one responsible for providing condoms, so a female should not be the only one responsible for providing for other forms of contraception. Protection is a mutual responsibility within a caring relationship.

9. **Discuss the power of emotions and feeling.** Many young people say they did not use condoms or contraception because they “just got carried away in the moment.” Be clear that this is not okay. Anyone who is mature enough to have sexual intercourse is mature enough to use protection.

10. **Discuss sexual coercion and dating violence with your child.** Make sure that your youth knows she/he has the right to say no and the right to be safe. Make sure your child knows that he/she can come to you or another trusted adult if a relationship involves or threatens to involve coercion or violence. Make sure he/she knows that is contrary to United Methodist teaching and to your family’s values to use coercion or violence against anyone else. Help young people identify ways to avoid/get away from sexual situations that feel uncomfortable or dangerous.

11. **With your child, identify the names of other adults to whom he/she can go if unable or unwilling to come to you.** This could be a relative, clergy member, health care provider, or friend, but identify the person as someone your youth can trust for confidential guidance and support. Give your youth permission to confide in someone else and say that these conversations will remain confidential although the other adult may encourage the young person to involve you.
**Activity**

1. To begin the session, ask participants to choose partners for an interview. With each person playing the role of a parent or youth, alternate asking the following questions: (a) “If you were a youth or young adult, what would you expect your parent to say to you about sexuality? (b) If you were a parent, how would you discuss sexuality with your child?” Allow five minutes, then regroup and ask for volunteers to talk about responses from the interviews. List on chart paper the key issues raised in the interviews. Allow 10 minutes for youth feedback.

2. Based on input from the interview, ask the participants to discuss communication (see Chapter 8 for additional information). For example, what is communication? How do persons communicate? What are the processes involved? How does one communicate effectively? Record participants’ input on a chalkboard or chart paper. Reinforce the idea that communication involves exchanging information or ideas through many mediums. Communication will not be successful unless all participants in the dialogue understand each other. Hearing, listening, understanding, interoperating, and responding are important for effective communication to take place. Allow 15 minutes for discussion and interaction.

3. After 15 minutes, form groups of 3 by counting off (1, 2, 3). Groups will reflect on and discuss how communication about sexuality could take place in the following areas:
   - **Group 1**: Parents and guardians
   - **Group 2**: Youth/peers
   - **Group 3**: Society (media, environment, faith community, and so on)

   Allow 15 minutes for small-group work. Hand out markers, posters, and tape to each group. Explain that each group should plan to present a six-minute report to the large group, including key points raised during the small-group discussion. Plan to include four minutes for questions at the end of each presentation.

4. After 15 minutes, reassemble and encourage members from other groups to interact by asking questions and making suggestions.

5. Conclude by discussing the following questions with the whole group:
   - How are the messages from parents, friends and society similar? How are they different? Why?
   - What messages about sexuality have you heard from other sources, such as religious teachings, romantic partners or health teachers? (List these messages on a chalkboard or chart paper.) With which messages do you agree or disagree?
   - Which of these messages makes you comfortable or uncomfortable in talking about sexuality?
   - If you were an adult, what is the most important message about sexuality you would give to your child or youth?

**Sexual Abuse and Violence in Sub-Saharan Africa**

Sexual abuse and violence are serious problems that transcend racial, economic, social and regional lines. Violence is frequently directed toward females and youth, who lack the economic and social status to resist or avoid it. Adolescents and young women, in particular, may experience abuses in the form of domestic violence, rape and sexual assault, sexual exploitation, and/or female genital mutilation. Accurately estimating the prevalence of sexual abuse and violence in the developing world is difficult due to the limited amount of research done on the subject. Cultural traditions against reporting abuse make it difficult to assess accurately, and few adolescent health programs in sub-Saharan African address these critical issues.
Domestic Violence Is Widespread in Sub-Saharan Africa

- Violence against women is a widespread problem in sub-Saharan Africa. Surveys conducted in sub-Saharan Africa reveal that 46 percent of Ugandan women, 60 percent of Tanzanian women, 42 percent of Kenyan women, and 40 percent of Zambian women report regular physical abuse. In a Nigerian survey, 81 percent of married women report being verbally or physically abused by their husbands. Forty-six percent report being abused in the presence of their children.
- Violence has a significant impact on the health and life expectancy of women. The World Bank estimates that rape and domestic abuse account for 5 percent of healthy years of life lost to women of reproductive age in developing countries.
- Domestic violence can have long-term psychological effects. Studies have shown that one out of every four suicide attempts by women is preceded by abuse.
- Children in abusive households also suffer from the effects of violence, whether or not they are physically abused. Studies have shown that children who witness violence may experience many of the same emotional and behavioral problems that physically abused children experience, such as depression, aggression, disobedience, nightmares, physical health complaints and poor school performance.

Young People Are Vulnerable to Rape and Sexual Assault

- Worldwide, 40-47 percent of sexual assaults are perpetrated against girls age 15 or younger.
- In a study in a South African hospital of children under age 15 in whom a diagnosis of child abuse was considered, 45 percent of the children reported having been the target of sexual abuse. Thirty-one percent reported being physically abused, and sexual abuse was suspected but not confirmed in another 14 percent of the children. A study in Uganda revealed that 49 percent of sexually active primary school girls say they had been forced to have sexual intercourse.
- Abuse takes place in both urban and rural environments. A study in a rural population of South Africa found that 51 percent of children between six months and 15 years of age receiving medical treatment for sexual abuse have been abused by a neighbor, an acquaintance, a lodger or a stranger. Studies conducted in a city in Zimbabwe found that half of reported rape cases involve girls less than 15 years of age and that girls are most vulnerable to sexual abuse by male relatives, neighbors and school teachers.
- Both boys and girls can be targets for sexual abuse. In a District in Uganda, 31 percent of school girls and 15 percent of boys report having been sexually abused, many by teachers.
- The threat of social stigma prevents young women from speaking out about rape and abuse. In Zimbabwe, rape cases are sometimes settled out of court when the perpetrator either pays compensation to the girl’s father or pays a bride price and marries the girl to avoid bringing public attention and shame to the girl and her family.
- All Anglophone countries have enacted laws which directly address sexual offenses against minors. The age at which young people are protected by statutory rape laws varies in these countries, from under 13 years in Nigeria to under 16 years in Zimbabwe. Only Kenya specifically criminalizes both physical and verbal sexual harassment.

Young People Are Targets of Sexual Coercion and Exploitation

- Young girls frequently report that their early sexual experiences were coerced. In a study in South Africa, 30 percent of girls report that their first sexual intercourse was forced. In rural Malawi, 55 percent of adolescent girls surveyed report that they were often forced to have sex.
- Sexual exploitation of young people is frequently facilitated by their lack of economic power and job opportunities. In Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia, an estimated 30 percent (about 30,000) of prostitutes are women ranging from 12-26 years of age. The number of adolescent females engaged in informal prostitution may be far greater.
- Young women are vulnerable to coercion into sexual relationships with older men. “Sugar daddies” take advantage of girls’ lack of economic resources by promising to help with their expenses in exchange
for sex. A study of female adolescents in Kenya revealed that 50 percent of the girls admit receiving gifts in the form of money, ornaments and clothes from their partners when they engaged in sex for the first time. In Uganda, twenty-two percent of primary school girls anticipate receiving gifts or money in exchange for sex.

- In a hospital study on abortion in Tanzania, nearly one third of adolescents receiving abortion were impregnated by men 45 years or older.
- In villages in Ghana, 70 percent of mothers interviewed said they had encouraged young girls into premarital sexual relationships. Many older women felt that receiving gifts in exchange for sex was not regarded as prostitution but evidence of a man’s love.
- Forced marriage of young girls to older males leaves girls with little or no economic or social power. In rural Northern Ethiopia, the mean age for first marriage is 13.5 years for girls and 19.5 years for boys. While the average age at marriage is rising, twelve of sixteen countries included in the Demographic Health Survey have an average age at first marriage of between 16 and 21.

Female Genital Cutting Threatens the Health of Young Women

- Estimates suggest that between 85 and 114 million girls have been subjected to female genital cutting, also known as female genital mutilation (FGM) or female circumcision. The practice varies from cutting the external genital area to closing the genital area leaving a small opening for passage of urine and menstrual flow. As populations grow, the number of girls undergoing the procedure is increasing by about 2 million per year.
- Female genital cutting has severe and lifelong health consequences for girls. In Sudan, doctors estimate that 10 to 30 percent of young girls die from it, especially in areas where antibiotics are not available. Medical complications of FGM include pain, prolonged bleeding, hemorrhaging, urinary retention, infections, obstetric complications, and psychological trauma.
- Few laws protect young women from FGM. In Anglophone African nations where genital cutting is prevalent, only Ghana has passed specific laws opposing its practice.

1 From Advocates for Youth, “Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health in Sub-Saharan Africa” (http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/publications/factsheet/fssxrepr.htm); February 3, 2009
2 From Advocates for Youth, “Healthy Relationships” (http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/youth/health/relationships/index.html); February 3, 2009
3 From Advocates for Youth, “Sex Education” (http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/rrr/characteristics.htm); February 3, 2009
4 From Advocates for Youth, “Abstinence” (http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/abstinence.htm); February 3, 2009
5 From Advocates for Youth, “Condoms” (http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/publications/factsheet/fscondom.htm); February 3, 2009
6 From Desmond Tutu: “Homophobia Equals apartheid” (http://www.afrol.com/articles/13584); February 3, 2009
7 From Advocates for Youth, “Gay and Lesbian” (http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/publications/safespace/faq.htm); February 3, 2009
8 From Advocates for Youth, “For Parents” (http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/parents/tips.htm); February 3, 2009
9 From Advocates for Youth, “For Parents” (http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/parents/contraception.htm); February 3, 2009
10 From “Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health in Sub-Saharan Africa” (http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/publications/factsheet/fssxrepr.htm); February 3, 2009
CHAPTER SIXTEEN
Gender-Based Violence

Introduction
Gender-based violence is a major human rights problem throughout the world. For centuries women have struggled with gender-based violence. And still, it continues to be part of life for many women and girls. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) states: “The range of gender-based violence is devastating, occurring quite literally from the womb to the tomb. Among other abuses, violence against women includes: prenatal sex selection of male babies, female infanticide, sexual abuse, sexual harassment in schools and the workplace, sex trafficking, forced prostitution, dowry and related violence, domestic violence, battery and marital rape.” (Violence Against the World’s Women, UNIFEM 2002). Gender-based violence is not restricted to particular communities. It happens in all kinds of communities, regardless of economic class, race, religion, ethnicity, nationality, or age.

The World Health Organization’s (WHO) Report on Violence and Health notes, “One of the most common forms of violence against women is that performed by a husband or male partner.” This type of violence is frequently invisible since it happens behind closed doors. It is often seen as a private matter between a man and his wife and, in most cases, accepted as normal and as part of “married life.” In some African cultures, it is believed that wife-beating is a manifestation of a man’s love for his wife.

Within families, both girls and boys are victims of many kinds of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse – including incest. Girls and women are more likely than boys and men to experience a wide range of abuses, including sexual harassment, rape, and other forms of sexual violence. Violence against women is widespread with far-reaching health consequences. It calls upon the government, civil society, church leaders, community workers, and women’s groups to take action.

The United Methodist Church is also clear about the need to defend the rights of women and abolish all forms of gender-based violence. Our 2008 Book of Discipline states, “We affirm women and men to be equal in the every aspect of their common life. We affirm the right of women to equal treatment in employment, responsibility, promotion, and compensation. We affirm the importance of women in decision-making positions at all levels of Church and society and urge such bodies to guarantee their presence through policies of employment and recruitment. … We affirm the right of women to live free from violence and abuse and urge governments to enact policies that protect women against all forms of violence and discrimination in any sector of society” (Para 162F, p. 110, 2008).
Concepts, Forms, and Factors

This chapter provides information to adult workers about gender-based violence and the consequences of this violence. This information can help adult workers be aware of the different needs of girls and boys and young women and men.

Note to Facilitator: The following icebreaker technique is recommended to help participants relax and warm up to the learning environment. However, another icebreaker technique may be used.

1. Pair up participants with someone they do not know. Suggest they talk about:
   • Their understanding of the meaning of gender
   • Their understanding of gender-based violence

2. Find out the names of at least two participants who have worked with victims of violence and the capacity in which they served.

Definitions and Forms of Gender-Based Violence

Violence – The World Health Organization (WHO) defines violence as, “The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actually perpetrated against oneself, another person, or against a group or community that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal development or deprivation” (World Health Organization, Geneva 2002).

Violence Against Women – The Beijing Platform for Action (PFA) defines violence against women as “any gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women including threats or such acts as coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.” (United Nations website: http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/)

Gender – Gender refers to the socially constructed roles and responsibilities assigned to men and women by society. The roles are learned; they vary between cultures and change over time.

Gender-Based Violence – Gender-based violence refers to all forms of violence that happen to women, girls, boys and men because of the unequal power relations between them and the perpetrators of such violence. Violence against women is often supported by the gender norms, values and beliefs of a culture or society. For example, it is a popular belief that men are superior to women and women should be subordinate.
Forms of Violence

Domestic Violence
This is the most common form of violence and it is the most difficult to deal with since it is perpetrated by family members in the privacy of the home. Domestic violence includes:

- **Physical Violence** – Includes wife battering, beating, child defilement, punching, slapping, kicking, and so on.

- **Psychological and Emotional Abuse** – Includes verbal abuse, intimidation, servitude, threats, accusations, humiliation, overwork, and subordination.

Economic Violence
This is one of the subtest forms of violence perpetuated against women. It happens in the family, the workplace, and in various institutions. It includes, but is not limited to: men withholding financial support; depriving women and girls of basic necessities such as food and clothing; forbidding employment; forcing women to surrender money to husbands. Another kind of economic violence experienced in some parts of Africa is the grabbing of widows’ or widowers property by relatives of the deceased spouse.

Socio-Cultural Practices
Most societies have some traditional practices that encourage violence against women. This form of violence occurs in different contexts including the family, community, and various institutions. In Africa it comprises early and forced marriages, early sex discriminatory dietary practices, wife inheritance, and female genital mutilation. In many African societies, women are regarded as the property of men. At the death of a husband, the woman becomes a commodity to be inherited and relatives grab family property as if the women and children are of no importance.

Sexual Abuse
According to the World Health Organization, sexual abuse is “any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic or otherwise directed against a person’s sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim in any setting, including but not limited to home and work” (WHO, 2002). Sexual abuse refers to all forms of forced sexual acts including rape, incest, sexual harassment, demands for sex in return for favors and forced prostitution.

Political Violence
This type violence affects women and girls because of their sexuality. Rape is often used as a weapon of war to terrorize communities and to force people to flee. It also includes violence by law enforcement officials, including border officials and peacekeeping forces. There are also ethnic clashes and organized crime such as banditry and abductions.
Gender Violence throughout a Woman’s Life
Women may face different forms of violence at different stages in their lives.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Type of Violence</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Natal</td>
<td>Prenatal sex selection, battering during pregnancy, coerced pregnancy (rape during war)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infancy</td>
<td>Female infanticide, emotional and physical abuse, differential access to food and medical care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childhood</td>
<td>Genital cutting; incest and sexual abuse; differential access to food, medical care, and education; child prostitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescence</td>
<td>Dating and courtship violence, economically coerced sex, sexual abuse in the workplace, rape, sexual harassment, forced prostitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reproductive</td>
<td>Abuse of women by intimate partners, marital rape, dowry abuse and murders, partner homicide, psychological abuse, sexual abuse in the workplace, sexual harassment, rape, abuse of women with disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old Age</td>
<td>Abuse of widows, elder abuse (which affects mostly women)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Causes and Effects of Gender Violence

Socio-Cultural Factors
The root cause of gender-based violence is the unequal power relations between women and men. This power inequity puts women in a lower social status and allows females and males to be socialized differently. Girls are trained to serve and reproduce while boys are trained to lead and be served. Females are perceived to be weak, inferior, and in need of guidance. Males are socialized to act strong and to expect services from women. Also the traditions, customs, beliefs, and attitudes of many cultures accept these unequal power differentials and use them to justify the subordination of women. With girls viewed as less important than boys, many girls remain uneducated, which further worsens the current situations and future prospects of women.

Legal Factors
Outdated laws, the negative attitudes of the prosecutors, magistrates, judges, and others towards women perpetuate violence. Women’s lack of access to legal and justice services also perpetuates of violence. Women’s ignorance of their rights contributes to the entrenchment of gender-based violence as well.

Policies and Practices
Though the national constitutions of most countries provide for the equal rights of women and men, the laws and policies have not been amended to conform to the constitutions. The absence of women in decision-making positions contributes to the policies that tolerate violence.

Economic Factors
The economic dependence of women on men is one of the major causes of economic violence. Poverty, limited opportunities, and lack of control over one’s own resources are ways gender violence manifests in the economic sector.

Institutional Factors
In many communities there is a lack of victim support services. Where these services do exist, it is difficult for victims to access them because of the fear of ridicule, retaliation, and/or further abuse. In most rural areas, the traditional leaders are the only source of support for victims, and these are mostly men.
Religious Factors
• Religious institutions often entrench and reinforce social structures like patriarchy and subordination of women.

• Interpretation of scriptures (Christian and Muslim) with a patriarchal bias gives “spiritual” sanction to women’s low status. Therefore:
  — The biblical belief that woman came out of man (see Genesis 2:22) reinforces patriarchy and the subjugation of women to men.
  — The Bible says married partners should not refuse sex unless it is by mutual understanding (1 Corinthians 7:5). This verse is sometimes interpreted to mean that a woman cannot refuse sex with her husband.
  — The Bible says that the man is the head of the wife (Ephesians 5:23).
  — The Qur’an says men are to manage women’s affairs because God “has preferred in bounty” one of them over another (Anisa 4:34).
  — The Qur’an says that women who are rebellious should be admonished and banished to their couches and beaten (Anisa 4:34).

• Women are encouraged to be subservient, submissive, passive, and silent.
• In Islam, a woman can never become an Imam or have authority over a man in religion.
• In the Catholic Church a woman can never become the Pope or a priest.
• Traditionally a man can have many wives, especially in Islam; but a woman can have only one husband.
• In Islam, it is very difficult, if not impossible, for women to initiate divorce, regardless of the circumstances.
• Christians are discouraged from divorce, although the Bible allows it in cases of adultery.
• During separation from one’s spouse and before reunion, men often have other sexual partners.
• The church policy on contraception varies (for example, some approve of condom use, some do not).

The Effects and Impact of Violence Activity
In groups of 5 to 7 people, brainstorm some of the consequences of violence.

Group 1: What are some health consequences of violence?
Group 2: What are some psychological effects of violence?
Group 3: What are some economic consequences of violence?
Group 4: What are some social consequences of violence?

Answers may include the following:
• Health Consequences: Physical injury, death, sexually transmitted infections (including HIV/AIDS and unwanted pregnancies)
• Psychological Consequences: Depression, loss of self-esteem, shame, alcohol and drug abuse, suicidal tendencies
• Economic Consequences: Health care costs, legal and judicial services, loss of productivity
• Social Consequences: Imprisonment, ostracism, stigma, loss of self- and social-esteem
Responding to the Challenges of Gender Violence

Ending Gender-Based Violence
Around the world, as many as one in every three women has been beaten, coerced into sex, or abused in some other way. Most often this abuse is by someone she knows, including her husband or another male family member. One woman in four has been abused during pregnancy.¹

“Violence against women both violates and impairs or nullifies the enjoyment by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms ... In all societies, to a greater or lesser degree, women and girls are subjected to physical, sexual and psychological abuse that cuts across lines of income, class and culture.”²

The confidentiality, safety and well being of survivors of gender-based violence must be a top priority at all times. When working with young people through the church, it is important that we offer appropriate pastoral support.

1. Confidentiality and Safety²
   - Do not repeat, publish, or broadcast the names or any identifying information about victims.
   - Do conduct counseling sessions or conversations about the abuse in a secure and private setting, and only if you are qualified and trained to do so.
   - Do take extra precautions to ensure the confidentiality and safety of the person who was victimized. Otherwise women and girls may risk social stigma and further violence. For example: A perpetrator of violence, including an abusive husband or boyfriend, may retaliate against a woman or girl for talking to a journalist, pastor, friend, or anyone else. In cases of “honor” crimes, relatives may abuse or kill female family members who are perceived to have brought “dishonor” to the family, often for suspected sexual activity outside marriage, including rape that the female family member did not instigate.
   - Do confirm with survivors that you will keep their confidence.
   - Do provide your personal contact information in a written form so victims can contact you later if necessary.
   - Do take extra precautions if you must speak with children. When possible, consult first with trusted family members or service providers, such as healthcare workers or counselors. For the safety reasons cited previously, do not speak to family members or others if there is potential for retaliation.
   - Do not speak to a child alone.
   - Do encourage women to talk with female survivors. Use discretion, depending on the situation, and respect the survivor’s preferences.
   - Do supply information about local support services to survivors who wish to seek help. Such services include rape crisis centers and women’s shelters.
   - Do remain aware that conversations about abuse can re-traumatize the victim.
   - Do ask whether the survivor needs medical help and psychological services, including the morning-after pill, emergency contraceptives, and/or counseling.
   - Do make sure she receives the support and justice she needs and desires.
2. Specific Risks of Gender-Based Violence in Refugee Camps

- Refugee women and girls may have fled sexual violence amid situations of armed conflict or may have encountered violence while traveling to safety.
- Domestic violence may be particularly acute in refugee settings because of disruptions in family and community structures, limited resources, and frustration and stress in protracted refugee situations.
- Unsafe physical surroundings, separation from families, and patriarchal governing structures often heighten women and girls’ vulnerability to gender-based violence in refugee camps.
- Scarce resources, unequal access to humanitarian aid, and male-dominated camp leadership may place refugee women and girls at risk for sexual exploitation by aid workers and local officials, as well as men and boys in the community.
- Restrictive laws in the host country and lack of access to the criminal justice system and legal representation may affect refugee women and girls’ ability to find redress for violence.

3. Ways to Support Women’s Rights and Safety in Refugee Camps

- Encourage a larger degree of women’s participation and leadership in all aspects of camp design, security, and management.
- Encourage the recruitment and retention of trained female protection officers, police officers, and aid workers, including teachers and food distribution officials.
- Enlist church help for organizing programs to prevent and respond to gender-based violence, involving legal, medical, psycho-social, and community awareness measures.
- Ask your church to help each person obtain individual registration documents and independent and equal access to all humanitarian aid.
- Encourage and help initiate equal and full access to educational and employment opportunities.

Activity

Encourage participants to develop individual plans of action. In small groups ask them to discuss the following scenarios and then regroup to report their findings. At the conclusion of group reporting, a facilitator should collect the solutions. These solutions may form a possible plan of action that participants can take back to their communities.

Group 1
You serve as a pastor in a local church in a community where domestic violence is rampant. What actions can you take to help end this vice?

Group 2
You are a community development worker. You have witnessed countless examples of economic violence in your community. What actions can you take to help end the violence?

Group 3
You are a female activist and there is a large amount of socio-cultural violence in your community. What actions can you take to help eliminate this violence?

Group 4
As the elected Parliament member for your constituency, what actions can you take or promote to help eliminate the political violence common in your area?

Group 5
You are a youth worker and sexual violence in your community is prominent. What can you do to help end this vice?
Resources


• “Gender and the Church – Women Training for Change,” Women’s Division, General Board of Global Ministries, The United Methodist Church. 2002.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN: HIV and AIDS

Introduction

The world’s young people are threatened by HIV/AIDS. Of the almost 40 million people living with HIV/AIDS, more than a quarter are aged 15-24. Half of all new infections occur in young people.\(^1\) In 2007, 22.5 million people in Africa were infected with HIV.\(^2\)

Young people are a vital factor in halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and many are playing a significant role in the fight against it. But they, and pre-adolescent children, urgently need knowledge and services to protect them against infection with HIV.

The United Methodist Church takes a clear position about our faith-based response to persons living with HIV and AIDS: “Persons diagnosed as positive for Human Immune Virus (HIV) and with Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) often face rejection from their families and friends and various communities in which they work and interact. In addition, they are often faced with a lack of adequate health care, especially toward the end of life. All individuals living with HIV and AIDS should be treated with dignity and respect. We affirm the responsibility of the Church to minister to and with these individuals and their families regardless of how the disease was contracted. We support their rights to employment, appropriate medical care, full participation in public education, and full participation in the Church. We urge the Church to be actively involved in the prevention of the spread of AIDS by providing educational opportunities to the congregation and the community. The Church should be available to provide counseling to the affected individuals and their families” (Para. 162U p. 117, 2008).

This chapter is divided into six modules. The teaching may be accomplished over the span of several sessions and as class time allows. The following website resources also will be helpful as you prepare:

- Information on nutrition and HIV/AIDS; includes printable handouts and Powerpoint presentations: http://www.fantaproject.org/focus/preservice.shtml
- International Federation of the Red Cross; provides information in Russian, English, French, Spanish and Portuguese for young people about HIV/AIDS: http://www.ifrc.org/
- List of resources recommended by UNICEF: http://www.unicef.org/lifeskills/index_14926.html
- French website for Centers for Disease Control in U.S: http://www.cdc.gov/fre/
- United Nations AIDS organization: www.unaids.org

Module 1: Faith Response to HIV/AIDS

Theological Dimension
As Christians, if we take seriously our faith and ministry, HIV/AIDS presents a difficult theological question for us: If God is good and loving, why does God allow evil and suffering? World religions have grappled with this question for centuries. Still today, there is no clear response to the questions of theodicy: the presence of evil and suffering in a world created by a loving and caring God.

To more fully examine the question of theodicy and HIV/AIDS, it is helpful to begin with yet another question: What is the true nature of God? Traditionally Christian thought teaches that God has three or four main qualities. God is omnipresent (present everywhere); omnipotent (all-powerful and capable of doing or preventing anything); and, omniscient (all-knowing). A fourth quality is sometimes added for further explanation: omni-beneficent (all-caring and generous).

However, a theological dilemma is created when we try to construct a congruent model of a God who simultaneously embodies all four qualities. For example, if God is all-knowing, all-present, all-powerful, and all-loving, why does God allow tragedies such as war, famine, and AIDS? There have been many different theological attempts to decipher this theological puzzle of who God is. At the end of the day, in our humanness, we cannot fully know the depth and breadth of God and God’s ways.

What we can and do know is that God does not abandon us in our suffering and difficulties. In fact, in our most painful moments, God walks with us, spiritually and emotionally carrying us if necessary. We also know that God’s love, grace, and forgiveness are made visible through the lives of God’s people. Though we cannot always explain why bad things happen to good people, we do still know that God loves those afflicted with and affected by HIV/AIDS. And just as Jesus did in his day, we too, are called to show God’s love, mercy, and grace to those whom society considers outcasts. People with HIV/AIDS and their families need support, care, and respect. As Christians, we can model how to be the hands and hearts of Christ in our communities.

Biblical Dimension
In seeking to find a biblical starting point for a response to HIV/AIDS, it is helpful to begin at the Beginning (Genesis 1). God looked on creation and said, “It is good.” Then God created humanity and said, “It is very good.” According to this creation story, each of us is created in the image of God and is loved unconditionally by God as individuals and communities. The entirety of God’s creation is God’s family, God’s community. And the equality of people in community has been confirmed, renewed, and transformed in the incarnation of Jesus the Christ, through his life, ministry, death, and resurrection.

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28). If Paul were writing today, it is likely that he would add the phrase, “there is neither HIV+ nor HIV-, for all are one in Christ Jesus.”

In celebration of the goodness of creation, we understand all persons to be equally loved in God’s eyes. There is no differentiation among people regardless of age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or HIV status. Part of our responsibility then, as disciples of Jesus, is to ensure that everyone in the family of God is honored, respected, and loved. This is the abundant life God urges human beings to choose.

The church must learn a variety of ways to care for the sick and infected. Too often today, like leprosy in Jesus’ day, AIDS is “resolved” by isolating and ignoring people rather than loving and supporting them within the community. As Christians we cannot escape the realities of brokenness and woundedness in and outside the church. And, as Christians, we should not escape God’s call to justice and mercy. We must listen closely to the words of the prophet Micah:
Since God’s love, as revealed in Scripture, is inclusive and relational, we are required to be in ministry and to stand with the sick and poor rather than isolate them.

At the heart of our attitudes toward HIV/AIDS are widely different understandings of God. Sometimes Christians present a model of a vindictive God who inflicts HIV/AIDS as a punishment for human sin. In contrast United Methodists believe that God is a God of compassion, who delights in creation. HIV is a virus that is dangerous to human beings, but is not a divine punishment for sin. Any illness represents an opportunity for people to show God’s love, mercy, and compassion to others.

From a Christian perspective, it is wrong to say that HIV/AIDS is punishment from God. This view presents an image of God which contradicts our understanding of a caring, loving God who suffers with us. God calls us to show compassion to all who have contracted HIV. It is not for us to judge anyone. Rather we are to help remove any stigma that may be attached to people with HIV and to help them in any way we can.

The claim that “AIDS is a punishment from God” arise from a theology of condemnation rather than compassion, and indifference rather than involvement. Christians should share the values of compassion, love, and human dignity. It is wrong to interpret HIV/AIDS, or other human catastrophes, as God’s punishment for sin. This interpretation is damaging, because the resulting judgmental attitudes are undermining to the church’s efforts of care and prevention. It is also theologically indefensible, a fact that is demonstrated powerfully in many of the healing narratives of the Gospels.

One such example is in John 9. In this situation Jesus heals a man who was born blind. The disciples ask Jesus, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” Jesus responds. Jesus clearly states that this person was not afflicted because of sin. Jesus goes on to say, that through this man’s affliction, God will be glorified, meaning that others will come to know about God through this man’s blindness.

In reflecting on the connection between HIV transmission and sin, it is important to remember that many people who are infected bear no responsibility for their conditions. Babies born with the virus, sexually abused women and children, and faithful partners of unfaithful spouses did nothing to contract the virus. However, regardless of how someone may have contracted HIV, there is absolutely no room for judgment and discrimination based on the premise that God has “willed” AIDS for sinful individuals:

AIDS must never be considered as a punishment from God.

[God] wants us to be healthy and not to die from AIDS.

It is for us a sign of the times – challenging all people to inner transformation and to the following of Christ in his ministry of healing, mercy and love.

The mandate for Christians to be of service comes from the powerful and prophetic vision of the last judgment (Mathew 25:31-46). In this passage, Jesus identifies himself with those who are hungry, naked, sick, and imprisoned. He proclaims that salvation will be conditioned upon our loving response to those in need.

In 1 Thessalonians, Paul begins with the following words: “We continually remember before our God and father your work produced by faith, your labour prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus” (1:3). A few years later Paul writes another letter incorporating within it one of the greatest love chapters (Corinthians 13). Verse 13 says, “Now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of
these is love.” The Bible clearly challenges Christians to live their lives through love. This mandate includes love and acceptance towards all those infected with or affected by HIV/AIDS. It is one’s Christian responsibility to allow all to experience Christ’s love and to inspire them with hope.

Underpinning conversation about theology and AIDS is a question of responsibility. Responsibility does not mean the apportioning of blame but rather the empowering of people to honestly claim where they are in their lives and to seek ways to prevent the further spread of the infection. Responsibility means that all people work to promote healthy lifestyles that advance the common good of society. We need faith-filled approaches to community and relationships that will help everyone address and manage challenge of HIV/AIDS. This challenge is embedded in the Great Commandment (Matthew 22:36-40).

A Pharisee asked Jesus a question, “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

Our theology, based on the good news of Jesus Christ and the expansive love of God, proclaims hope and healing for those who have faced and are facing HIV/AIDS. Faith in this situation is to show love and compassion for our fellow human beings who are in need or suffering – without preconceived notions or judgments. Our church is not in the business of judgment. And the God whom we serve is a loving God.

As a church we are called to be mirrors of God’s mercy and heralds of God’s compassion; communities of acceptance and hope where people living with HIV/AIDS can experience care, comfort, and support. God’s love and compassion are not restricted to Christians. God intends these gifts to be shared with all people.

Let us live by hope, for our questions and doubts are held within the larger framework of God’s love and promise for us and for the whole creation. Christ identified with the suffering of all humanity, and this includes the suffering of those infected with and affected by HIV/AIDS.

Summary
The church’s loving response to the difficult challenges of HIV/AIDS is derived from the following theological and biblical convictions:

- Humanity is created in God’s image.
- God loves human beings.
- Jesus’ disciples are commanded to love one another. One way we can love one another today is to alleviate the suffering of persons living with HIV/AIDS.
- The church, as the body of Christ, is the place where God’s healing love is experienced and shared.

Our theology must help minimize the stigma and discrimination that often come with HIV/AIDS. The problem of HIV/AIDS can be addressed only with a theology of hope. “We are hard pressed on every side but not crushed: perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted but not abandoned, struck down, but not destroyed” (2 Corinthians 4:8).

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Module 2: HIV/AIDS Overview

Overview
People need to understand why and how HIV/AIDS can affect them. Although incidence is relatively high among the world’s poorest and least educated populations, HIV/AIDS also affects affluent societies. HIV can affect anyone, regardless of age, gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and economic status. In this module the basic facts about HIV/AIDS will be discussed: how it is transmitted, how it is not transmitted and who is likely to be affected.

Important Points Regarding HIV/AIDS:
AIDS is spreading rapidly throughout the world, specifically in the developing world.
1. There is currently no cure for HIV/AIDS. Once contracted, progression of the disease may be slowed but cannot be stopped completely. The right combination of medications can hinder the damage that HIV causes to the immune system and delay the onset of AIDS.
2. There is no vaccine against HIV/AIDS.
3. It is preventable.

Knowing about the HIV/AIDS epidemic is very important for young people. They are the most vulnerable to this disease because they often do not have access to correct information and services related to HIV/AIDS. Furthermore, many young people experiment with sex and drugs before they are fully aware of or able to comprehend the possible unwanted consequences of sexual behavior and drug use.

Definition of HIV and AIDS:
"HIV stands for ‘human immunodeficiency virus.’ HIV is a retrovirus that infects cells of the human immune system (mainly CD4 positive T cells and macrophages – key components of the cellular immune system) and destroys or impairs their function. Infection with this virus results in the progressive depletion of the immune system, leading to ‘immune deficiency.’"

"The immune system is considered deficient when it can no longer fulfill its role of fighting off infection and diseases. Immunodeficient people are much more vulnerable to a wide range of infections, most of which are very rare among people with healthy immune systems. Diseases associated with severe immunodeficiency are known as ‘opportunistic infections,’ because they take advantage of a weakened immune system."

H – Human means it is transmitted from one human being to another
I – Immunodeficiency means the virus breaks down the immune system (the body’s defense against bad germs/diseases) and makes it “deficient.” As a result, it weakens the body’s ability to protect itself from diseases.
V – Virus means a small germ or bacteria (microscopic organism) that causes disease in your body.
"**AIDS** stands for ‘acquired immunodeficiency syndrome’ and describes the collection of symptoms and infections associated with acquired deficiency of the immune system. Infection with HIV has been established as the underlying cause of AIDS. The level of HIV in the body and the appearance of certain infections are used as indicators that HIV infection has progressed to AIDS."\(^2\)

The term AIDS applies to the most advanced stages of HIV infection. Many people infected with HIV, if not treated, develop signs of AIDS within 8-10 years. AIDS is identified on the basis of certain infections, grouped by the World Health Organization\(^3\):

- **Stage I** – HIV disease is asymptomatic and not categorized as AIDS
- **Stage II** – Includes minor mucocutaneous manifestations and recurrent upper respiratory tract infections
- **Stage III** – Includes unexplained chronic diarrhea for longer than a month, severe bacterial infections, and pulmonary tuberculosis
- **Stage IV** – Includes Toxoplasmosis of the brain, Candidiasis of the oesophagus, trachea, bronchi or lungs and Kaposi’s Sarcoma

Most of these conditions are opportunistic infections that can be treated easily in healthy people.

**A** – **Acquired** means you catch the disease from someone who has it already.

**I** – **Immune** means the ability to fight diseases. It refers to the body’s natural defense system that provides protection from disease-causing organisms.

**D** – **Deficiency** means a loss in ability to fight against diseases due to the breakdown of the immune system. It describes the lack of response by the immune system to organisms that impair the body’s ability to protect itself against diseases.

**S** – **Syndrome** means a group of symptoms that occur together and characterize a particular disease.

HIV is known to be the virus that causes AIDS. It weakens our immune system, the body’s natural defenses against disease-causing organisms. A person with HIV can feel and look healthy for a long time. He or she can continue to carry on with life’s daily activities. If someone has the virus, he/she is diagnosed as HIV positive.

**What Is the Immune System?** (An explanation for younger youth)

- Think of the immune system as an army of cells and the bacteria and viruses that cause diseases and infections as the enemy.

- The immune system is the body’s defense system or a group of cells within your body that defend you against infections and disease.

- General T-Cell (see explanation at end of section) leads the immune cell army by activating them and telling them what to look for and attack.

- Private B-Cell, when activated by General T-Cell, makes antibodies that can slow down an invader by sticking to them and allowing them to be attacked.

- HIV is the enemy that causes AIDS. It has to attack and inhabit General T-Cells in order to be able to reproduce itself. It can disguise itself, making General T-Cell’s job harder.

- Opportunistic infection is any possible invader that can normally be held in check by your immune army (in fact many people in this room probably have a virus and everyone possesses some bacteria in their bodies), but if your immune army is weak, these invaders can make you sick.
Definition of T-Cells – T-cells belong to a group of white blood cells known as lymphocytes and play a central role in cell-mediated immunity. They can be distinguished from other lymphocyte types, such as B-cells and NK-cells by the presence of a special receptor on their cell surface called the T-Cell receptor (TCR). “T” stands for thymus, since it is the principal organ in the T-Cell’s development.

How Does HIV Affect the Immune System?
- HIV specifically attacks a type of T-Cells called CD4 cells. These are the cells that under normal conditions recognize foreign objects (antigens) within the body and send signals (cytokines) to the B-Cells to kill the invading object. HIV specifically binds to these cells. B-Cells, upon signals from T-Cells, produce antibodies that they can throw at invaders. The antibodies stick to the invaders and slow them down so that they can be killed.
- The HIV antibodies produced by the immune system are unable to overcome the infection.
- Over time, HIV progressively weakens the immune system
- The person becomes “immuno-deficient”
- A weak immune system, then, can no longer effectively defend the body.

What Happens When the Immune System Is Weakened?
- The body becomes vulnerable to a variety of infections.
- Infections that take advantage of a weakened immune system are called “opportunistic infections.”
- Eventually the immune system is so weak that the body is overwhelmed by infections and the person dies.

What Is the Difference Between Having HIV and Having AIDS?
- When the virus is detected in the body, the person is considered HIV positive.
- HIV is diagnosed by a blood test or a test of oral fluids or urine.
- When the immune system is severely weakened by HIV, other infections occur. AIDS is the collection of symptoms and infections associated with acquired deficiency of the immune system.

Body Fluids That Transmit HIV: (from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in U.S.; http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/resources/qa/qa37.htm)
- Blood and other body fluids containing blood
- Semen
- Vaginal fluid
- Breast milk

How Does a Person Become Infected with HIV?
Individuals are infected through another person’s body fluids. Some of the ways body fluids are exchanged between people are:
- Unsafe sexual intercourse (vaginal, anal, oral) with an infected person
- Contact between seminal fluid or vaginal secretion, including menstrual blood and the mucous membranes of the mouth in oral intercourse
- Infected blood
- An infected mother passes the disease to her child, or an infected child passes it to the mother
- Intravenous (IV) drug use

Note: A woman has a greater chance of being infected by an HIV-infected male than a man has of being infected by an HIV-infected woman in heterosexual intercourse because of biological characteristics.
How Is HIV Spread Through Infected Blood?
- Transfusion of infected blood from one person to another
- Non-sterilized syringes and needles; sharing the same syringe and needle among injecting drug users (IDUs); skin penetration by an infected needle or other skin-piercing instruments (e.g., razor, tattooing and body-piercing instruments)

How HIV Spreads From an Infected Mother to an Unborn Child
- Before Birth: Through the placenta
- During Birth: Exposure of the baby to the infected body fluids of its mother
- After Birth: Through breastfeeding or the giving of pre-chewed food to the child

Note to Facilitator: It is important to emphasize that the virus lives in the blood, semen, vaginal fluid, breast milk, etc., and is spread when these bodily fluids pass from one person to another. This occurs through such things as blood transfusions, ear-piercings, and the use of non-sterilized tools.

HIV is NOT Spread by ...
- Attending school
- Coughing or sneezing
- Sweat or tears
- Hugging
- Using toilet or shower facilities
- Shaking hands with infected persons
- Mosquitoes or other insects
- Using phones, computers, chairs, desks
- Sharing clothes
- Eating foods prepared or served by an infected person
- Sharing forks, knives, spoons, and cups
- Swimming together with infected persons
- Using sports and gym equipment

Symptoms of HIV
“It is not possible to reliably diagnose HIV infection or AIDS based on symptoms alone.

“People living with HIV may feel and look completely well but their immune systems may nevertheless be damaged. It is important to remember that once someone is infected they can pass on HIV right away, even if they feel healthy. As time passes without effective treatment, HIV weakens an infected person’s immune system, making them much more vulnerable to opportunistic infections. These infections are caused by germs that are around us all the time but which can normally be fought off by a healthy immune system. Once HIV has broken down the body’s defenses, such infections can take hold and produce any of a wide range of symptoms; some very severe. Certain cancers also become more common when the immune system is weakened.

“Such symptoms are, however, not caused directly by HIV and they can’t by themselves be interpreted as definite signs of HIV infection or AIDS. A diagnosis of AIDS requires signs of severe immune deficiency, which cannot be explained by any factor except HIV. This generally requires an HIV test.

“The only way to know for sure whether a person is infected with HIV is for them to have an HIV test.”

Discussion Questions
1. What is the difference between HIV infection and AIDS?
2. What are the symptoms of HIV infection and AIDS?
HIV/AIDS True or False Quiz

1. ___ A person can get HIV from sitting next to a person who has it.
2. ___ A person can be infected with HIV by having sex with a commercial sex worker.
3. ___ An unborn child can get HIV infection from his/her mother if she is infected.
4. ___ Household insects such as bedbugs and cockroaches can be HIV carriers and transmit the disease to people.
5. ___ If a mosquito bites a person with HIV/AIDS and then bites somebody else, the second person it bites may get AIDS.
6. ___ You can get HIV by using a phone that has just been used by someone with HIV/AIDS.
7. ___ You can get HIV if a person with AIDS coughs or sneezes near you.
8. ___ You can be infected with HIV from a toilet seat.
9. ___ You can get HIV from kissing an infected person on the cheek.
10. ___ You can get HIV by drinking from the same glass as a person who is HIV-positive.

(Quiz Answers: 1-False; 2-True; 3-True; 4-False; 5-False; 6-False; 7-False; 8-False; 9-False; 10-False.)
Effects of HIV/AIDS

On the Individual
• Immunodeficiency (a weakening of the immune system, the body’s natural defenses against infections) leads to other complications such as diarrhea, skin cancer, or pneumonia
• Rejection by friends and loved ones; isolation from social/community activities
• Anger at themselves, in the form of self-blame for acquiring HIV; anger toward the person who infected them; anger at others for their denial, rejection, ignorance; anger at God for allowing it to happen
• Declining ability to function efficiently
• Fear of dying in pain or without dignity
• Dismissal from employment or denial of employment

On the Family
• Psychological stress of all family members caused by anger, sorrow, frustration, and the inability to cope with the needs of the infected individual
• Discrimination and rejection faced by all family members involved with the care of the infected individual
• Economic problems due to high cost of drugs and hospitalization, frequently combined with an inability to continue working

On the Community
• Funds from other areas of public need are possibly drained by costs associated with AIDS prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and care
• Strain on the healthcare system and insurance companies
• Loss of economic output and productivity due to illness in prime working years

On Women
• Women have considerable responsibilities in looking after their children and husband. Thus the burden of caring for family members living with HIV/AIDS often falls to the women – even if they also have HIV or AIDS.

What Is Prevention?
Prevention refers to any measures taken to protect individuals or groups from being exposed to the HIV virus.

How does one protect oneself and one’s family from HIV?
The major route of transmission is through sexual intercourse, and one can follow, “the ABCs of HIV/AIDS”:

A: Abstain – Abstain from sexual intercourse. Sex of various types including vaginal, oral, or anal sex should be avoided.
B: Be Faithful – Engage in sexual intercourse with only one faithful partner.
C: Use Condoms – Use condoms correctly and consistently for all types of sex.
What Is Meant by Safe, Protected, and Safer Sex?

**Safe Sex:** Sexual activities and behaviors which have no risk. Such sex prevents a person’s blood, semen, or vaginal secretions from coming into contact with a partner’s blood and, thereby, prevents transmission of infection.

**Protected Sex or Safer Sex:** Broadly defined as the behavior that reduces the risk of any unwanted consequences of sexual activity. For example: Reduce the risk by using a condom correctly every time one has sex.

**Activity (20 minutes)**

1. Divide participants into small groups of 3-7.

2. On chart paper, ask each group to draw a person living with HIV/AIDS, indicating what this person might look like if he or she were living in the best of circumstances. Emphasize that groups should draw only the person and what he or she would look like, not the environment. (Approximately 5 minutes)

3. After 3 to 5 minutes, instruct groups to think about what that person needs to live and thrive in the best circumstances. Ask, “What sort of support, supplies, relationships, and so on does that person need to live in the best circumstances?” Remind groups not to use any words, only pictures. (Approximately five minutes)

4. Call on groups to briefly explain their drawings to the large group if time allows.

*No One’s Alone.*

*AIDS Affects Everyone.*
Who Can Get HIV/AIDS?

**ANYONE**, male or female, young or old, rich or poor, educated or uneducated, from any country, race, religious affiliation, or sexual orientation can acquire HIV.

- Many people are worried about HIV and AIDS.
- Many people have HIV.
- Some people have AIDS.
- Many people have friends and relatives who have HIV or AIDS.
- Many people have friends and relatives who have died of AIDS.

All People Need to Know What to Do:

- To help themselves
- To help others
- To protect themselves and others from HIV infection

HIV Can Progress to AIDS Quickly or Slowly

- The average time for progression from HIV infection to AIDS can be as short as a few months or as long as many, many years. Good care can help an infect person live a long time before developing AIDS.
- Support groups for People Living with AIDS (PLWAs) are available and can provide valuable assistance in helping them take care of their bodies and meeting their emotional and spiritual needs.

Signs and Symptoms of Seroconversion

When a person’s immune system develops antibodies as a result of HIV infection (seroconversion), these symptoms can include:

- Diarrhea
- Weight loss
- Skin rash
- Cough
- Fever
- Mouth sores
- Swollen lymph glands
- White spots in the mouth or throat
- Memory loss
- Weakness
- Heavy night sweats

Girls may also experience severe vaginal yeast infections that don’t respond to usual treatment, as well as pelvic inflammatory disease.

An infected person is at a higher risk of contracting other diseases because the virus weakens the immune system. The secondary diseases are called ‘opportunistic infections’ because they take advantage of the weakened body.

Some people may feel and look healthy for years even though infected with HIV. But an HIV+ person who feels and looks good can still infect others with HIV. You cannot tell simply by looking at someone whether he or she is infected with the virus.
People Know They are HIV Positive through Testing

What Is an HIV Test?
Testing for HIV is run on a sample of blood, oral fluids, or urine. It is possible that a person may test negative if the infection is recent. It may take up to six months (window period) for someone to test positive for HIV after contracting the virus. If a person was potentially infected within six months prior to the test, he/she should take another test in six more months. Since HIV is non-symptomatic, the diagnosis is confirmed by the presence of HIV antibodies in the blood, urine or oral fluids.

HIV Antibody Tests
• Two tests are recommended. If results are conflicting, a third confirmatory test, which is usually more specific for HIV, is done.
• Pregnant women normally pass on antibodies to their babies. Therefore, a baby born to an HIV-infected mother might test positive for HIV antibodies without being infected.
• The most common test is an enzyme immune assay (EIA) or the enzyme-linked immunosorbent (ELISA). The test checks the body’s reaction to the virus. Another test is the Western Blot, which is required for confirming the diagnosis of HIV infection.
• Urine and oral fluid HIV tests offer alternatives for anyone reluctant to have blood drawn. The urine test is not as accurate at this time (2008) as the blood tests.
• The rapid HIV test is a test that usually produces results in up to 20 minutes.
• With any test, pre- and post-counseling is necessary.

Discussion Questions
1. What factors in your community/country are likely to influence transmission of HIV?
2. What factors in your community and country are likely to increase vulnerability to HIV infection?
3. What factors are likely to increase the impact of HIV/AIDS on families, communities, and congregations?
4. Discuss the main impact of HIV/AIDS on your community, church, and country.
Overview of HIV/AIDS in Africa and the World
The aim of this information is to provide participants with an appreciation of the scope of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Africa and around the world.

Regional Statistics for HIV & AIDS
The latest statistics on the world epidemic of AIDS & HIV were published by UNAIDS/WHO in March 2008 and refer to the end of 2007:

* Proportion of adults aged 15-49 who were living with HIV/AIDS

It is estimated that during 2007 about two and a half million people became infected with HIV. About two million people died from AIDS, even with increased access to treatment. “Adults” are people aged 15 or above. Children orphaned by AIDS under age 18 and have lost one or both parents to AIDS.6

90% of children living with HIV are in Sub Saharan Africa.7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Adults &amp;Children Living with HIV/AIDS</th>
<th>Adults &amp; Children Newly Infected</th>
<th>Adult Prevalence*</th>
<th>Deaths of Adults &amp; Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>22.5 million</td>
<td>1.7 million</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>1.6 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Africa &amp; Middle East</td>
<td>380,000</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>25,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South and South-East Asia</td>
<td>4 million</td>
<td>340,000</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>270,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Asia</td>
<td>800,000</td>
<td>14,000</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>32,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>75,000</td>
<td>92,000</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>1.6 million</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>58,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caribbean</td>
<td>230,000</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>11,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America</td>
<td>1.6 million</td>
<td>150,000</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>55,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Europe &amp; Central Asia</td>
<td>760,000</td>
<td>31,000</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>12,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>1.3 million</td>
<td>46,000</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>21,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Total</td>
<td>33.2 million</td>
<td>2.5 million</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
<td>2.1 million</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“The Window of Hope”
Children between 5 and 14 years old constitute the ‘Window of Hope’ in Africa because they are mostly not infected with HIV. This group should be educated and supported to abstain from sex or to delay their first sexual encounters as long as possible to reduce HIV infection.

What are the main modes of HIV and AIDS transmission in Africa?  
• 80% or more Sex  
• 15% Mother-to-Child  
• 5% Infected blood and blood products

Discussion Questions
1. When was the first time that AIDS was acknowledged in your country?
2. What is the government’s response to AIDS in your country?
3. What is the church’s response to AIDS in your country?
Ways the Church Can Partner With Non-Religious Organizations:

- Promoting abstinence and faithfulness
- Encouraging the delay of sexual activity among adolescents
- Promoting the use and consistent availability of condoms, including female condoms
- Strengthening:
  - Programs for STDs (sexually transmitted diseases) control, including management of STIs (sexually transmitted infections)
  - Blood safety
  - Infection prevention
  - Nursing and clinical care
  - Counseling and testing (CT)
  - Home based care for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA)
- Showing compassion for the infected and affected, including orphan care
- Enhancing the role of people living with HIV/AIDS
- Targeting interventions for high-risk groups
- Promoting public/private partnerships regarding HIV/AIDS education

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2. UNAIDS.
Module 3: Impact of HIV and AIDS on Youth

Purpose
HIV/AIDS is an enormous threat to the social, physical, and psychological development of youth and young adults. This module is designed to help people understand the depth of this threat.

Activity
1. Divide participants into small groups and ask them to discuss the following questions:
   - What are some of the ways HIV and AIDS will have long-term impact on individuals, society, and the church? What will this impact mean?
   - How do cultural sexual practices encourage or discourage the spread of HIV/AIDS?

2. Reassemble as a large group and ask each small group to report on its discussion.

   Possible Areas of Impact:
   - Health
   - Social Life
   - Agriculture
   - Family
   - Education
   - National Security
   - Orphans
   - Economic

   Example: Family – Children raising children because parents are no longer living.

   Note to Facilitator: Use the information below to supplement discussion.

Social Life
HIV and AIDS add enormous stress to infected individuals and their families who are faced with the demands of caring for the seriously ill and with the trauma of death. They also face the economic burdens of healthcare, funeral costs, and loss of income. All of these factors are worsened by the stigma associated with AIDS. People can be victims of prejudice at work, in the community, at church/mosque and at home. The death of an adult can have a dramatic impact on family structure and function. Children, the elderly, or single parents may be left to run households alone.

Orphans
The HIV and AIDS epidemic has, and probably will continue to produce large numbers of orphans. Care for orphans is one of the greatest challenges facing the continent. Extended family structures often care for orphans; still, many will end up on the streets. Orphans face the trauma of losing parents and the stigma surrounding HIV and AIDS. They usually have less access to education or food than non-orphans, and they face worse poverty since the number of dependents increases in the households that care for them. Finally, as children under stress, they grow up without adequate parenting and support and are at greater risk of developing antisocial or destructive behaviours and of being less productive members of society.¹

Health
HIV and AIDS affect adults who are usually among the healthiest members of society. Also large numbers of children with HIV or AIDS will suffer from serious, chronic diseases, which results in a dramatic increase in the need for healthcare. This has implications for both the public and private healthcare sectors. Basic treatments, which can considerably improve the quality and length of life, are expensive. Furthermore people with AIDS can live longer and require hospitalization for terminal conditions.

Educational
Absenteeism by a single teacher (infected by HIV) impacts a large number of children. Schools also have to deal with significant numbers of children infected at birth or through sexual abuse. Sexually active teenagers, especially young women, who become infected, will affect educational systems. In addition, many thousands of children will need support to cope with the psychological, social, and economic impact of HIV and AIDS on their families or households.

¹
Economic
HIV and AIDS will result in high economic costs over time. Many businesses will have difficulty affording the cost of affected employees who miss days of work. In addition, the costs of their medical care will be very expensive for many businesses. On a global level, HIV and AIDS could result in a reduction of available skilled and experienced people. Economic growth and development may also be reduced if investment in infrastructure, education, and skilled labour falls because of a large-scale diversion of resources to HIV and AIDS care.

Cultural Practices that Impact the Spread of HIV
- *Wife Inheritance* – A widow is often passed on to another man in the family and she is expected to fulfill her sexual duties with that person.
- *Widowhood Rites* – In some cultures, it is believed the husband’s brothers must sleep with the woman before the spirit of the husband will leave permanently.
- *Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting* – This practice exists to help maintain the chastity of the female by cutting her clitoris and suppressing her sexual desire.
- *Power Imbalance in Male-Female Relationships* – A woman is not permitted to negotiate for sex. Even outside marriage, women do not have the power to negotiate for safer sexual practices.
- *Multiple Sexual Partners* – Culturally it is acceptable for a man to have more than one sexual partner, even apart from the polygamy issue. However, it is not acceptable for a woman to do the same. Throughout Africa, many societies condone this contradiction.
- *Pre-Marital Sex* – Among some ethnic groups the man must sleep with the woman before marriage or else the father of the woman will not give permission for marriage.
- *Dry Sex* – Some women use drying agents to cause their vaginas to tighten so that the men will enjoy sex with them more. Drying of the vagina can promote increased tearing, which can cause bleeding.
- *Sexual Enjoyment for Men* – Some cultures practice pulling a young girl’s clitoris to enlarge it so that when she is old enough for sex, her partner can enjoy playing with it.
- *Trokosi System* – Young virgin girls are “sacrificed” to atone for the sins of the family by being enslaved and later becoming the wives of fetish priests. It is believed that this pays for the crimes committed by any past or present members of the family. Although many governments have outlawed practices such as these in policy, in practice, they still exist in some communities.

It is important that Christian and Muslim religious leaders work to dialogue with the traditional religious leaders to change and eliminate some of these unhealthy practices.

The Issue of Religiosity and HIV/AIDS
Christians believe in the power of God to accomplish anything. However, it has never been documented, nor has anyone ever claimed to have been healed of HIV and AIDS. God and one’s faith can empower a person to live a positive, healthy, and productive life; but, no one has been found who converted from HIV positive to HIV negative. For example, Magic Johnson learned he was HIV positive when it was in the early stages. He was able to obtain the best medical and physical care because he is wealthy. However, he is still HIV positive though he appears to be in good physical condition.

Although we know that with God all things are possible, it is important that we do not feed into people’s propensity to engage in serious, reckless, and dangerous activities or practices while expecting God to work miracles in their lives.
Ways Faith Communities Can Reduce the Impact of HIV/AIDS:

• Accept People Living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHAs).
• Reduce stigma and discrimination against PLWHAs.
• Support infected and affected people and orphans.
• Improve the status of women. For example, help develop income-generating activities.
• Provide spiritual and material support for PLWHAs.
• Show compassion for PLWHAs. For example, religious bodies can set up support groups and systems for the infected and affected.
• Promote the greater involvement of People Living with AIDS in religious and social activities.

Gender Inequality and HIV/AIDS

Poorness and gender inequalities are major factors in accelerating the spread of the HIV and AIDS epidemic. The present rate of HIV infection is greatest among women and girls.

• In Africa, where the epidemic is most severe, young women are three times more likely to be infected than young men.
• In addition to being a health and development issue, HIV/AIDS is also intimately linked to gender inequality.

Biological Factors That Place Women at Greater Risk of HIV Infection

• Surface area of female genital organs is greater.
• The vagina is a receptacle.
• The semen contains a higher concentration of the virus than the vaginal fluids.
• The mucus membrane of the vagina is thin and delicate, making it vulnerable to trauma, which becomes an entry point for the virus.
• Sexually transmitted infections often show no symptoms in women so they are not discovered early.

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2 For further definitions around gender issues see Gender and Development: Concepts and Definitions, by Hazel Reeves and Sally Baden, Institute of Development Studies, Sussex University, February 2000.
Module 4: Gender and HIV/AIDS

Definitions

Gender refers to the socially determined ideas and practices of what it is to be female or male.

Gender Inequality refers to women not having the same opportunities in life as men, including the ability to participate in the public sphere.

Gender Roles are the different roles men and women play. These roles will vary from community to community, though there are a number of common threads. These roles inevitably impact the lives of men and women, sometimes in relation to HIV/AIDS. What are these roles?

Activities

1. Identify the different social roles of men and women. (Approximately 20 minutes)
   - Divide participants into groups of six.
   - Draw a large chart similar to Table 1 (below) and discuss and list roles of men and women in relation to the economy, community, family, and sexual relations.
   - List in a positive and/or negative way how these roles affect and are affected by HIV/AIDS.

2. Discuss the roles of men and women in your church and how these roles affect and are affected by HIV/AIDS, or how HIV/AIDS affects the roles. (Approximately 10 minutes)
   - List these roles as separate columns for the chart.
   - List the positive and negative ways these roles of men and women in your church affect and are affected by HIV and AIDS.

3. In a plenary (full-group) session, discuss the following questions. (Approximately 20 minutes):
   - Who has the most power in the economy, the community, the church, the family, and in sexual relationships?
   - How does the power structure in society relate to or promote vulnerability and HIV/AIDS?
   - What are some ways you, as a Christian, can affect social roles so as to bring more equality and empowerment to those with HIV/AIDS, their caregivers and their families?
Table 1: Roles of Men and Women in a Village in Zimbabwe

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economy</strong></td>
<td>• Be the main breadwinner</td>
<td>*Provide extra labor in the fields</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Decide how much money to give to the family</td>
<td>*Earn small amount of extra income, such as selling vegetables in the market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Decide on any big expenditures for the family, such as school fees, medication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community</strong></td>
<td>• Be involved in politics and make decisions</td>
<td>• Provide practical support, such as to orphans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Represent the village</td>
<td>• Help neighbors who are sick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Manage the village</td>
<td>• Share news and information with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family</strong></td>
<td>• Act as head of household</td>
<td>• Do the cooking and cleaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide moral guidance and punishment</td>
<td>• Provide practical care for the children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Take the family to church</td>
<td>• Nurse members who are sick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sexual Relations</strong></td>
<td>• Decide when, where, how, and with whom to have sex</td>
<td>• Obey husband’s desires related to sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Decide whether to use a condom</td>
<td>• Do not express pleasure or pain related to sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Decide to get help or not, such as for an STI</td>
<td>• Produce children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Have as many sexual partners as he desires</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Negative Effects</strong></td>
<td>• More partners increases his risk of HIV</td>
<td>• Powerless to control when to have sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Heavy responsibility to provide for family</td>
<td>• Powerless to control if a condom is used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Double burden of caring for children and working</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Why Are Women and Girls Vulnerable?**

**Activity for Young People**

Examine the reasons why women are at greater risk of HIV infection then men.

1. Divide young people into pairs and, using separate pieces of paper (ideally sticky notes), ask pairs to list possible causes of inequality – one cause per piece of paper. Remind young people that the causes of vulnerability will vary from culture to culture. If using sticky notes, assign each pair a section of the wall on which to post their notes. (Approximately 10 minutes)

2. Gather together and discuss pairs’ results and their significance with the full group (Approximately 15 minutes), asking: “Are there themes or categories for some of these causes?”

3. Have the full group begin to move around and position the sticky notes in categories on the wall – creating titles if they wish. Discuss and agree on potential, broad category names. Write categories on cards and attach to the wall with groupings of papers, remembering that division into categories should not hide the fact that all are inevitably inter-related. (Approximately 15 minutes)
Reasons for the Vulnerability of Women and Girls to HIV

• Inadequate knowledge about the disease
• Insufficient access to sexual and reproductive health and education services
• Inability to negotiate safer sex due to gender discrimination and imbalances of power
• Lack of female-controlled HIV prevention methods, such as the female condom and microbicides.
• Human rights violations against women

As long as women and girls are unable to exercise education, property rights, freedom from violence, and economic security, they will remain at the highest risk for HIV.

TABLE 2: A Chart of Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural</th>
<th>Economic</th>
<th>Educational</th>
<th>Social</th>
<th>Religious</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wife inheritance</td>
<td>Poverty leads women to engage in unsafe sex for money, housing food or education</td>
<td>Girls are often denied education and access to information about sex and HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>Girls are vulnerable to violence/rape</td>
<td>There is subjugation of women based on inappropriate scriptural interpretation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men can have more than one sexual partner, but women cannot</td>
<td>Women are excluded from inheritance system.</td>
<td>Girls are often required to leave school to care for a family member with AIDS</td>
<td>Girls marry early, often to older men</td>
<td>Church policy on contraception is varied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited employment opportunities</td>
<td>Women sometimes need to leave their jobs to care for a family member with AIDS.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Girls/women are often not permitted to or may be reluctant to ask male sexual partners to use condoms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What Should Be the Response to This Situation?

There is no one overall response to reducing the vulnerability of women. Each of these responses will have varying levels of success depending on specific circumstances.

The ABC strategy – Abstain, Be faithful, Use a Condom – is the mainstay of many HIV prevention programs. However, in much of Africa, the reality is:

• Abstaining or insisting on the use of a condom is not realistic because rape and other forms of sexual violence are widespread.
• Almost half of all girls and young women around the world report that their first sexual encounter was forced.³
• Only 11 percent of women in Zambia believed they have the right to ask a husband to use a condom.⁴ (an example of women’s rights).
Thus, the ABC strategy by itself is neither realistic nor sufficient. Marriage does not necessarily provide a safety net:

- In many parts of the world, the majority of women is married by age 20 and has higher rates of HIV than their unmarried, sexually active peers.\(^5\)
- In poor households in Africa, the presence of an AIDS patient can absorb all household labor, most of it done by women.
- In households affected by HIV and AIDS, declining family income causes children to withdraw from school, and girls are usually the first to go. Across Africa, for example, formal school participation is declining, especially among girls.

A comprehensive strategy is needed to:

- Boost girls’ access to education
- Strengthen legal protection for women’s property and inheritance rights
- Combat sexual harassment and violence against women
- Ensure women have access to HIV/AIDS care and prevention service

### Activities

1. As a group, discuss the positive and negative aspects of the ABC strategy, especially as it relates to women. (Approximately ten minutes)

2. In smaller groups of three or four, and with reference to the issues identified in Table 2, identify additional actions that can be taken to reduce the vulnerability of women and girls to HIV/AIDS. Ask someone from each group to give a two-minute report to the larger group that includes key discussion points.

### Action Plan

The nature of gender inequality and how it manifests within churches will vary. It would be most surprising, however, to find a church or community for which such inequality does not exit, at least in part. Acknowledging that gender inequality exists, and that it reinforces the spread of HIV and AIDS, is an important task of the faith community. When these inequalities are identified, there are concrete measures that can be taken to reduce their impact.

### Activities

1. Identify and record actions that your church or community can take to address a minimum of two specific causes of gender inequality.

2. Develop a plan for implementing these actions, including a clear set of objectives, time frame, resources required, people to be involved, and methods of evaluation.
**Conclusion**

Tackling these inequalities is not a task reserved solely for women; men must also be fully involved. For starters, men must declare zero tolerance for violence against women. They must commit to their daughters’ education and to the alleviation of the burden of care on women. In short, women and men must work together to promote and protect the human rights of all women and girls, and confront the poverty and gender inequalities that fuel the epidemic.

**NOTES**

1. Reeves and Baden.
Module 5: Social Factors Which Influence the Spread of HIV/AIDS

“Like a spotlight, HIV/AIDS exposes and reveals the frailty of aspects of our personal and communal lives – things that until now we have been unwilling to confront. It forces human beings to confront death and the meaning of life in a way that few other human illnesses do. In facing the death or deaths of those living with HIV, we are all confronted with our own frailty.”

Introduction
When one moves beyond the large numbers of people infected with HIV to the faces of AIDS, one notices the suffering of both the infected and the affected. HIV/AIDS does not impact only the lives of those who are HIV+. The virus also changes the lives of family, friends, and communities. Not only are people’s lives and relationships affected, but also people’s pain from HIV/AIDS is magnified in Africa by economics, social and cultural understandings (gender imbalance, social shame, stigma, and the silence and denial of families and churches), and poverty.

Factors that Are Likely to Influence the Transmission of HIV/AIDS

Economic
HIV/AIDS is not just a disease of poor countries. The United States is very wealthy and there are over one million infected persons there. Botswana, one of the wealthiest countries in Africa, is one of the eight countries in the world whose adult population has an “HIV prevalence that exceeds 15%.” Clearly there is no simple connection between HIV/AIDS and a country’s national wealth or poverty status. It is, however, believed that the extent of HIV in a country bears some relationship to the interaction between a country’s level of wealth and the ways in which the wealth is distributed and managed. The ability to share equally allows a society to function with the best interests of all in mind. According to this paradigm, an extensive AIDS epidemic is more likely to occur in countries where resource distribution is deficient.

Also the shifting economies in Africa have intensified labor migration. This continuous movement of people is an underlying factor in the spread of HIV/AIDS. For example, men from countries like Lesotho, Botswana, Swaziland, Malawi, and Zambia travel to South Africa for employment; or men from Burkina Faso travel to Côte d’Ivoire and leave their families behind for long periods of time. While in South Africa or Côte d’Ivoire, men may live in an overcrowded single-sex hostel, which is frequented by sex workers. These living conditions result in high-risk behaviors that increase the spread of HIV among the migrant workers. The mobility of men from rural areas to towns and cities for work has also resulted in increased HIV infection. Men from small villages go into nearby cities to find work. Rather than walking back and forth each day, they will stay in the city for several weeks at a time before returning to the village.

Social and Cultural

Gender Imbalance
There are several gender dimensions that are useful for understanding the spread and impact of HIV/AIDS in Africa societies:

- Social and cultural beliefs and practices: polygamy, unsafe sex practices
- Marrying a widow to the deceased husband’s brother. If the dead husband died of AIDS, the infected widow may pass on the disease to the new husband.
- Female circumcision. The multiple-use of non-sterilized instruments (such as razor blades).
Shame and Stigma
Preconceived notions of HIV/AIDS connect the virus with promiscuity. This view brings shame and stigma to those who have the virus, especially to women and girls. It is not unusual for females to be blamed for giving the virus to men. The fear of being discriminated against prevents open discussion and diminishes support systems for those suffering with HIV/AIDS. With these attitudes hovering around HIV/AIDS, it is very difficult for people to go for testing or to admit to family members that they have the virus. When people finally are tested, they are often already in later stages of the virus or full-blown AIDS, making treatment and survival more difficult. (See Module 6 in this chapter for more on stigma and shame.)

Silence and Denial of Families and Faith Communities
Silence and denial are intricately linked to shame and stigma. Families and churches do not want to talk about HIV/AIDS or to work with HIV+ people because of the stigma connected with the virus. Some churches take the easy way out and wrongly say that HIV is a punishment from God. When families and friends will not admit HIV is present, those who are positive are less likely to seek treatment and to properly care for themselves.

Silence and denial are significant contributors to the spread of HIV. If people do not talk openly about their HIV status, safe sex practices are less likely to be implemented. Denial spreads HIV just as rapidly. If an HIV+ person denies their positive status, they risk spreading the virus to all of their sexual partners.

Poverty
HIV has affected both rich and poor in different parts of the world. Nevertheless the virus exacerbates poverty by leaving people poor, hungry, and without adequate access to health care. Well over half of the population of Africa lives below the poverty line. HIV/AIDS compounds poverty. Some people who have the virus are unable to work or are fired from their jobs because of discrimination. Some people with AIDS are too ill and weak to go to a health center for treatment or to school for classes. An inability to access these basic resources to improve one’s life make poverty even more difficult to overcome.

In 2005, the High-Level Roundtable on Eradication of Poverty of the United Nations said the root causes of poverty can be “categorized into three broad groups: unequal distribution of assets; insecurity and vulnerability; and social exclusion and powerlessness.”

Bad governance (e.g., the mismanagement of funds and supplies that comes with corruption) is one cause of unequal distribution of assets. Bad governance often keeps money and resources for a few while many in the community or nation go hungry or live without basic necessities, such as clean water and adequate shelter. Distribution issues may also come as a result of a natural disaster or war. Roads, schools, and hospitals can be destroyed in war and in disasters such as earthquakes and cyclones. Such devastation prevents supplies, education, and training from reaching those who most need it. When resources do not reach all members of society equally, the cycle of poverty becomes even more entrenched.

Insecurity and vulnerability are also sometimes the result of war or natural disaster. When people are uncertain if they and their families will be alive tomorrow, great insecurities arise. War and disaster also create food shortages because of crop destruction, leaving people uncertain about their next meal. Additionally, there are cultural practices and beliefs which contribute to people’s vulnerability. For example, in many countries in Africa, the inequalities among men and women create insecure environments for women. Women are not allowed to choose when or with whom they have sexual relations.

Social exclusion and powerlessness keep poverty alive also. If people are ostracized from the community because they are HIV+, their voices are not respected or heard. This social exclusion separates them from communal wisdom and knowledge. It also cuts them off from valuable resources, leaving them powerless to work toward a better life for themselves and their families.
It is not unusual for all three of these root causes of poverty to overlap. Economic, social and cultural factors that perpetuate the subordination of women also contribute to the spread of HIV. Women may be forced into commercial sex work by their economic situation or that of their families, leaving them more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. In many societies the subjugation of women limits their control over their own bodies and their power to make decisions about reproduction. Faced with overwhelming poverty, a woman who works in a brothel may reason: “If I work here I may die in ten years. If I don’t work here, I will die of starvation tomorrow.”

Grasping the complex relationship between poverty and HIV/AIDS is central to an understanding of the impact of the epidemic on human life. In Africa, HIV/AIDS is largely perceived to be a disease of poverty because of the crippling economic effect it has on families. HIV/AIDS sabotages attempts at poverty reduction by perpetuating economic hardship and increasing vulnerability and social exclusion.
Activity (20 minutes)
1. What are the factors in your country or community that are likely to influence the transmission of HIV?
2. Which of these factors in the country or community are likely to increase people’s vulnerability to HIV infection and increase the impact of HIV/AIDS on families and the economy?


Module 6: Reducing HIV/AIDS Stigma and Discrimination

Introduction
From the beginning, the HIV/AIDS pandemic has been accompanied by fear, ignorance, denial, and silence. This leads to the stigmatization of and discrimination against people with HIV/AIDS and their families. In addition, many more who do not know their HIV status live in fear of facing stigma and discrimination should they contract the disease. It goes without saying that the stigma surrounding HIV and AIDS is as much about social phenomena as it is about biological and medical concerns. Across the world the global epidemic of HIV/AIDS has triggered responses of compassion, solidarity, and support – bringing out the best in people, their families, and communities. But it has also elicited reactions of hatred, denial, rejection, blame, and shame.

HIV-related stigma is increasingly recognized as the single greatest challenge to slowing the spread of the disease. Stigma is a powerful tool of social control. It can be used to marginalize, exclude, and exercise power over individuals. And, in certain instances, people are denied access to the services and treatment they need.

Stigma
HIV-related stigma refers to all unfavorable attitudes, beliefs, and policies directed toward people perceived to have HIV/AIDS as well as toward their significant others, loved ones, close associates, social groups, and communities. Patterns of prejudice, which include devaluing, discounting, discrediting, and discriminating against these groups of people, play into and strengthen existing social inequalities – especially those of gender, sexuality, and race – that are at the root of HIV-related stigma.

Link and Phelan (2001) describe stigma as occurring when four interrelated components come together:

- Distinguishing and labeling differences
- Associating human differences with negative attributes
- Separating “us” from “them”
- Status loss and discrimination converge in the context of social, economic, and political power

Discrimination
Stigmatization often leads to discrimination, which refers to any form of treatment, distinction, exclusion, or restriction of a person based on a person’s group, class, situation, or characteristics rather than the person’s merit.

Activity

1. Give note cards (in a variety of colors) to participants and let each write definitions of stigma and discrimination as he or she understands them and based on his or her experiences or cultural observations.
2. After a few minutes, collect and attach cards to the wall and discuss.
3. Create group definitions of stigma and discrimination.

Why There Are Stigma Related to HIV and AIDS
In many societies people living with HIV and AIDS are considered shameful. In some societies HIV/AIDS is associated with minority groups or the behaviors of commercial sex workers or homosexuals. Others see the disease as a result of personal irresponsibility. Unfortunately these negative responses to HIV/AIDS widely exist and often feed upon and reinforce dominant ideas of good and bad with respect to sex, illness, and proper and improper behaviors.
Factors That Contribute to Stigma Surrounding HIV/AIDS

- Religious or moral beliefs lead some people to understand HIV/AIDS as the result of moral fault that deserves to be punished
- Some people believe HIV and AIDS are linked to witchcraft
- It is a life-threatening disease
- There is no known cure.

Forms of HIV- and AIDS-Related Stigma and Discrimination

When HIV/AIDS became a known disease, it caused a global scare. Thus communities, as well as countries, established various measures to “protect” themselves. Legislation included compulsory screening and testing as well as limitations on international travel and migration. There are laws that insist on the compulsory notification of HIV/AIDS cases and also the restriction of the person’s rights to anonymity, confidentiality, and freedom of movement. These were enacted and justified on the grounds that the disease was a public health risk.

Today the situation is changing as people gain a deeper understanding of the disease. Even as laws are changed, there remain many who do not fully understand HIV/AIDS. The misconceptions with which people live perpetuate the stigma and discrimination.

Families

In the majority of developing countries, family members are the primary caregivers for the sick. However, not all families are loving caregivers in cases of HIV/AIDS. It is not unusual for infected members to find themselves stigmatized by and discriminated against within their own families.

“My sister kept everything separate for me: my cup, plate, washing bowl and all other utensils. We used to eat together until they learned the cause of the death of my husband. Now she really harasses me. I pray that nobody else comes to be in this situation. I ask myself, ‘Can’t someone change and educate her?’”

Women and Stigma

The impact of HIV/AIDS on women is particularly alarming. Women are often economically, socially, and culturally disadvantaged and lack equal access to treatment, financial support, and education. In many societies, women are perceived as the main transmitters of sexually transmitted infections. HIV+ women are treated differently from men in many developing countries. Men are likely to be “excused” for the behavior that resulted in the infection whereas women are not.

“My mother-in-law tells everybody that, because of me, her son got this disease. She says, ‘My son is simple and as good as gold; but look at the killer [meaning me] who brought the disease to him.’”

Employment

The inaccurate assumption that HIV can be transmitted through casual contact at the workplace has led to a situation where numerous employers terminate or refuse employment to HIV+ persons. Even if people are not terminated, there is evidence that People Living With HIV/AIDS (PLWHAs) who are open about their status at work may experience stigmatization and discrimination.

“Nobody would come near me, eat with me or sit and chat with me. I could not stand the discrimination, so I left the job.”

Initially most companies and organizations did not have HIV workplace policies and as a result job applicants could be asked to complete pre-employment screening. Some employers used the test results to deny employment opportunities to PLWHAs. It would not be unheard of for a director of human resource development in a developing country to say:
“Though we do not have a policy so far, I can say that if at any time of recruitment there is a person with HIV, I will not employ him. I will certainly not buy a problem for the company. I see recruitment as a buying and selling relationship; if I don’t find the product attractive, I will not buy it.”

Activities

1. Divide participants into small groups to create scenarios/skits that tell about the difficulties of living with HIV/AIDS. After a few minutes, call on each group to perform its theater sketch/skit.
2. Assign participants to different small groups to create skits that portray a variety of healthy and faith-filled responses to people with HIV/AIDS.
3. Identify some of the ways people, churches, and communities should respond to HIV/AIDS and people who are affected by and infected with the virus.

Health Care

Fear of stigmatization and discrimination has led to a very low rate of HIV status disclosure. People do not often go for voluntary counseling and testing, so they are unable to access treatment and care even when it is available. Some reports reveal that people are stigmatized and discriminated against by healthcare systems, including medical personnel. When HIV+ people believe they cannot even trust people in the medical profession, they feel very lost and isolated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why Don’t People Know their Status?</th>
<th>Solutions</th>
<th>How Can the Church be Supportive?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know where to get tested</td>
<td>Learn the location of testing sites from community midwives, clinics, hospitals, pastors</td>
<td>Be up-to-date on latest testing sites in the area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The site is not easily accessible to all and/or is expensive to travel to</td>
<td>Pool resources … Go to testing sites with others who also need to be tested</td>
<td>Help establish testing sites in a variety of locations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Help provide support and care (financial, emotional, spiritual, physical) to those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If infected, may not have money or resources for proper medical care</td>
<td>Find support from individuals, groups and organizations who can help provide educational resources, medical and monetary assistance</td>
<td>Help protect anonymity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Help provide support and care (financial, emotional, spiritual, physical) to those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afraid to get tested, fearful of results, fearful of being seen by a familiar person</td>
<td>Find support from individuals, groups and organizations familiar with issues of shame and the emotional complexities of HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>Be supportive and confidential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Help provide support and care (financial, emotional, spiritual, physical) to those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misinformation: Don’t think they are at risk, and therefore don’t need to be tested</td>
<td>If you are sexually active or have been sexually abused or raped, get tested</td>
<td>Provide accurate information and education about how HIV/AIDS is contracted and spread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Encourage people to know their status, provide support and care for them and their families when they learn their status</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activity

Discuss the following questions in the full or small groups:

• Use chart paper and discuss the issues below (create your own chart and add information as in the example).
• List strategies that churches and communities can adopt to encourage people to learn their HIV status and to seek early treatment if needed.

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CHAPTER EIGHTEEN
Substance Abuse

Introduction
Drug abuse used to be confined to small groups but is now a global obsession. Historically people have taken drugs for a number of reasons: curative, religious, and recreational. Globalization has made the flow of drugs easier, particularly in Africa where poverty, poor governance, corruption, armed conflict, and porous national borders have made the continent vulnerable to dangerous and illegal drug trafficking. In Africa drug use is often associated with the underclass and the socially marginalized.

More people are abusing drugs today than in any other time in history, and many of those people are youth.¹

MODULE 1: Common Types of Drugs Used in Africa

What Is a Drug?
“The word ‘drug’ refers to any substance or product that affects the way people feel, think, see, taste, smell, hear, or behave. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines ‘drug’ as ‘any substance, solid, liquid, or gas that changes the function or structure of the body in some way.’”²

Medicine: A substance that is used to prevent or cure illnesses and diseases. By definition, therefore, medicines are drugs because they affect people’s bodies in some way.

Illicit (Illegal) Drugs: Drugs whose production, sale, distribution, purchase, or consumption is prohibited by law.

Drug Addiction and Drug Dependency: Two terms that are often used interchangeably. They refer to a compulsive physiological need for habit-forming drugs. “Addiction is a chronic, often relapsing brain disease that causes compulsive drug seeking and use despite harmful consequences to the individual that is addicted and to those around them.”³

Drug Addicts: Those individuals who are addicted to drugs (that is, who have “a chronic, often relapsing brain disease that causes compulsive drug seeking and use despite harmful consequences to themselves and to those around them”⁴).

Drug Abuse: Refers to a situation in which people take or consume drugs illegally or without medical supervision in order to change the way they feel, think, or behave. Drug abuse can jeopardize physical and/or mental health.

Drug Pusher: One who sells drugs illegally or without medical supervision.

Categories of Drugs
Drugs are classified into categories depending on their use and effect on the body.

Depressants: Sedatives that act on the nervous system. They provide temporary relaxation and relief from anxiety and mental stress. When used over time, they have the tendency to make the user dependent upon them. Example: Heroine
Stimulants: Agents that activate, enhance, or increase activity of the central nervous system. They include amphetamines and synthetic appetite suppressants such as phenmetrazine or methylphenidate. Stimulants can cause elevated blood pressure, nausea, and/or vomiting. They can also cause violent and aggressive behavior, agitation, and impaired judgment. Example: Cocaine

Hallucinogens: Drugs that cause profound mental changes such as euphoria, anxiety, sensory distortion, vivid hallucinations, delusions, paranoia, and depression. Examples: Mescaline and LSD.

Tranquilizers: The most common drugs used to relieve anxiety and help people sleep. Examples: Temazepam and Valium.

Steroids: Performance-enhancing drugs. Youth who want to build up their muscles in order to look fit, as well as athletes who want to gain undue advantage over fellow competitors often use steroids. This is the main reason for “drug testing” in the sports world. Steroids are swallowed as pills or capsules or they are injected. Steroids can cause:

- Wild mood swings including withdrawal, depression, paranoid jealousy, extreme irritability, increased aggression, delusions, and impaired judgment
- Acne, smaller breasts, deep voices, and disrupted menstrual cycles in females
- Impotence, shrunken testicles, swollen breasts, and low sperm counts in men
- Liver, heart, and kidney damage in both women and men
- Halted growth in youth

Types of Drugs
This section will address some of the most common drugs being used by youth in Africa. They include:

Alcohol
Alcohol abuse is one of the greatest threats to life among youth in Africa. Because it is massively produced and sold cheaply, alcohol is a major epidemic which cuts short the lives of hundreds of teenagers. Alcohol is the most widely accepted drug in the world and is part of many social settings. It changes a person’s mood, reduces inhibitions, and helps people feel more confident and less anxious. It is often part of celebrations and is used to drown out unpleasant feelings. Alcohol abuse often begins when a person believes that without alcohol he or she will not be able to enjoy an occasion or will be less able to cope with a difficult situation. Dependency follows as the body becomes used to a certain level of blood alcohol. Alcohol use can cause slurred speech, clumsiness, and exaggerated emotions. Higher doses can cause double vision, dizziness, staggering, loss of balance, nausea, vomiting, loss of consciousness, and even death.

Extended Effects of Alcohol Use
- Stomach irritation, ulcers
- Hangovers caused by dehydration
- Liver damage
- Mouth and throat cancers in heavy drinkers
- Nutritional damage caused by neglect of a proper diet
- Brain damage caused directly by alcohol in the blood
- Blindness, loss of consciousness, and loss of memory for periods of time
- Death

In addition, alcohol abuse causes social problems, such as:
- Auto accidents, which can lead to serious/permanent injury or death
- Violence
- Murder, rape, and other criminal behavior
Tobacco
Tobacco is one of the most commonly abused drugs in the world. Tobacco, like alcohol, is cheap and until recently, there was very little governmental intervention in its production and sale. The major chemical in tobacco is nicotine. Nicotine is extremely addictive. In some places, children as young as eight years old smoke cigarettes. Smokers become psychologically and physically dependent on nicotine.

Effects of Tobacco
- Nicotine causes high blood pressure, increased heart rate, and reduced oxygen-carrying capacity of the blood.
- In tobacco users, the smoke replaces oxygen in the lungs and can cause suffocation and heart failure. Long-term use of nicotine is also harmful to the liver, as well as to the kidneys and brain.
- Prolonged smoking may cause cancer and death.

Caffeine
Caffeine is a mild stimulant. High doses cause the jitters and may prevent sleep. Very large doses may cause flashes of light or odd noises. It can also increase heart rate and blood pressure. It is a weak diuretic (encourages urine formation) and increases the respiratory rate. Substances rich in caffeine include coffee, cola nut, cola drinks, energy drinks, and so on.

Effects of Caffeine
- Heavy doses of caffeine can cause nervous breakdown and death.
- In pregnant women, high doses of caffeine may affect the size of babies at birth. Caffeine increases the risk of miscarriage. Also low birth weight, withdrawal symptoms, and breathing difficulties in newborns have been connected to caffeine use by the mother during pregnancy.
- Heavy caffeine intake also increases the risk of the sudden, unexplained death of babies after birth and possibly during pregnancy. Tea, coffee, and cola should therefore be avoided in large doses during pregnancy. Caffeine has a tendency to shut down the blood supply to the placenta, starving the fetus of oxygen.
Marijuana
Common names: dope, smoke, cannabis, weed, draw, puff, blunts, blow, ganja, pot, herb, widow.

Marijuana (cannabis, sativa) is widely grown in Africa and around the world. It is the most popular illegal drug in Africa and is grown commercially using the latest agricultural techniques.

Marijuana is smoked in cigarette form or in a pipe. It is sometimes used in combination with other drugs, mixed in food, or brewed as a tea. When smoked, marijuana has a pungent, distinctive, sweet-and-sour odor.

**Effects of Marijuana**

- Prolonged use is known to cause poor memory and learning disorders.
- It also causes distorted perception, difficulty in thinking and problem solving, loss of coordination, and increased heart rate.
- Marijuana makes people relaxed and talkative.
- Because it is a depressant, it has the tendency to make people who are sad feel worse.
- Marijuana users are known to have a heightened sense of hearing and color perceptions.
- Users often report that marijuana improves self-awareness, relationships, and makes them more “easy going,” tolerant, and understanding. Some marijuana users say that it helps them be creative.
- Excessive use of marijuana can cause burning and stinging of the mouth and throat, is often accompanied by a heavy cough, phlegm production, and frequent and acute chest pain.
- Smoking marijuana increases the likelihood of developing respiratory problems and cancer of the head, neck, and lungs.
Cocaine
Common names: coke, cocaine, Charlie, wash, rock, base, stones, crack

Cocaine is one of the most dangerous and addictive drugs in the world. Cocaine is a white powder refined from the coca plant that grows in South America. It is usually placed on a smooth surface such as glass and cut up with a razor blade, forming thin lines or trails, which can then be sniffed up through a makeshift straw such as rolled up paper money. “Snorting” is the most common form of consumption, though it is sometimes injected. Cocaine is easily absorbed through the lining of the nostrils. Repeated snorting of cocaine damages the membranes of the nose and can eat away the nasal septum, the barrier between one side of the nose and the other.

Cocaine speeds up body activity and makes the user hyperactive. These effects are usually intense but often last less than an hour. Cocaine releases an intense rush of energy, making a person feel good, mentally sharp, talkative, and confident. Cocaine makes the user crave more as its effect in the body diminishes.

**Effects of Cocaine**
- Cocaine makes the user restless, nauseated, agitated, anxious, paranoid, and possibly causes hallucinations.
- Cocaine has been known to cause heart failure, convulsions, and death.
- Regular cocaine users often have interrupted sleep patterns. They feel unable to cope with life until they take another dose.
- People who take cocaine may believe they cannot have a “good time” without the drug. Stopping the drug produces terrible headaches, tiredness, nausea, sleepiness, and depression.

Heroin
Common names: smack, junk, skag, H, brown, horse, harry, boy

Heroin, like tobacco, is one of the cheapest drugs on the market. However, it is not very common in most parts of Africa. Heroin is an off-white or brown powder produced from the dried milky sap of opium poppies.

Heroin can be smoked, swallowed, sniffed, or injected. Fumes from heated heroin are inhaled (“chasing the dragon”). It makes the user feel relaxed, happy, dreamy – even drowsy in larger doses. Heroin, like other opiates, causes severe constipation. Sniffing heroin damages the nose. Heroin depresses the nervous system and can cause coughing, breathing and heart-rate irregularities. Heroin can cause dilated blood vessels and dilated pupils.

**Effects of Heroin Use**
- Non-sterile injections cause abscesses, damage veins, and introduce bacteria into the bloodstream
- Slows reactions and diminishes concentration
- Causes nausea and vomiting, especially with first-time use
- Liver disease
- Lung complications
- Can cause death when used in large quantities or when injected with infected materials
- Heroin users risk being infected with hepatitis and HIV/AIDS infection through the exchange of infected needles and syringes.
Ketamine
Common names: K, special K, KitKat, date-rape drug

Ketamine is a powerful anesthetic used mainly by vets during surgery on farm animals. It is normally available in the form of a liquid or white powder. It can be snorted or swallowed as a powder or injected as a liquid.

Effects of Ketamine
- Ketamine makes the person feel disconnected from the body and can cause hallucinations
- Because it eliminates pain, users may hurt themselves without realizing it
- Ketamine can cause the heart rate to fall
- Ketamine can cause loss of consciousness, vomiting, and death.

4 ibid
Module 2: Drug Abuse Use Among Young People

Reasons for Drug Use

“The most basic human instinct is survival. The most basic drive is pleasure – or the satisfaction of human appetites whether for food, drink, or sex.”

1. **Frustration** – When people lose hope, drug addiction can become a way to hide from reality. When people feel marginalized, can’t find rewarding work, believe their existence is meaningless, and/or are struggling with relationships they are more likely to resort to drugs in order to mask the pain.

2. **Experimental Purposes** – People may also use drugs to experiment with the effects – for pleasure or simply out of curiosity.

3. **Peer Influence** – Young people often experience strong peer pressure. They are always fighting a battle between conforming to the behavioral patterns of friends and embracing their authentic personhood. Because of a general lack of experience and some of the skills necessary to deal with these pressures, young people are more likely to conform. In situations where drugs are available, they end up taking them in order to “be like the others” in the group.

4. **Family Influence** – Young people may learn about drugs and their uses from their parents or other family members. Often children are more likely to end up taking or abusing drugs when they live in families where smoking, drinking alcohol, and/or drug use is considered a normal part of life.

5. **The Media** – Mixed messages from media often contradict or conflict with young people’s experiences. Frequently the media send out messages that glamorize or encourage drug among young people.

6. **The Need to Succeed** – Many young people, especially those who play sports, take drugs in order to enhance their performance.

Possible Signs and Symptoms of Drug Use and Abuse

Though the signs below could signal that a teenager is abusing drugs, these behaviors may also be a normal part of adolescence, of depression, or other personal problems. The key issue is change in appearance, personality, attitude, or behavior. Please note that the presence of these signs does not prove anything tangible. However, a combination of these behaviors may arouse suspicion.

- Loss of appetite, increase in appetite, changes in eating habits, unexplained weight loss or gain
- Slowed or staggering walk, poor coordination
- Inability to sleep, awake at night, unusual lethargy
- Red and watery eyes, pupils larger or smaller than usual, blank stare
- Cold, sweaty, or shaking hands; puffy face, blushing, or pale
- Unusual smell on breath, body, or clothes
- Extreme hyperactivity, excessive talkativeness
- Running nose, hacking cough
- Needle marks on lower arms and/or legs
- Nausea, vomiting
• Excessive sweating
• Change in attitude, personality, or friends; sudden avoidance of old friends, won’t talk about new friends; friends take drugs
• Changes in activities or hobbies, poor academics, loss of interest in family or family activities
• Difficulty concentrating, forgetful, low self-esteem, apathetic
• Moodiness, irritability, silliness, paranoia, excessive need for privacy
• Withdrawn, secretive, stealing
• Car accidents, need for money for unclear reasons, possession of needles/syringes

Harmful Effects of Drugs

The Immune System – Many drugs, for example marijuana, impair the immune system’s ability to fight off infectious diseases.

Learning and Social Behavior

• Drugs in general cause depression, anxiety, and personality disturbances. They have the potential to cause problems in daily life or make a person’s existing problems worse. The more a person uses drugs, the more he or she is likely to fall behind in acquiring intellectual, job, or social skills.
• Students who use drugs receive lower grades and are less likely to graduate from high school, compared with their non-using peers.
• Workers who take drugs are more likely than their co-workers to have problems on the job. This can be manifested in several ways:
  — Withdrawal behaviors, such as leaving work without permission, daydreaming, spending work time on personal matters
  — Shirking responsibilities, such as doing things that adversely affect productivity, morale, career status, and social life
  — Impairment of cognitive abilities, physical and mental health

Effects on Pregnancy – Children who were exposed to drugs while in the womb have increased percentages of birth defects, intellectual deficiencies, and behavioral problems. Drug-exposed children have more behavioral problems than unexposed children and poorer performance scores on tasks of visual perception, language comprehension, sustained attention, and memory. Such children are more likely to exhibit deficits in decision-making skills and the ability to remain attentive in school.

Economic Effects – May cause poverty because a majority of the person’s money is spent on drugs. When personal funds are spent, people may turn to stealing to get money for drugs. Drug use also adversely affects a person’s ability to keep or find a job.

Increase in Crime Rate – When drugs are used, stealing, gangsterism, rape, prostitution, and other forms of sexual misconduct may increase because people are less inhibited and possess less ability to make good decisions and maintain boundaries.
Relationship Between Drugs and HIV/AIDS
There is a direct link between drug abuse and HIV/AIDS. Until a few years ago, people knew that HIV/AIDS was primarily contracted through sex; however, information currently being collected across the continent paints a new picture. It is evident that a rising number of registered HIV cases are reportedly caused by injected drug use.

How does this happen?
1. Sharing and multiple uses of syringes and needles can lead to the transfer of HIV-infected blood. Even a tiny amount of HIV-infected blood left in the syringe can be transmitted to the next user.
2. For some people, drugs and sex go hand-in-hand. Drug users often trade sex for drugs. Some people think that sexual activity is more enjoyable when they are using drugs. Drug use, including alcohol, also increases the risk of unprotected and unsafe sexual activity. Those who are under the influence of drugs may find it difficult to set personal limits or boundaries, and are less likely to remember to use protection.

Halting Drug Use Among Young People – The Way Forward
The Institutional Response – What governments, institutions, and communities can do:
• African governments can put in place anti-drug and drive laws, and ensure these laws are enforced.
• Police forces should be well trained and adequately equipped to recognize signs of alcohol and drug intoxication.
• Alcohol consumption limits should be put in place and structural programs such as breath tests for alcohol must be enforced, especially for drivers. Impose stiff and severe penalties for drug/alcohol intoxication at the wheel.
• Compulsory treatment for drug addicts and rewards for offenders who stay drug-free.
• Civic education aimed at disseminating information about drugs, drug abuse, and treatment should be available throughout the criminal justice system. Police, probation officers, magistrates, prison officers, and others would benefit from training to help recognize and manage drug-/alcohol-related problems.
• Licensing laws for the manufacture of all drugs could be made far stricter.
• A legal age for buying cigarettes and alcohol should be imposed as in other countries. For example in the United States, the legal age to purchase tobacco products is 18 and the legal age to purchase alcohol is 21.
• Governments could make it a criminal offense for anyone to sell any kind of drug to persons below the legal age.
• Advertisements against the use of drugs could be displayed in public places such as stadiums, roadways, TV, movie theatres and on the radio.
• Drug-related businesses offering employment to under-aged children should be severely punished.
• Schools, colleges, universities, prisons, and religious institutions should use every possible opportunity to encourage a drug-free culture. For example, substance abuse prevention should be part of youth-group, school and college curricula.
• The media should be encouraged to actively participate in anti-drug campaigns.
• Governments, faith communities, and towns could endeavor to provide job-training opportunities for young people so that they may live positive and meaningful lives.
• Governments, civil society, and churches must work hand-in-hand to remove children from the streets and care for them. Street children are at high risk for becoming drug users.
Personal Response – What parents and youth workers can do:

Parents
- Parents have a major role in protecting their children from the drug culture. It is important that parental love, discipline, encouragement, and character development be given to children during the formative years.
- In addition, parents themselves must set an example by not only living drug-free lives but also by establishing positive communication links with their children, freely discussing the dangers of drugs.
- A close and positive relationship between parents and the school is necessary. A sharp, unexplained drop in academic performance is a possible indication that a child is taking or using drugs. A positive relationship between school and parent ensures the situation will be addressed.

Youth Workers
- Build relationships with parents and communicate regularly with parents about the activities and behaviors of youth.
- Live as positive, drug-free examples for young people.
- Understand that youth workers have an important role in the lives of young people. Many young people will hear the words of a youth worker even when they act as if they are not listening.
Discussion Questions

1. When and where did you first hear the word drug?
2. What, in your opinion, is responsible for the fact that drug use is on the rise among young people?
3. Discuss some of the institutional and personal responses to drugs, drug use, and drug users listed in Module 2.
4. How can you as individuals and as a community of faith positively affect your communities?

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Module 1: What Are Human Rights?

The basic notion of human rights lies in people’s recognition of the need to protect and affirm every person’s dignity. Human rights are important, regardless of people’s origins, age, culture, sexual orientation, religion, or income. Human rights issues are often considered to be national or international in scope, but human rights are equally relevant at an individual and community level.

Some people seek ways to access their rights to land or to freedom from discrimination. Some protest in pursuit of the right to a healthy environment. Some people talk about women’s rights and the rights of children.

Human Rights and Our Scriptural Foundation

The Social Principles of the United Methodist Church include the following scriptural groundwork for human rights. Read the excerpt from the Social Principles aloud together, and then discuss the questions.

God created human beings,
In the image of God they were created;
Male and female were created.
Genesis 1:26-27 (adapted)

“We affirm that all persons are of equal worth in the sight of God, because all are created in the image of God. Biblical tradition demands that we live in an interdependent relationship with God and our neighbor. We must respond to human need at every community level. As covenant people of God, we are called to responsibility rather than privilege. God’s vision for humanity as revealed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ demands the total fulfillment of human rights in an interdependent global community. It is a vision of life where needs of the community have priority over individual fears and where redemption and reconciliation are available to all. Human rights are holistic in nature and therefore indivisible in their economic, social, cultural, civil, and political aspects. The omission of any of these aspects denies our God-given human dignity. As Christians, we receive and carry a mandate to seek justice and liberation. Isaiah calls us to ‘loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke.

Isaiah 58:6’”

Discussion Questions

1. What is the significance of all persons being created “in the image of God?”

2. How might your ministry be about “loosing the thongs of injustice?”

3. Isaiah wrote these words in his context. How do they apply to yours? What injustices do the young people whom you serve face?

What Is the Definition of Human Rights?

Human rights are expressed in many different ways; thus, it is difficult to arrive at a universal definition. People’s understanding of human rights is continually evolving, but there are general understandings of what is meant by the term. One way of looking at rights is to see them as a special kind of claim. For example, the right to education means that everyone is entitled to a good education and, in particular, that governments have an obligation to provide educational facilities and services. The Stanford Dictionary of Philosophy defines human rights as “international norms that help to protect all people everywhere from severe political, legal, and social abuses.”

Another way of understanding human rights is to look at the specific human rights agreed upon by people around the world. Equality and freedom from discrimination are generally accepted as fundamental. Specific rights include the right to life, freedom from torture and other cruel and inhuman treatment. The right to a fair trial, free speech, freedom of religion, health, education, and an adequate standard of living are other examples of human rights.

Rights are related to the values by which societies live. These values have their origins in the world’s great religions and philosophies. Value systems can vary in detail between one society and another, but the fundamental ideas are very similar. Concepts of justice and human dignity are at the heart of these values.

People everywhere seek physical security, freedom from suffering, and freedom from unreasonable restraint for themselves and their families. They seek equality and fairness, the opportunity to reach their potential, and acknowledgment of their inherent dignity. Over the last few hundred years, ideas about human rights have developed as a way of expressing some of these values. But whether expressed or not, rights are – and always have been – part of our interactions with one another.

Rights also relate to what is lawful; that is, some rights may be laid down in law. If you have a legal right to something, you may be able to defend it in court. In many situations, though, rights exist but are not covered by law. These rights are often called moral rights. Moral rights are based on society’s sense of what is fair or just.
Which Rights?
There can be disagreement about human rights. For example, some argue over which rights are more important or whether a particular moral or legal right is a human right. When we talk about human rights we are usually referring to those principles that the nations of the world have agreed to refer to as human rights — rights that have been set down in international agreements and form part of international law. The rights set out in these agreements are often written into the domestic laws of countries as well.

Human rights cover virtually every area of human activity. They include civil and political rights, such as freedom of speech and freedom from torture. They also include economic and social rights, such as the rights to health and education. Some rights apply to individuals, such as the right to a fair trial; these are called individual rights. Others apply to groups of people, such as the right to a healthy environment; these are called collective rights.

Human rights are more than mere demands. They have special characteristics that have been agreed upon by the international community. One of these characteristics is that human rights are universal, meaning they apply to everyone, regardless of status, race, gender, nationality, sexual orientation, or other distinction. Indeed equality is one of the fundamental human rights. Another characteristic is that they are indivisible — rights cannot be separated so that people have some rights but not all. People are entitled to all rights, whether civil or political, economic or cultural.

Activity
1. Divide participants into small groups and assign each group two rights from the Human Rights Declaration in Addendum B. Ask groups to identify why they think their rights were included on the list. Why are these rights important?

Human Rights and Responsibilities
Human rights involve responsibility and duties toward other people and the community. Individuals often have a responsibility to ensure that they exercise their rights with due regard for the rights of others. For example, exercising freedom of speech should not infringe on someone else’s right to privacy. Human rights are part of the context of people living together in societies. For human rights to be realized effectively there must be some legal, social, and international order.

Governments have a particular responsibility to ensure that people are able to enjoy their rights. The human rights claim by an individual or community implies an obligation on the part of the wider society, usually through government, to guarantee the right in question. Governments today, if they wish to have credibility, have to ensure a framework of law and provide services that together allow all their citizens to enjoy a life in which their rights are honored. It is generally accepted that this responsibility lies with the government, and citizens can call them to account if rights are not ensured.

Discussion Question
1. Name ways you can exercise a specific right without infringing upon the rights of others.
Why Are Human Rights Important?
There has been a tremendous expansion in the understanding and application of human rights ideas over recent decades. Knowledge about human rights can empower individuals and promote remedies for specific problems. Values of tolerance and equality promote the reduction of friction within society. Proper observance of human rights promotes the security and well-being of all people, including people living in countries other than one’s own. Action on human rights develops our ideas about the kind of society we want to live in. Such action can include community discussions and incorporation by administrators of human rights ideas into practical programs and activism on issues of concern and legislation by governments.

Human rights are a prominent part of how people interact with others at all levels in society— in family, community, educational institutions, the workplace, politics, and international relations. It is vital therefore that people everywhere strive to understand human rights. When people better understand human rights, it will be easier for them to promote justice and the well-being of all society.

Discussion Questions
1. Who has the responsibility to respect and protect human rights?
2. What are some terms that describe the concerns of humans?
3. Do you think human rights are important? Why?
4. Which human rights do you think are most important? Why?

In addressing the previous questions, participants should be encouraged to identify the relevant issues. These issues may include:
• **Who has responsibility for acknowledging human rights?**
  — Governments (think about how this might work in a totalitarian state)
  — Organizations, such as the United Nations, Amnesty International, the International Committee of the Red Cross, churches (like The United Methodist Church), and so on
  — Groups, such as schools, towns, clubs, youth organizations, and so on
  — Individuals

• **What are some terms that describe the concerns of human rights?**
  — Dignity, respect
  — Responsibility
  — Values systems
  — Moral and legal rights
  — Justice, tolerance, equality
  — Interaction between people and their community

• **What makes human rights important?**
  — The unique value of each person and their common humanity
  — The importance of recognizing every individual’s dignity
  — The need for freedom of thought, movement, ideas
  — The need to operate as part of a community
  — The value of mutual respect among people
  — A system of values by which individuals and communities can interact together constructively
  — The need for balance between our rights and our duty to acknowledge and respect the rights of others
  — The broader societal values attached to human rights, such as civil, social, political, and economic rights
**Activity: Human Rights Today**

Use the following questions to help participants think specifically about the global timeline of human rights.

- How and when was the United Nations formed? *(October 24, 1945)*
- When was the Universal Declaration of Human Rights voted in? *(December 10, 1948)*
- When was Nelson Mandela set free? *(February 11, 1990)*
- When was apartheid dismantled in South Africa? *(February 2, 1990)*
- When was Martin Luther King, Jr. assassinated in America? *(April 4, 1968)*

1. Ask the group to create a timeline on chart paper using these dates and other important human rights-related dates for your region.
2. If the group is large, ask them to create timelines that involve important human rights moments in their communities and countries.
3. As a large group, create an overall timeline containing all dates and concerning people that are important to those gathered.

**What Human Rights Abuses in World War II Prompted the Formation of the United Nations?**

Issues to consider could include:

- Discrimination against particular groups of people (such as Jews, people with disabilities, homosexuals, communists)
- Torture, cruel and inhuman treatment (such as starvation, subjection to “experiments,” rapes, beatings)
- Genocide (the systematic destruction of races of people)
- Contravention (opposition) of the Geneva Convention of 1929 regarding treatment of prisoners of war

The atrocities and violations of human rights that occurred during World War II galvanized worldwide opinion and made human rights a universal concern. During World War II millions of soldiers and civilians were killed or maimed. The Nazi regime in Germany created concentration camps for certain groups, including Jews, communists, homosexuals, and political opponents. Some of these people were used as slave labor; others were tortured and/or exterminated in mass executions. The Japanese occupation of China and other Asian countries was marked by frequent and large-scale brutality toward local populations. Japanese forces took thousands of prisoners of war who were used as slave labor, with no medical treatment, and inadequate food.

The promotion and protection of human rights became an Allied war objective after U.S. President Roosevelt proclaimed the Four Freedoms in 1941: the freedoms of speech and belief, and the freedoms from want and fear. The war ended in 1945, but only after the destruction of millions of lives, including many through the first and only use of atomic weapons at Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan. Many countries were devastated by the war and millions of people died or became homeless refugees.

As the war drew to a close, the victorious powers decided to establish a world organization that would prevent further conflict and help build a better world. This new organization was the United Nations (UN) and came into existence in 1945. The purposes of the UN were essentially fourfold:

- To ensure peace and security
- To promote economic development
- To promote the development of international law
- To ensure the observance of human rights
In pursuit of these goals, member governments of the UN have set up a vast and complex array of organizations covering virtually every area of human activity.

The UN’s strong emphasis on human rights made it different from previous international organizations. UN member countries believed that the protection of human rights would provide for freedom, justice, and peace for all in the future.

In its early years, the UN established and documented standards for basic human rights that would serve all people and all nations. It has continued to expand the range of standards that governments and people are expected to live by. Sovereign states had the right to decide whether they would be bound under international law by these standards or whether they would incorporate these standards into domestic legislation.

The first major achievement of the UN in the field of human rights was the adoption by the General Assembly of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 (see Addendum B). The United Nations went on to draft other treaties and declarations, many of which built on the wording and ideas contained in the Universal Declaration. These human rights “instruments,” as they are called have specified how various rights apply to specific groups of people, such as women and children. They have also introduced new concepts that had not been part of the thinking of those who originally drafted the Universal Declaration. For those countries that have accepted them, the instruments have created an international obligation for governments to observe the rights they set out.

These human rights standards have had a profound influence on the national law of the various UN member states, including those in Africa. In the legal systems of some countries, international treaties automatically become the law of the land.

International human rights standards and national human rights laws are considered essential to the observance of human rights in particular countries. It is important that both states and their people be vigilant about the dangers of human rights abuse, and that individuals know their rights and the rights of others. They should be able to use international and national law, as well as the legal system and national human rights institutions, to ensure that the promise of human rights protection is realized.

**Activity: Modern Human Rights Laws**

1. What were some of the violations of human rights during WW II? (Refer to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human Right</th>
<th>Violation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example: Freedom of movement</td>
<td>Construction of ghettos that allowed no movement in or out</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. How do some African countries’ legal systems incorporate UN standards?
3. What examples can you give of legislation in an African country that is based on the protection of human rights?
4. What are some of your thoughts on the human rights abuses of World War II? (Use more paper if necessary, or discuss with group.)
5. What human rights abuses have occurred in different parts of the world during your lifetime – in Africa, in your country of origin?

2 From online Stanford Dictionary of Philosophy, Stanford University (http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/rights-human/).
Module 2: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other Human Rights Instruments

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. It is the basis for human rights protection and promotion around the world and has been endorsed by many countries. Many countries have included its provisions in their basic laws or constitutions.

Those who drafted the Declaration had the extreme human rights violations perpetrated during World War II and the preceding years in mind. The United Nations wanted to promote a better world through international cooperation, including the field of human rights. In adopting the Declaration, the United Nations emphasized the inherent dignity of every person and that recognition of human rights was the basis for freedom, justice, and peace. It called on governments and individuals to promote respect for human rights through education and government policies.

The Universal Declaration is a powerful and eloquent statement, setting standards that provide a framework to call human rights violators to account. In its own words, it is “... a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations....”

The UDHR is an internationally agreed upon statement that acknowledges the inherent dignity of each person.
- The UDHR is a series of “articles” that defines universal human rights.
- The UDHR is recognized as a statement of powerful moral force and is often quoted in defense of those for whom human rights organizations may advocate (for example, political prisoners)

The rights set out in the Universal Declaration cover not only civil and political rights, which protect individuals from government abuse of power, but also economic, social, and cultural rights, which are the basis for adequate standards of living that will ensure human dignity.

The rights in the Declaration include:
- the right to life, liberty and personal security
- freedom from torture and degrading treatment
- the right to equality before the law
- the right to a fair trial
- the right to privacy
- freedom of belief and religion
- freedom of opinion
- freedom of peaceful assembly and association
• the right to participate in government
• the right to social security
• the right to work
• the right to adequate standards of living
• the right to education

The existence of the Universal Declaration by itself does not mean that human rights violations do not continue to occur. Some countries are ruled by dictatorships; people are tortured and killed, and there is discrimination and vilification in many parts of the world. Also some individuals are victims of poverty, unemployment, ill health, and lack of educational opportunity. Nevertheless there has been much progress since 1948. There is widespread recognition of what human rights are, due largely to the existence of the Universal Declaration and other United Nations human rights standards.

The Universal Declaration has great moral force. The standards it sets have become the basis for much of the development of human rights law that has followed. Over the past fifty years, governments within the United Nations framework have developed other more detailed human rights standards. Some of these standards are legally binding on the governments that agree to them.

International human rights standards that are legally binding are in the form of agreements between different countries of the world. These agreements, or “treaties,” are worked out by representatives of governments who sit down together at the United Nations to discuss ideas and wording that all can agree upon. Human rights treaties are usually called “conventions” or “covenants.” The “legally binding” nature of them does not mean they cannot be contravened, (all laws can be broken). Instead it means an undertaking has been entered into that acknowledges the treaties at a level that will allow independent examination and potential intervention (by the UN) should the treaty be broken.

So, what does it mean to say a treaty is “legally binding”? International law does not have the same power of compulsion, as does the domestic law within a country. There are no international police forces or courts with a general jurisdiction over human rights. It is very much up to the member country as to whether or not it will stay within international law. Inevitably, there are cases where member countries choose to step outside the law.

The system of international law is not as weak as this may sound though. When countries ratify a treaty, they take a solemn obligation to observe the provisions of the treaty. In the case of major human rights treaties, the obligations include regular reporting to and scrutiny by UN human rights bodies. Each country has an interest in maintaining a rule-based international system because they don’t want others to break the rules. While there are no penal sanctions, most governments do not like to be exposed to international criticism for failing to observe human rights standards.

After adopting the Universal Declaration, the United Nations went on to draft two major treaties that elaborated on the provisions of the Universal Declaration in a way that made them legally binding on countries that agreed to become parties to them. The two treaties were the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (known by the acronym ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). They were adopted by the General Assembly in 1966. The full content of ICPR can be found at: http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/a_ccpr.htm. The full content of ICESCR can be found at http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/a_cescr.htm.

Some other human rights instruments include:


In accepting international human rights standards, governments agree to ensure that the people living within their boundaries are able to access and enforce the rights set out in the instrument concerned.

If a country chooses to sign and “become party” to a human rights treaty, that country must ensure that its domestic legislation complies with the treaty’s provisions. If it fails to do so, that country will be in breach of international law.

A large number of nations in the world have accepted the major human rights treaties and committed themselves to their provisions. This underscores the universality of human rights principles. Taken together, this great body of standards represents the aspirations of the world’s people for justice, higher standards of moral behavior, and the elimination of suffering. It has achieved this through a process of consultation and negotiation, which has synthesized ideas coming from all of the world’s cultures, religions, and political and legal systems.

The implementation of international human rights law is for the long term. Much remains to be done to achieve the UN Charter’s goal of “better standards of life in larger freedom.” Documents and laws on their own cannot ensure the achievement of human rights objectives. They must be supported by education, vigorous debate and active effort on the part of individuals, communities, organizations, and governments.

**Activity**

1. First, reflect alone for several minutes and make notes about some rights for young people that could be improved in your region? Share these with one other person. Then, as a pair, find another pair to share with as a group of four.

2. As groups of four, help one another name two specific ways each person can work to make one of these a reality in his or her community.

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Module 3: Human Rights in Africa

Africa has worked closely with the United Nations over the years. These connections have been both positive and negative. Quite a few countries in Africa have made great strides in human rights and have helped to develop and ratify some treaties. However, the UN has also raised concerns with some African governments over human rights issues, such as Sudan, Chad, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda. To read more about these and other countries and current issues visit the UN News web link at http://www.un.org/News/ and do an advanced search for “Africa.” Or, visit http://allafrica.com/ and search by country name.

Activities

These activities will assist in translating abstract concepts into understandable form.

1. Ask participants to identify human rights struggles in their countries of origin or residence (in large or small groups). Make note of some of the issues that participants identify and use as topics for a structured debate, if possible.

2. In small groups, ask participants to prepare role plays and dramatizations using the issues identified.

3. Provide a collection of newspapers and magazines (or ask participants to bring; or ahead of time, ask participants to watch or listen to particular current affairs program/report as a means to initiate discussion) and choose examples of human rights in current events. Discuss in small groups and call for reports.

4. Encourage participants to research the human rights conditions in their own countries. It may be useful to mention race discrimination laws, sex discrimination laws, and disability discrimination laws in various regions of Africa or in the specific country where this training is taking place.

Be attentive to the feelings and emotions of participants. Issues that may evoke a response from participants are:

- Treatment and placement of refugees
- Reconciliation between and among various ethnic and language groups
- Current cases of discrimination on the basis of sex, race, sexual orientation or disability
- Witnessing the abuse or harassment of someone, especially a family member
Activity

1. Ask and discuss the following:
   - What are some roles that youth and young adults are already playing in promoting human rights in your region?
   - What other roles can youth and young adults play in promoting human rights?
   - What are some ways adults can help young people promote human rights?

   Allow participants to brainstorm ideas. Some ideas may include:
   - Actively attempting to show respect to all people everyday
   - Intervening when observing human rights abuses
   - Using language that is kind rather than derogatory
   - Joining organizations that promote human rights, such as:
     - International Centre for Conflict and Human Rights Analysis, www.icchra.org
     - Other charitable humanitarian organizations
   - Developing school fundraising drives and donating the money to victims of human rights abuses

2. Obtain a copy of the Africa Union Youth Charter that outlines the human rights of youth and discuss how this charter is being kept in various countries in Africa.

Human Rights and African Governments

Each country’s government decides whether or not to observe international human rights standards. The fact that an African government agrees to observe international standards does not make those standards legally enforceable within that particular country. To be legally enforceable requires specific country legislation. Without such legislation there is no legal way to ensure that the rights named in any international human rights treaty will take precedence over any state legislation that is inconsistent with the international treaty.

In the common law, traditional freedoms are protected by centuries of custom and the precedents set by previous court decisions. The common law is a flexible instrument that is capable of reinterpreting rights in the light of changing circumstances. However, some rights may not be well established in the common law. Where rights are not included in legislation, they may be more difficult to enforce. Political or economic interests may be given priority over human rights. And it is always open to governments to pass new legislation either to override the common law or to vary existing legislation that provides for human rights.

Ultimately the extent to which human rights are protected in Africa depends on the values of the Africa people. The depth of these values is often tested, particularly when human rights issues arise. Community values are continually changing. The development and dissemination of international human rights standards help shape these values to protect human rights.
The Universal Declaration of Human Rights makes it clear that human rights violations involve not only civil and political rights but also economic, social, and cultural rights. Thus if African societies are analyzed in the light of the provisions of the Universal Declaration, we can see that there are many human rights issues that need to be addressed. This is particularly so for certain groups, some of whom are especially vulnerable: asylum seekers, migrants from other language groups, those living in poverty, people with disabilities, homosexuals, those living with HIV/AIDS, and so on.

You can find out if your country has ratified specific treaties at the Africa Union website: See http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/Documents/Treaties/treaties.htm.

**Activity**

Issues of political freedom, freedom of speech, and equality in the face of race, sex, sexual orientation, or disability differences arise frequently in society.

- As a group, identify some of the human rights issues in Africa currently in the news. If possible, refer to newspapers or magazines, or think about TV and radio news stories you have seen or heard in the past few weeks.
- Divide participants into small groups. Ask participants to think about all the parties involved in one of these current issues and create a presentation (using debate, role play, courtroom drama, etc.) exploring the feelings of each person involved.
- Ensure that the perspectives of all parties represented in the news story/event are included. After each presentation ask the small group to report some of the feelings participants experienced, and any learnings about conflict resolution, justice and/or injustice. Post the learnings of each group on chart paper in the meeting space.

**Discussion Questions**

1. Are there instances you can think of where human rights were not upheld by people you know? What are some of the human rights issues in Africa today?
2. What can you do to help promote human rights in your community?
3. How do human rights relate to faith in Jesus and to being a Christian?
4. As Christians, what are some ways we can speak/act on behalf of human rights? What should be the church’s role in promoting human rights?
The Web of Discipleship is a tool that helps us discern where young people are in their relationship with the church and with Christ (cautious, curious, committed, professing, inviting) as well as the types of ministries (gateway, stand-alone, ongoing, outreach, teach/reach/receive) that can best reach each young person in that stage of discipleship. For example, following the model below, those who are cautious need gateway ministries, and those who are curious need stand-alone ministries, and so on.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People who are Cautious:</th>
<th>Need</th>
<th>Gateway Ministries:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Suspicious</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Provide “gates” into congregational life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Uncomfortable</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Moderate but purposeful programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Unfamiliar</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Don’t put them on the spot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cautious about visiting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Cautious about letting defenses down</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People who are Curious:</th>
<th>Need</th>
<th>Stand-Alone Ministries:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Interested in knowing more</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Short-term ministries of four or less components</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Haven’t engaged</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Satisfies curiosity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Seeking something</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Relates to other Christians</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Not convinced Christian life is for them</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People who are Committed:</th>
<th>Need</th>
<th>Ongoing Ministries:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Committed to group and growth</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Opportunities to make deeper commitments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Not a personal relationship with Christ</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Longer-term studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Not disciplined in faith growth</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Begin leadership experiences</td>
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</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People who are Professing:</th>
<th>Need</th>
<th>Outreach Ministries:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Committed to have Christ at center of life</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Focus on disciplines of faith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Aware of God’s presence</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Living as body of Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Think church programs are not religious enough</td>
<td></td>
<td>• New ministry roles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People who are Inviting:</th>
<th>Need</th>
<th>Teach, Reach, Receive Ministries:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Deeply committed</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Shared strategies for reaching others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Seek to help others in discipleship</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Advanced leadership training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Focus on living their faith</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Significant leadership roles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Addendum B
United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Adopted and proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948

On December 10, 1948 the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights the full text of which appears in the following pages. Following this historic act the Assembly called upon all Member countries to publicize the text of the Declaration and “to cause it to be disseminated, displayed, read and expounded principally in schools and other educational institutions, without distinction based on the political status of countries or territories.”

PREAMBLE
Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,
Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,
Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,
Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,
Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,
Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,
Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,
Now, Therefore THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY proclaims THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

Article 1
All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2
Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3
Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4
No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5
No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6
Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7
All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8
Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9
No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10
Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.
Article 11
(1) Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defense.
(2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

Article 12
No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13
(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.
(2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14
(1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.
(2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15
(1) Everyone has the right to a nationality.
(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 16
(1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.
(2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.
(3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

Article 17
(1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.
(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18
Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19
Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.
Article 20

(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
(2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21

(1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
(2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.
(3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 22

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 23

(1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
(2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
(3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
(4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

Article 24

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25

(1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.
(2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Article 26

(1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.
Article 27
(1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.
(2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Article 28
Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

Article 29
(1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.
(2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.
(3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 30
Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.
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