

CHAPTER 12

BEING METHODIST: A LIFESTYLE TO FOLLOW

Refer to **pg 149** in the workbook

Summary

The aim of this chapter is to show the distinctive features of Methodism. While at heart Christians, Methodists have their own particular ways of doing certain things and their unique structure of administration. The learners will be introduced to John Wesley's own idea of the Methodist. They will also see the connectional structure of the Methodist family.

The practical is a project to get to know the leadership of the local church and to pray meaningfully for them.

To get ready

1. Extra Bibles, pens, pencils
2. Photocopies of material on page 15
3. Optional - photocopy of material from separate Word files (See text).
4. Paper glue
5. Scissors
6. Plain paper for church structure chart
7. Long rulers
8. Pictures of bishop and presidents of different conferences
9. Memory verse Luke 10:27

Teacher's Guide

The matching exercise on this page should be no problem.

Refer to **pg 150** in the workbook

1. Refer to the end of the chapter on page 15 for the different slips of quotes from John Wesley. Make sure there is enough for everyone. With the help of the Bible reference, the learners are to stick the appropriate quote into the correct speech bubble. Work together as a group, each one having to read up a particular verse and find the correct quote. Then share the findings to help everyone paste up.

Here is the original note from John Wesley.

What does it mean to be a Methodist?

From "John Wesley; Holiness of Heart and Life" by Charles Yigoyen, Jr and quoted in Pelita Methodist Vol 28, No. 8 August 2003

John Wesley, in 1742, described some characteristics of the typical Methodist in a short pamphlet.

Methodists are "happy in God". They rejoice because they have found forgiveness in Christ (Eph. 1:7). The Holy Spirit is present in their lives assuring them that they are children of God (Rom 8:16).

Romans 8:16
The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.

Ephesians 1:7
In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace

In everything Methodists give thanks, knowing that they can trust God even in the most distressing and trying situations (1 Peter 5:7). They know that God cares for them and will deliver them.

1 Peter 5:7
Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

Continued on the next page.

Refer to **pg 151** in the workbook

Methodists pray without ceasing (1 Thess 5:17). Even when they are not in a church or on their knees in private prayer, they continually walk with God (1 John 1:7), and their hearts are "ever lifted up to God, at all times, and in all places."

1 Thess 5:17
Pray continually...

1 John 1:7
But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.

As they love God, Methodists also love their neighbors (1 John 4:21). Their hearts are full of love for everyone. They love their enemies, even "the evil and the unthankful" enemies of God (Luke 6:35). This love is constant. It continues even when it is rejected by those who are loved.

1 John 4:21
And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.

Luke 6:35
But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back.

Methodists are "pure in heart" (Matt 5:8). The love of God has purified their hearts "from all revengeful passions, from envy, malice, and wrath, from every unkind" attitude and feeling.

Matthew 5:8
Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.

Continued on the next page.

Refer to **pg 152** in the workbook

A Methodist has one focus: doing God's will (John 6:38)

John 6:38

For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me.

Methodists avoid evil (one of the General Rules of the Methodist Societies). They especially refrain from words and acts that might hurt others. (2Timothy 2:22)

2 Timothy 2:22

Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

They do good to all (as Scripture commands in Galatians 6:10) - neighbors, strangers, friends, and enemies (another of the General Rules).

Galatians 6:10

Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

The General Rules mentioned above are printed out in full in separate Word file: **Ch 12_General Rules of the Methodist Church** for your reference.

Refer to **pg 153** in the workbook

Let the learners write some notes if they want to.

1. Based on the above characteristics, let the learners try to understand their own Christian life by noting their strengths and weaknesses according to what Wesley has brought up.

Explain that the left hand side will be negative, meaning that at the end of the left arrow, we will have 'Not happy in God at all' for the first one. The right hand side means 'Really happy in God'. The rest is the same.

Refer to **pg 154** in the workbook

Some may need further explanation.

'Peace in heart' refers the assurance that we are God's children.

'Doing God's work' is the social concern shown in deeds like visiting the sick. The learner can do God's work by helping out in the home.

'Doing good to all' refers to acts of kindness to all people (even animals). This can be in words or deed.

Again emphasize the fact that being Methodist refers to the lifestyle of relating to God and other people according to Scriptures.

Looking at the learners' analysis of their spiritual state according to these characteristics, encourage them to improve on the weak areas.

Emphasize that the Christian life is an on-going, growing life. Just as we check our physical health by noting certain signs like loss of appetite, tiredness, sore throat etc, so we should check our spiritual health by noting our interest in the things a Christian should be interested or involved in. John Wesley has given check points for us to note.

Where there is need for improvement, note it down.

Refer to **pg 155** in the workbook

2. Encourage a sense of mutual accountability. Most of the members of the group have been with each other on this spiritual journey for many weeks. We should learn to help each other grow. And Wesley's traits of a Methodist, extracted from Scripture, can provide a benchmark for growth.

There is a commitment form for them to put down in black and white, the responsibility of looking after each other.

Refer to **pg 156** in the workbook

3. The purpose of knowing the structure of the Methodist setup is not for pure academic knowledge but for the learners to see how the structure allows for mutual accountability and assistance. There is a 'bigger brother' looking after you all down the line. Emphasize this.

4. The answers to the cryptogram is as follows.

GENERAL CONFERENCE;
BISHOP; COUNCILS

ANNUAL CONFERENCE;
PRESIDENT; BOARDS

Refer to **pg 157** in the workbook

DISTRICT CONFERENCE
DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT; COMMISSIONS

LOCAL CONFERENCE;
PASTOR; COMMITTEES

There will be some terms that need explaining.

The Methodist setup is a connectional one.

At the highest level is the General Conference and the Bishop is the head.

The Annual Conference is headed by the President and there are Boards that look into specific areas of Christian living.

Then the District Conference is headed by the District Superintendent and the Commissions are the working committees.

At the Local Conference level, i.e. the local church, there is the pastor (some Methodist churches may not have pastors assigned to them) and we have Committees.

Refer to **pg 158** in the workbook

5. In our country, there are six Annual Conferences in our General Conference divided according to language and regional lines. They are the Trinity Annual Conference (English speaking - TRAC), the Chinese Annual Conference (CAC), the Tamil Annual Conference (TAC), the Sarawak Chinese Annual Conference (SCAC) and the Sarawak Iban Annual Conference (SIAC). Each of these is headed by a President. There is also a Provisional Conference called the Sabah Provisional Annual Conference (SPAC),

You can obtain the pictures of the Presidents from the front pages of the Methodist diary given out every year. Photocopy them and let them stick them next to the relevant conference. This includes Bishop's picture.

You may want to add the Senoi Missionary Conference (not an Annual Conference yet) which is still being helped by the other conferences for the time being till it is self-supporting.

Refer to **pg 159** in the workbook

6. Illustrate a chart drawing on the board to show the different districts in that particular Annual Conference.

This Manual gives the option for conferences other than the Trinity Annual Conference. So the teacher will have to make his or her own cuttings according to the different districts in the particular conference.

If you think it is appropriate, you may say something about the Duties of Members and Meaning of Membership that is given in the Methodist Discipline and printed out in full in a separate Word file: **Ch 12_Duties of Members and Meaning of Membership**. Alternatively, you can make photocopies and pass them out to the learners to look through at their leisure.

Refer to **pg 160** in the workbook

7. What is important is that the learner lives out the Christian life within his or her local congregation. This portion is to give them some understanding of how the local church is structured. The learners have to get photographs of the church leaders. Digital pictures are better because they can be printed out and then photocopied onto thinner paper for pasting onto the workbook page.

With the permission of the church leaders, this organizational chart can be even placed on a more permanent basis on the church notice board.

Names like LCEC for Local Church Executive Committee and PPRC for Pastor-Parish Relations Committee should be explained.

Refer to the Methodist Discipline for descriptions as the roles of the different committees of the church. Encourage the learners to see how their giftings can channel them into these committees to serve.

A sample organizational chart can be found separately in a Word file: **Ch 12_Sample Local Church Organizational Chart**. This is to allow the teacher to edit, if necessary, to suit the situation.

One suggestion to get to know the leaders of the local church better (and for them to know this present batch of learners better, too) is to have a 'makan' the following week as a celebration for finishing the course. Let the learners make their own invitation cards for each of the leaders in the LCEC. During the fellowship time, show the organizational charts your learners have made with all the pictures of the leaders of the church in their respective places.

Discuss the meaning of membership in a local church by thinking of what the learners can do for their leaders. Scripture references are Hebrews 13:17, 1 Thessalonians 1:6 and 5:12, 13, and Romans 15:30.

Hebrews 13:17
Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.

1 Thess 1:6
You became imitators of us and of the Lord.

Romans 15:30
I urge you, brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle by praying to God for me.

1 Thess 5:12, 13
Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.

Church members are to submit to the authority of their leaders, to imitate them, pray for them and to respect them even for their admonishments.

Let the learners note this down in the scroll.

Refer to **pg 169** in the workbook

8. The memory verse is Luke 10:27. Let the learners look it up and write in down in the scroll.

Luke 10:27

He answered: " '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, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' "

Let the learners fill up the summary themselves and then discuss it as you ask for their answers.

TODAY I LEARNED ...

- 1 what it means to live the Christian life like a **Methodist**
- 2 that the Methodist is **happy** in God
- 3 that in everything Methodists give **thanks**
- 4 that the Methodist **prays** without ceasing
- 5 that Methodists love their **neighbors** even their **enemies**
- 6 that Methodists are **pure** in heart
- 7 that the one focus of the Methodist is to do God's **will**

Refer to **pg 162** in the workbook

- 8 that Methodists avoid **evil**
- 9 that Methodists do **good** to all
- 10 that our church is part of a bigger **connectional** setup
- 11 that our **local** church is a part of a **district** which is part of the **annual** conference
- 12 that the members of the **Local Church Executive Committee** or LCEC takes care of the administration of our church

AND I LEARNED HOW

to **pray** for and **help** our church leaders

See pages 2 to 4 above

Methodists are "happy in God". They rejoice because they have found forgiveness in Christ. The Holy Spirit is present in their lives assuring them that they are children of God.

In everything Methodists give thanks, knowing that they can trust God even in the most distressing and trying situations. They know that God cares for them and will deliver them.

Methodists pray without ceasing. Even when they are not in a church or on their knees in private prayer, they continually walk with God, and their hearts are "ever lifted up to God, at all times, and in all places."

As they love God, Methodists also love their neighbors. Their hearts are full of love for everyone. They love their enemies, even "the evil and the unthankful" enemies of God.

Methodists are "pure in heart" The love of God has purified their hearts "from all revengeful passions, from envy, malice, and wrath, from every unkind" attitude and feeling.

A Methodist has one focus: doing God's will.

Methodists avoid evil. They especially refrain from words and acts that might hurt others.

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