




Welcome to Confirmation Class

Confirm Series: Lessons 16-17

As we wait to begin, take a moment to review our goals and expectations for class:

Lesson Goals  As a result of this lesson, I will be able to... <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand how the Social Principles reflect the collective beliefs of the United Methodist Church.• Relate the process of forming these principles to their lives and the importance of working together for common values.	Class Expectations  <ul style="list-style-type: none">• WORK HARD• BE KIND	For Fun!  <i>Talk to your neighbor or the table:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What was the best part of your Thanksgiving break?• Does your family decorate for Christmas before or after Thanksgiving?• Is playing Christmas music before Thanksgiving acceptable?
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²⁹ Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; ³⁰ you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.'³¹ The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'
There is no other commandment greater than these."

Mark 12:29-31

Tentative Agenda

5:00-5:05= Welcome/Opening Prayer

5:05-5:35= Lesson 16: A Loving Church

5:35-5:50= Break/Snack

5:50-6:25= Lesson 17: So Now What?

6:25-6:30= Wrap Up/Closing

Opening Prayer

Dear God, thank You for bringing us together today to learn about what it means to live a life dedicated to mission. Open our hearts and minds as we explore how we can serve others, just as the disciples did and as so many missionaries do today. Inspire us to see the ways we can make a difference, both near and far, and help us to trust You as we share what we have with others. Guide us to be Your hands and feet in the world. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Unit 3: Our Life Together

Lessons 16:

A Loving Church



- Pick one value from this list that you connect with most.
- Why did you pick that value?
- Pick one core value on this list that you connect the least with/struggle with the most.
- Why did you pick that value?



- Read Mark 12:28-34
- Trying to trap Jesus with his own words was a pretty common occurrence in the Gospels.
 - Religious leaders and experts were often trying to trick him into saying something that contradicted either his own words, or more important, Scripture. That may have been happening in today's story from the Bible.
- The expert in the Law may have been trying to trick Jesus into holding one part of the Law above others, or he may honestly just have wondered what Jesus thought. In any case, Jesus comes at it from a different angle.
- The first part of his answer, "Israel, listen! Our God is the one Lord, and you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your being, and with all your mind, and with all your strength," was from a precious Jewish prayer (Deuteronomy 6:4-9), one they kept posted on the door frames of their houses. Pious people even wore it strapped on their bodies.
 - Jesus was telling this expert in the law that if he would do that and love his neighbor as he loved himself, he would keep all of the hundreds of laws contained in the Jewish Scripture.

All in the Details...The Greatest Commandments

1. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.
2. You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

What keeps us from living out these commandments?

Why do we still need other rules to live by?



- The United Methodist Church has gone to great effort to think through and write down what it believes about many social issues: The Social Principles of the United Methodist Church.
- It's made up almost entirely of what the UMC believes the faithful Christian response should be on a wide range of social issues that affect our culture.
- In a sense, this is our church's answer to the realization that we struggle to always love our neighbor as ourselves.



- The Social Principles guide Methodists on how to live out their faith in the world. They were developed by people coming together to discuss what they believed was most important to live like Jesus.
- The Social Principles of the United Methodist Church are a set of guidelines that reflect the church's understanding of what it means to live faithfully and justly in the world.
 - These principles address a wide range of social, economic, environmental, and political issues.
 - They are meant to inspire, guide, and challenge members to be active in living out their faith in real-world contexts.
 - The Social Principles are divided into six sections.
- The Social Principles are updated and refined every four years at the United Methodist Church's General Conference, reflecting ongoing discernment about how to live out faith in a changing world. While not doctrinal, these principles provide guidance for individual and collective action in the name of Christ. For more detailed information, the full text can be found in the Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church.

The Natural World

Core Belief: God's creation is sacred, and humans are called to be good stewards of it.

Key Topics:

- Environmental stewardship
- Climate change
- Preservation of resources
- Justice for communities affected by environmental issues

The Economic Community

Core Belief: The economy should serve people, not the other way around.

Key Topics:

- Ethical business practices
- Fair wages
- Poverty alleviation
- The dangers of materialism and consumerism

The Nurturing Community

Core Belief: Every individual is valuable and deserving of dignity.

Key Topics:

- Family life
- Human rights and dignity
- Gender equality
- Support for children, youth, and the elderly
- Advocacy against abuse and exploitation

The Political Community

Core Belief: Governments are responsible for protecting human rights and promoting justice.

Key Topics:

- Peacemaking and conflict resolution
- Advocacy against violence and war
- Accountability for political leaders
- Support for democracy and fair governance

The Social Community

Core Belief: The church advocates for fairness and justice for all people.

Key Topics:

- Racial and cultural equality
- Rights for immigrants and refugees
- Economic justice
- LGBTQ+ rights and inclusion
- Equal access to healthcare and education

The World Community

Core Belief: Christians are called to work for global justice and peace.

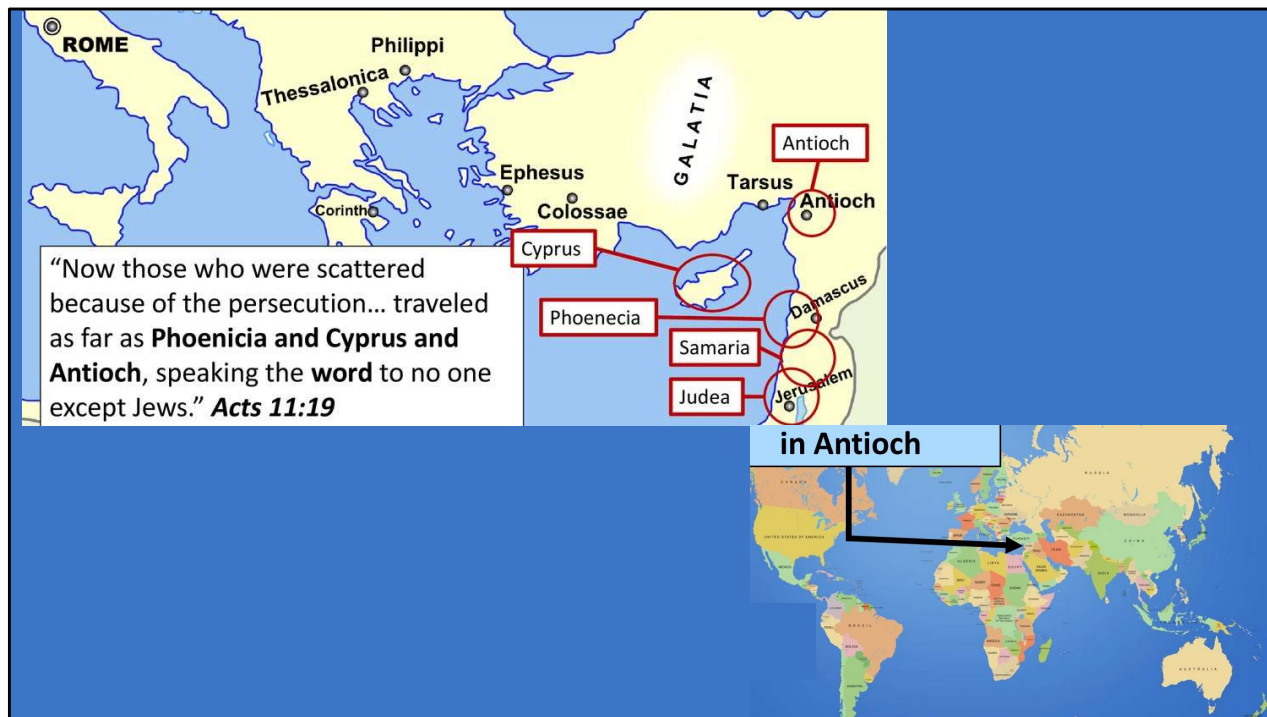
Key Topics:

- Addressing global poverty and hunger
- Human rights and religious freedom
- Support for international organizations like the United Nations
- Disarmament and nuclear nonproliferation

- Which of these 6 social principles do you think is the most important? Why?

Unit 3: Our Life Together

**Lessons 17:
So Now What?**



- As United Methodists, we’re called beyond observing and having opinions on culture to be a missional church.
 - Our Social Principles reveal the voice of the church, but our mission in the world reveals our heart.
- How can we help is often the question. We usually want to do more than we can. Sometimes people help in ways that ultimately unhelpful; it’s easy especially in a crisis situation to unintentionally interfere where we intended to help.
- The early church faced an unusual situation that called for a quick response.
 - In the story we’re about to read, the apostles had carried the news of Jesus to Antioch, where for the first time they started converting Greek-speaking Jews, called Hellenists.
 - The work in Antioch was going so well that Saul and Barnabas ended up staying there for a year.
 - This was actually the first time they were called Christians! While they were there, however, a crisis arose.

Read Acts 11:19-30

Discuss the following questions:



1. What was the crisis?
2. How did the disciples respond?
3. How would things change if the youth group was in charge of Antioch?
4. How could the disciples have overreacted? How could they have done less?
5. How, do you think, did they decide what "according to each person's abundance" would amount to? (Verse 29)
6. Why is it important for everyone to give what they can, even if it's small? Does God care more about how much we give or about our hearts when we give?

- Read Acts 11:19-30

1. What was the crisis?

- There was a famine (a time when there wasn't enough food) coming to Judea, and the people there were going to need help.
- The disciples in Antioch had to figure out how they could support those who were going to struggle.
- This feels awfully familiar with the SNAP benefits being cut off with the government shutdown.

2. How did the disciples respond?

- Instead of keeping all their resources for themselves or their own city, they chose to help the people in Judea. They collected money and sent it to the church leaders there to help those in need. This showed how much they trusted God and cared about others, even people far away.

3. How would things change if the youth were in charge of Antioch?

- Possible student response: "If the youth were in charge, maybe we'd organize a fundraiser or bake sale to collect money or food to send. Or we'd make sure we had enough for Antioch first before giving to Judea."
- Follow-up idea for discussion: "What does it mean to trust God with what we give, even if it feels like we don't have enough for ourselves?"

4. How could the disciples have overreacted? How could they have done less?

- Overreacted: They could have sent so much that they had nothing left for themselves, which might have left Antioch struggling.

- Done less: They might have ignored the need in Judea entirely, thinking, “We have our own problems to worry about.”
- Key point for students: It’s about finding the right balance—helping others while still taking care of your own community.

5. How, do you think, did they decide what “according to each person’s abundance” would amount to? (Verse 29)

- This meant each person gave what they could afford based on what they had. For example:
- Someone who had a lot of money or food might give more.
- Someone who didn’t have much could still give a little bit, but it was important that everyone contributed something.

6. Why is it important for everyone to give what they can, even if it’s small? Does God care more about how much we give or about our hearts when we give?

- Takeaway for Students: The story reminds us that being part of a church means helping each other, even when it’s hard. It’s about sharing what we have and trusting that God will take care of us while we care for others.



Global Ministries

The United Methodist Church

<https://umcmmission.org/missionaries/>

What mission information did you research?

Why did you pick this person or area of mission work?

What was something you learned that was new, interesting, or confusing?

- Just like the disciples in Antioch supported the church in Judea, we can support missionaries who are working all over the world.
 - Learning about their work helps us see the amazing things God is doing through people who dedicate their lives to mission.
 - It also inspires us to think about how we can live missionally in our own lives—whether through prayer, donations, or our own acts of service.
- Let's connect what we've been learning with real-life examples of people who dedicate their lives to mission work, just like the disciples in Antioch did in Acts 11:19-30.
 - It allows us to see how mission work happens globally through the United Methodist Church and to reflect on how you can support or learn from these efforts.
 - Through this, the hope is that you will better understand that living missionally means stepping outside of ourselves to care for others, no matter where they are in the world.
- After you share your responses, we will pray for the missionary or mission project you researched, asking God to bless their work and help them make a difference in the world.



Wrap-Up

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As we wrap up class, lets go over a few things together:

Objective

The objective of class today was...

Application

Today's lesson is important to me because...

Upcoming Dates

- Sunday, December 7:
 - Advent/Hanging of the Greens
 - SUNDAY NIGHT LIVE - *Carol Sing Along* (5-7pm)
- Sunday, December 14:
 - Confirmation Mentor Meet Up (10am)
 - Confirmation Class (5-6:30pm)
- Sunday, December 21:
 - Sunday School for Children and Youth (*Note the one service at BG: 10:00am*)
 - SUNDAY NIGHT LIVE - *Christmas Party and Rehearsal for Christmas Eve* (5-7pm)
- Wednesday, December 24:
 - Christmas Eve Children-led Service (*Note the adjusted time: 4:00pm*)
- Sunday, December 28:
 - NO Sunday School for Children or Youth

Closing Prayer

One confirmand will lead us in a closing prayer.