

Unit 4: Our Beliefs

Believing in something is taking a step toward the unknown and having the humility to realize that mystery will always be present. The beauty of our relationship with our Creator is that we don't know everything, yet we can trust God, which means taking action on our belief.

What we believe is important—both communally and individually. The United Methodist Church has doctrine that states her institutional beliefs, but she also acknowledges that we are individuals with unique perspectives. Belief is not always being “right” but rather is about providing a structure to create a communal identity and a skeletal framework for individual belief. Identity is important; it helps create parameters for who we are and what we believe. As United Methodists, we have aspects of our belief system that makes us unique. How we understand the Bible, how we understand and experience God, and our prayer life are a few examples.

This unit will help clarify what it means to claim the United Methodist identity.




Unit 4: Our Beliefs

Lesson 18: Faith and Trust

Welcome to Confirmation Class

Confirm Series: Lessons 18-19

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

Lesson Goals  <i>As a result of this lesson, I will be able to...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compare and contrast faith, trust, and belief• Explore the components of the Wesleyan Quadrilateral and how it can guide us in our everyday decisions	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 is your typical Christmas Eve and Christmas Day agenda?• Are you traveling for the holidays?• What is one gift you hope to open this Christmas?
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⁹ I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed,
for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

Joshua 1:9

Tentative Agenda

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

5:05-5:35= *Lesson 18: Faith and Trust*

5:35-5:45= Break/Snack

5:45-6:25= *Lesson 19: Experiencing God*

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

Opening Prayer

Gracious and loving God, We come before You today with open hearts and curious minds. Help us grow in faith and trust, learning to rely on You in all things. Guide us as we explore how Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience work together to deepen our understanding of You and our calling as Your followers. May Your wisdom light our path and strengthen our trust in Your promises, as we seek to live out our faith each day.

In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.



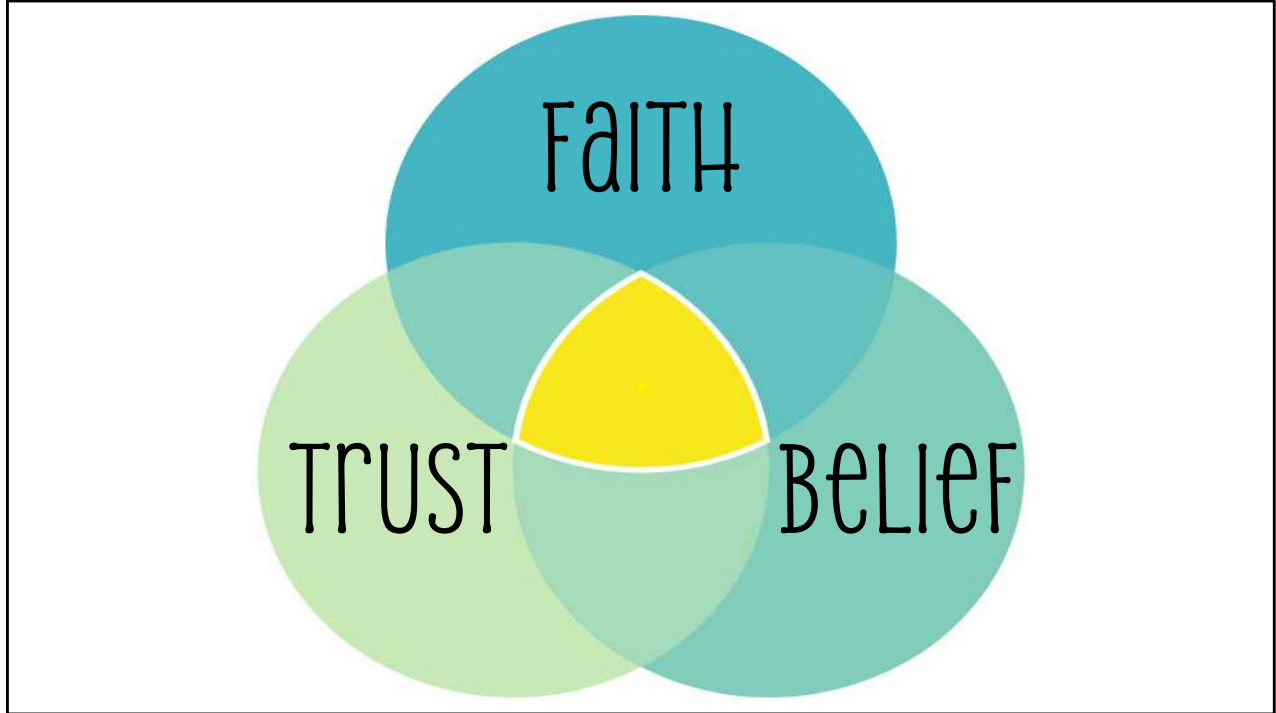
- This part of the session will introduce the idea of trust and how it is essential in the context of our relationship with God. We will focus on the story of Joshua from Scripture, highlighting his trust in God and the passing of his mentor, Moses.
- We will then use our understanding of trust and the example of Joshua to discover how trust functions in our lives. We realize that God is the only one that we can truly trust deeply and fully!
- Let's start by exploring trust!
 - Play the "Evolution of Trust" online game.
 - How did it feel playing the game and trusting/not trusting the other player?



WHO IS MOSES? WHO IS JOSHUA?

- Most of the Bible (especially the first 39 books) is about a special group of people. They were first called Hebrews, then Israelites, then Jews.
- They began as a small tribe, then grew into a nation of people.
- They were slaves to other nations more than once.
- A key time in their history is when the leader of the Israelites, Moses, led them out of slavery in Egypt.
 - It was an incredible event where Moses split a wide sea for them to cross and escape.
- **Ask:**
 - Who is Moses? What do you know about him and his story?
 - Who is Joshua? What do you know about him and his story?
- **Share:**
 - Moses is one of the most important people in Jewish and Christian faith because God revealed through him a lot about courage and leadership.
 - After their escape from Egypt, the Israelites journeyed for years through the harsh desert trying to find their way back home.
 - Before they became slaves, they had lived in a beautiful place called the Promised Land.
 - Moses endured years of complaining and struggles leading this group toward home...and toward trusting in God.
 - Along the way, Moses mentored a young man named Joshua.
 - Joshua desired to be like Moses because of how Moses lived out his faith in God. But after years of leading the people of Israel through the desert, Moses came to a moment in his life where he chose not to trust in God.
 - His punishment was that he would pass away before the people of Israel would return to their Promised Land.

- After Moses died, Joshua was put in charge of the nation of Israel.
- Joshua was scared, as hundreds and thousands of people were now counting on him, and he missed his courageous mentor, Moses.



- Read Joshua 1:1-18 in your Bible.
- **Ask:**
 - How does God respond to Joshua? (1:1-9)
 - How does Joshua respond to his faith in God? (1:10-15)
 - Why, do you think, did others trust Joshua? How did he inspire his people? (1:16-18)
 - Can you think of someone in our church like Joshua? Who? Why?
 - What do you think, does it mean to trust God?
- **Share:** Part of deepening your faith is asking questions, experiencing doubts, and discovering your own real faith. As strange as it sounds, doubt is a necessary part of faith.
- **Ask:** Have you ever doubted your faith or God? When?
- **Share:** When we talk about trusting God, it really has to do with living in the reality that we are not in control, and resting in the fact that God is. Most of the pain in our lives and in our world is centered in a struggle to find control. Trust is about leaning into the reality that God is the only one truly in control (thankfully!).
- **Ask:** How do faith, trust, belief connect? How are they different?



(3 min) <https://youtu.be/2Yo6lsLRNMM?si=GjGxF2qhLDonKAER>

PINK-	DONT agree	Our Social Creed	<p><i>The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church – 2020/24</i> We believe in God, Creator of the world; and in Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of creation. We believe in the Holy Spirit, through whom we acknowledge God’s gifts, and we repent of our sin in misusing these gifts to idolatrous ends.</p>	<p>A Companion Litany to Our Social Creed God in the Spirit revealed in Jesus Christ, calls us by grace to be renewed in the image of our Creator, that we may be one in divine love for the world.</p>
	DONT UNDERSTAND		<p>We affirm the natural world as God’s handiwork and dedicate ourselves to its preservation, enhancement, and faithful use by humankind.</p>	<p>Today is the day God cares for the integrity of creation, wills the healing and wholeness of all life, weeps at the plunder of earth’s goodness. And so shall we.</p>
	DONT CONNECT WITH		<p>We joyfully receive for ourselves and others the blessings of community, sexuality, marriage, and the family.</p>	<p>Today is the day God embraces all hues of humanity, delights in diversity and difference, favors solidarity transforming strangers into friends. And so shall we.</p>
YELLOW-	STRONGLY agree		<p>We commit ourselves to the rights of men, women, children, youth, young adults, the aging, and people with disabilities; to improvement of the quality of life; and to the rights and dignity of all persons.</p>	<p>Today is the day God cries with the masses of starving people, despises growing disparity between rich and poor, demands justice for workers in the marketplace. And so shall we.</p>
	Have a connection		<p>We believe in the right and duty of persons to work for the glory of God and the good of themselves and others and in the protection of their welfare in so doing; in the rights to property as a trust from God, collective bargaining, and responsible consumption; and in the elimination of economic and social distress. We dedicate ourselves to peace throughout the world, to the rule of justice and law among nations, and to individual freedom for all people of the world.</p>	<p>Today is the day God deplores violence in our homes and streets, rebukes the world’s warring madness, humbles the powerful and lifts up the lowly. And so shall we.</p>
			<p>We believe in the present and final triumph of God’s Word in human affairs and gladly accept our commission to manifest the life of the gospel in the world.</p>	<p>Today is the day God calls for nations and peoples to live in peace, celebrates where justice and mercy embrace, exults when the wolf grazes with the lamb. And so shall we.</p>
			Amen.	<p>Today is the day God brings good news to the poor, proclaims release to the captives, gives sight to the blind, and sets the oppressed free. And so shall we.</p>

- A credo isn’t just something you believe with your head.
- You believe it with your hands and your feet—doing the work, not just thinking about it.
- The Methodist have something called “Our Social Creed”.
 - Last session, you talked about the Social Principles (nature, economic...).
 - The Social Creed goes along with these.
 - The Social Creed is a statement of The United Methodist Church's commitment to social justice, rooted in Christian beliefs and Wesleyan practices.
 - It serves as a theological and ethical framework for the church’s social engagement, emphasizing justice, equality, and the dignity of all people.
- Read through the social creed and highlight
 - Pink anything you don’t agree with, don’t understand, or don’t connect with.
 - Yellow the opposite—those things you strongly agree with or have a connection to.
 - When you’re done, you may doodle on the back of the page.
 - Give a few minutes—gauge the timing on when they are done and doodling or waiting
- Everyone must share one pink and one yellow highlighted item and explain why they highlighted it before we can go on break.

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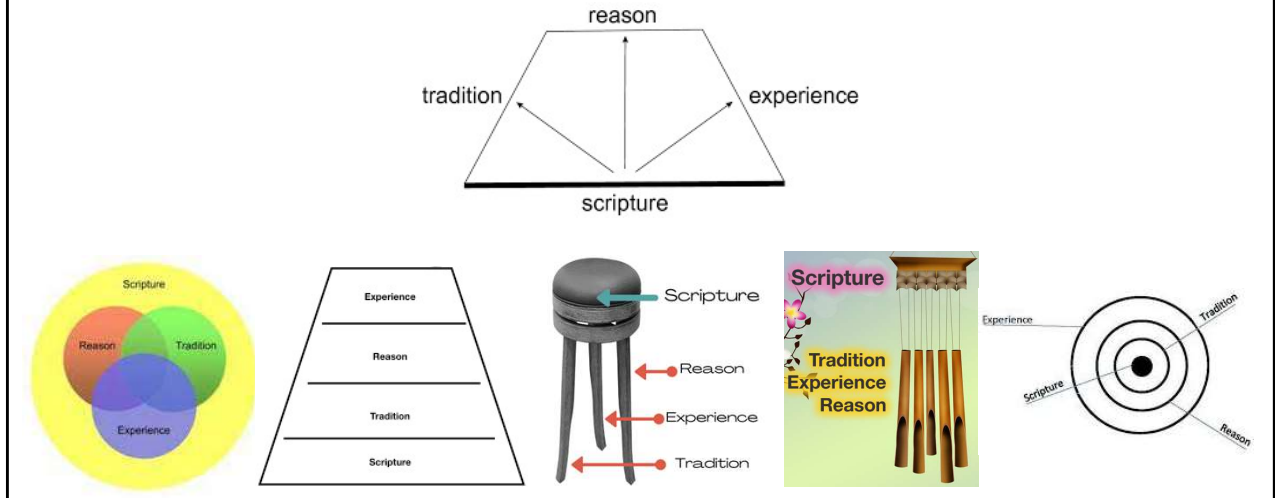
Lesson 19: Experiencing God

Scripture is divinely inspired, and our primary revelation and resource for understanding.

Tradition connects us to our transcendent community of like-minded brothers and sisters who came before and will come after us.

Reason is our human ability to think and comprehend our experience and knowledge. Through the Holy Spirit, God gives us greater understanding of the truths of Scripture.

Experience moves us from just knowing about God to encountering God deeply and personally in the present.

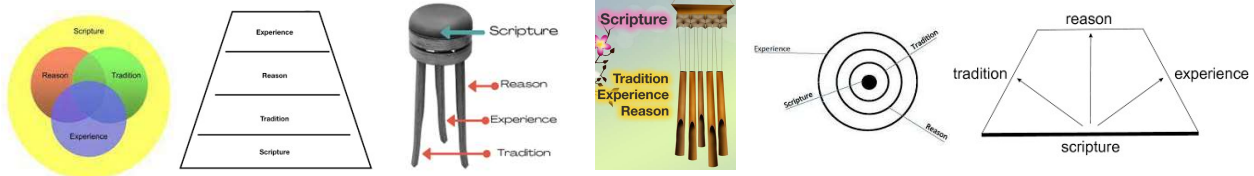


This part of the session will explore four ways to experience God, using the Wesleyan Quadrilateral. Let's learn more about the four ways of experiencing God and reflect on how these ways of understanding God look in our lives.

Albert Outler, a twentieth-century Methodist scholar, wrote that United Methodists believe in four distinct ways in which we discover God—through scripture, reason, tradition, and our experiences. We call these four revelations, or means to discover God, the Wesleyan Quadrilateral.

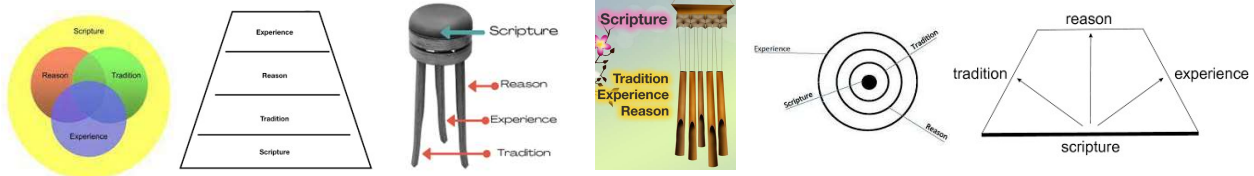
The quadrilateral can be illustrated in other ways, too—some even clearer than the four-sided quadrilateral. Note that tradition, reason, and experience are all supported, encompassed, and based on Scripture—all is filtered through Scripture.

Scenario 1: You're invited to a party where you know there will be peer pressure to drink.



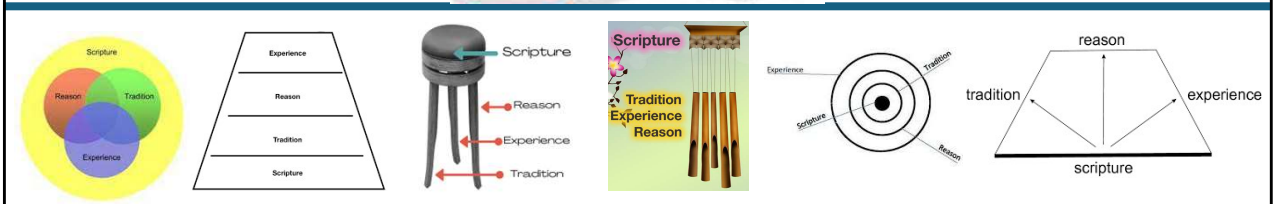
- Scenario 1: You're invited to a party where you know there will be peer pressure to drink.**
 - Scripture:** Referencing verses like **1 Corinthians 10:13** ("No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear") can help remind the group that God gives strength to resist temptation and provides a way out. **Ephesians 5:18** can also guide the decision, highlighting that being filled with the Spirit is better than being filled with substances that cloud judgment.
 - Tradition:** Look at what Christian tradition says about temperance, self-control, and living a holy life. The church has long emphasized the importance of living a life that reflects Jesus' values, including avoiding behaviors that can lead to harm or dishonor.
 - Reason:** Logically, one could reason that drinking could lead to risky behavior or consequences, such as impaired judgment or hurting relationships with others. You might ask, "What are the potential consequences if I give in to the pressure?" Thinking about long-term effects might guide their choice.
 - Experience:** Reflecting on personal experiences or stories from friends or family members about the negative consequences of drinking could help. Alternatively, reflecting on past moments where they've made wise choices and felt good about it could offer the courage to resist peer pressure.

Scenario 2: You're struggling with a tough relationship (friend or family).
How do you approach making peace or forgiving them?



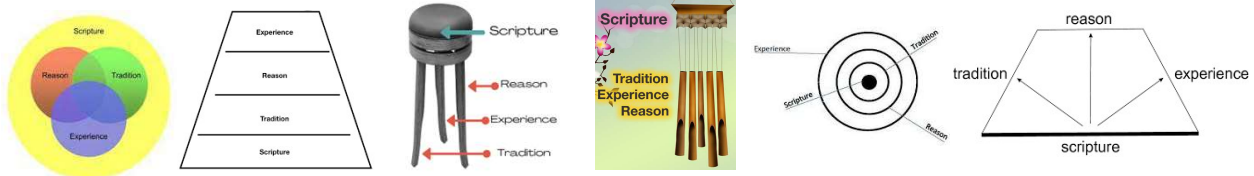
- **Scenario 2: You're struggling with a tough relationship (friend or family). How do you approach making peace or forgiving them?**
 - **Scripture:** Verses like **Matthew 18:21-22** ("Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, 'Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?' Jesus answered, 'I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.'") can help guide how we should approach forgiveness. Also, **Ephesians 4:32** teaches that we should forgive each other as Christ forgave us.
 - **Tradition:** Christian tradition emphasizes reconciliation, following the example of Jesus in forgiving and reconciling. The act of asking for forgiveness and offering it has always been a cornerstone of Christian life. Consider church practices like communion, which is a symbolic act of reconciliation.
 - **Reason:** Logically, choosing to forgive can be a healthier decision for both your emotional well-being and the relationship. Holding onto grudges or anger can cause long-term bitterness and hurt, while forgiveness allows healing and peace.
 - **Experience:** Reflecting on past experiences of forgiveness, either from oneself or others, could help. What did you learn from forgiving or being forgiven in the past? How did it impact your relationship with the person involved?

Scenario 3: You're offered a job, spot on a sports team, or an opportunity that seems like it would take up too much time, leaving little space for church or personal growth. How do you decide?

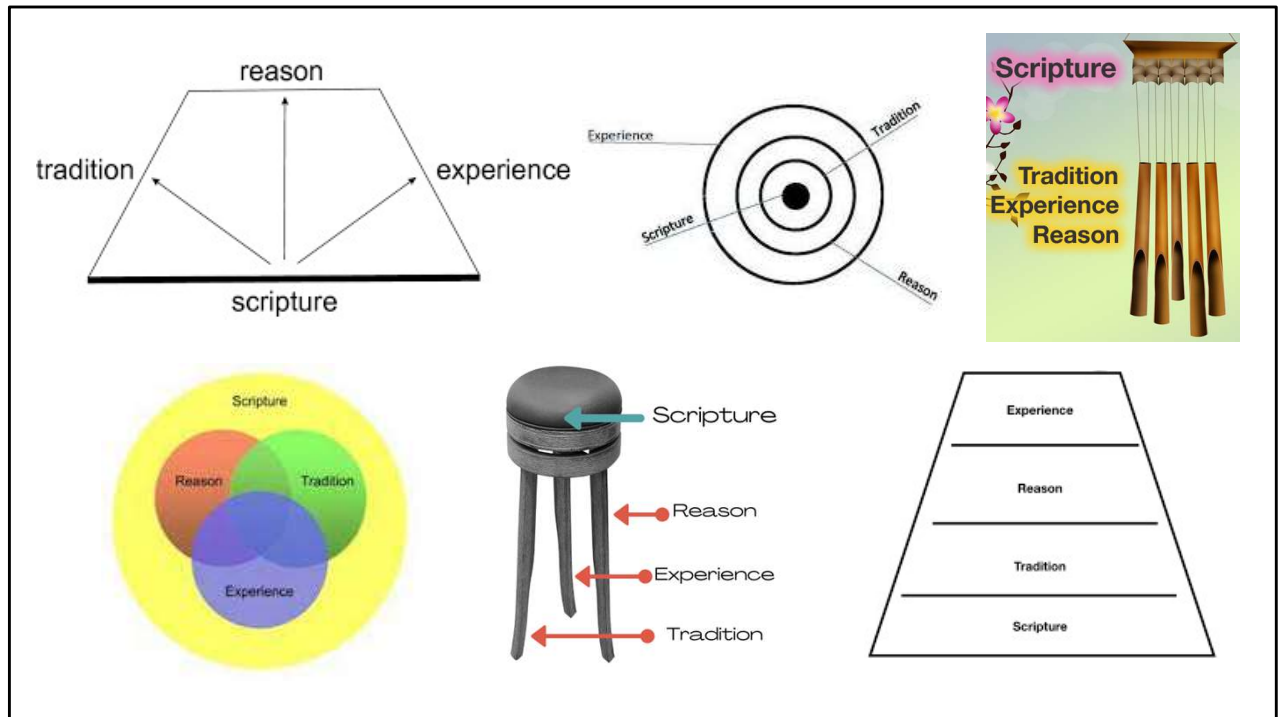


- Scenario 3: You're offered a job, spot on a sports team, or an opportunity that seems like it would take up too much time, leaving little space for church or personal growth. How do you decide?**
 - Scripture: Matthew 6:33** ("But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well") reminds us to prioritize God over earthly concerns. **Luke 10:38-42**, where Jesus speaks to Martha about the importance of choosing what is better, helps us reflect on balancing work with spiritual growth.
 - Tradition:** Church tradition often encourages finding a balance between work, rest, and worship. The **Sabbath** is an important tradition in Christian life, reminding us that we need time to rest and grow spiritually, not just work endlessly.
 - Reason:** Logically, overworking could lead to burnout and neglecting important relationships, including our relationship with God. By considering the long-term impact on personal growth, spiritual life, and relationships, it might help decide whether taking on too much is wise.
 - Experience:** Reflecting on past experiences where putting too much focus on work led to stress or a lack of spiritual fulfillment can provide insight. Alternatively, considering times when balancing responsibilities successfully resulted in greater peace and growth can guide the decision.

Scenario 4: You see someone being bullied or excluded at school. What do you do?



- Scenario 4: You see someone being bullied or excluded at school. What do you do?**
 - Scripture:** **Matthew 25:35-40** (“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink...”) encourages caring for the marginalized and those in need. Also, **Luke 6:31** (“Do to others as you would have them do to you”) teaches empathy and compassion, pushing us to act in kindness toward others, especially those who are being treated unfairly.
 - Tradition:** Church tradition emphasizes the importance of standing up for justice and loving others as Christ loved us. Acts of kindness and advocacy for those who are oppressed or bullied are in line with Christian values of love and justice.
 - Reason:** Logically, bullying leads to harm and injustice. Intervening or offering support is a way to prevent further harm and create a safer, more compassionate environment. It’s rational to act because, in the long run, helping others builds a more respectful and kind community.
 - Experience:** Reflecting on personal experiences or stories from others where standing up for someone or showing kindness had a positive impact could motivate the teen to act. Alternatively, considering how it felt when they were excluded or bullied could help them understand the importance of offering support to others.



- The **Wesleyan Quadrilateral** is a powerful tool for navigating life’s challenges.
- By using Scripture, Tradition, Reason, and Experience, you can make thoughtful, faith-centered decisions that reflect your beliefs and values in the world around you.
- Use the notecard to draw, write, or create something that will help you remember the Wesleyan Quadrilateral that you can hang on your bathroom mirror, slide into your phone case, or tuck into your backpack to help you return to this structure when you are faced with making decisions that better reflect your beliefs and values.

Wrap-Up

Confirm Series: Lessons 18-19

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 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*)
- Tuesday, December 30
 - Movie Meet Up at Hawthorn Mall to see David (4:15pm)
- Sunday, December 28
 - NO Sunday School for Children or Youth
- Sunday, January 4
 - SUNDAY NIGHT LIVE (5-7pm)
- Sunday, January 11
 - Confirmation Mentor Meet Up (10am)
 - Confirmation Class (5-6:30pm)
- Sunday, January 18
 - SUNDAY NIGHT LIVE (5-7pm)
- Monday, January 19
 - Martin Luther King Jr Service Day
- Sunday, January 25
 - Confirmation Class (5-6:30pm)
 - Chili Cook-off (5pm)

Closing Prayer

One confirmand will lead us in a closing prayer.