

The United Methodist 10

5-7 minutes



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Preamble

I've led over 16 years of "new member" classes for introductions to The United Methodist Church. Some folks seek membership, whereas others seek clarity about the church or denomination's distinctiveness and beliefs.

A year ago, I shared on social media the "Methodist Five" (the first five entries below) as an introduction to United Methodist theology. It was widely appreciated, but I felt it needed more substance for actual teaching.

So here's an updated version (The United Methodist 10, double time!) for use in your new member classes, Sunday school classes, group study, or even a sermon series.

- **1** Mission
- **2** Forms of Holiness
- **3** Stages of Grace
- **4** Sources of Authority
- **5** Vows by the People
- **6** Works of Piety to Practice
- **7** Deadly Sins to Avoid
- **8** Works of Mercy to Do
- **9** Fruits of the Spirit
- **10** Layers of United Methodism
- Bonus: Love your neighbor, **0** exceptions.

Teaching list

1 Mission

- Topic: To make (or nurture*) disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world
- Subjects: Missiology.
- Resource: [Here's where it came from](#). Reference your own church's mission statement too and talk about what it means!

2 Forms of Holiness

- Topic: Personal and Social Holiness
- Subjects: Wesleyan Accountability
- Resource: Remember that “social holiness” to Wesley wasn’t social justice, but was being connected with others which leads to seeking social justice. Read more: “[No holiness but social holiness](#)” article.

3 Stages of Grace

- Topic: Prevenient, Justifying, and Sanctifying Grace in Wesleyan theology.
- Subjects: Soteriology, Ordo Salutis (Order of Salvation)
- Resources: “[A Wesleyan Understanding of Grace](#)” article.

4 Sources of Authority

- Topic: Scripture, Tradition, Reason, and Experience
- Subjects: Quadrilateral, Interpretation, Our Theological Task
- Resources: [Chiming in on the Wesleyan Quadrilateral](#), [Our Theological Task resources](#).

5 Vows by the People

- Topic: prayers, presence, gifts, service, witness
- Subjects: Discipleship
- Resources: Vows of membership in the Book of Worship. “[Our United Methodist Values](#)” article.

6 Works of Piety to Practice (Stay in Love with God)

- Topic: Source list: [Wesleyan Works of piety – Wikipedia](#).
1. prayer
 2. scripture study
 3. holy communion
 4. fasting
 5. Christian community
 6. healthy living
- Subjects: Personal Holiness, Discipleship, [Three Simple Rules](#)
 - Resources: Name the different opportunities for these things in your congregation. Resources from [UMDiscipleship](#) or reading lists from [United Women in Faith](#).

7 Deadly Sins to Avoid (Do No Harm)

- Topics: Traditional list:

1. envy
2. gluttony
3. greed or avarice
4. lust
5. pride
6. sloth
7. wrath

- Subjects: Wesleyan Accountability, Social Action, [Three Simple Rules](#)
- Resources: Name the small group and care group opportunities for these things in your congregation. Resources from [COSROW](#), [GCORR](#).

8 Works of Mercy to Do (Do Good)

- Topics: Source list: [The Wesleyan Means of Grace | The United Methodist Church](#).
- 1. Doing good works
- 2. Visiting the sick
- 3. visiting those in prison
- 4. feeding the hungry
- 5. giving generously to the needs of others
- 6. seeking justice
- 7. ending oppression and discrimination
- 8. addressing the needs of the poor
- Topics: Social Action, [Three Simple Rules](#)
- Resources: Name the programs for mercy and justice in your congregation. Resources from [GBCS](#) or [GBGM](#).

9 Fruits of the Spirit

- Topics: Scripture
- 1. love
- 2. joy
- 3. peace
- 4. patience
- 5. kindness
- 6. goodness
- 7. faithfulness
- 8. gentleness
- 9. self-control
- Topics: Personal Holiness
- Resource: This is the fruits of the Christian life: to be beacons on a hill, lights in the windows. Scripture commentaries on [Galatians 5](#).

10 Layers of United Methodism (7 Rings and 3 branches)

- Summary: The United Methodist Church structure is like a pebble dropped in still water with concentric rings embracing more and more churches and people.
 - 1 Local Church (Charge Conference – held yearly)
 - 2 City/ Town/Cluster (common context)
 - 3 Community network (District)
 - 4 Regional network (Annual Conference – held yearly)
 - 5 Multi-state network (Jurisdictional Conference) or multi-country network (Central Conference – every 4 years)
 - 6 Affiliation network ([Reconciling Ministries Network](#), [Wesleyan Covenant Association](#), etc)
 - 7 Global network (collaborations across official and unofficial lines, such as [these programs](#) and many global initiatives by the General Agencies/Commissions)

PLUS our global connection has three branches, like the US Government:

- 8 – **General Conference** serves as the Legislative Branch, creating doctrine and polity every four years.
- 9 – The **Bishops and General Agencies/Commissions** serve as the executive branch, putting into action the will of General Conference.
- 10 – The **Judicial Council** serves as the judicial branch, ensuring the constitutionality of General Conference’s doctrines and general church decisions.

Topics: Ecclesiology

Resources: [UMC Structure](#) article

Use in your church!

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