

Instructions:

Group leaders, take some time before your gathering to look over these questions. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you pick 3-5 questions to discuss that pertain to your group's unique style and needs.



Series: Methodism for Smarties

Have you ever wondered what it means to be a Methodist? What do we believe about salvation or the Bible? Why do we baptize infants? Or what does it mean to be a part of a worldwide United Methodist Church? Join us this November as we dig in to scripture, our Wesleyan theology, and United Methodist polity to answer some of the most frequently asked questions about our church!

Message description:

Polity is the means of governance, authority, participation, and decision-making of a gathering of believers. It is just another way to describe how a church might organize itself to best fulfill its mission! The work of polity is essential in the life of a church for it to function effectively. The polity of the United Methodist Church is considered connectional in nature; it is a network of local churches, annual conferences, jurisdictional and central conferences, bishops, and boards and agencies of the general conference. At its best, the polity of the United Methodist Church seeks to resource and support the local church so that we can live out our mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. The local church is the primary piece of our polity as the main arena through which disciples are made, cultivated, and sent.

Key Scriptures

Acts 2:42-46; 1 Peter 2-3

For Further Study:

What is the General Conference? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U2MLEFn3b8M>

Read more about the General Boards and Agencies and our global impact:

<https://www.umc.org/en/content/agencies>

What it means to #BeUMC a discussion guide: <https://www.umc.org/-/media/umc-media/2022/06/10/19/37/BeUMC-Discussion-Guide-2>

Questions Related to This Week's Message:

1. What unit is foundational to our connectional system? Or asked another way, what is the primary arena through which disciples are made?
2. What evidence do we find in scripture for how the early church organized themselves as a gathering of believers?
3. What did you learn about our polity structure?
4. What makes you proud to be United Methodist?
5. What questions do you still have about our polity? (please send them to Rachel!)

Going Deeper:

Read 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and 1 Corinthians 12.

- What do you think it means that an overseer (leader, our understanding of bishop today) should be above reproach?
- What expectations should we have of our spiritual leaders? Should they be different from the expectations we have in discipleship of all members? Why or why not?
- Re-read the passage in 1 Corinthians on the spiritual gifts. What evidence do you see here of how an assembly of believers ought to organize themselves?
- What purpose do gifts serve for the local gathering? Read 1 Corinthians 14:12. How can we use our gifts to edify, or build up, the whole body?
- What does this have to do with polity?
- Do you agree that polity is useless unless it serves the mission of the church?

Challenge:

Consider reading one of the resources above.

- What did you learn?
- What surprised you?
- What resonated with you or encouraged you?
- What confused you?
- What do you still have questions about?