PARTICIPANTS' GUIDE

THE WAY OF INTEGRITY

Living in right relationship with self, others, and God

Developed by the General Commission on the Status and Role of Women

GENERAL COMMISSION ON THE STATUS & ROLE OF WOMEN
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

GENERAL COMMISSION ON THE
STATUS & ROLE OF
WOMEN
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

1901 Chestnut Avenue
Glenview, IL 60025
Phone: 312-346-4900 Toll-free number: 800-523-8390
www.gcsrw.org
Email: info@gcsrw.org

Table of Contents

Introduction	3
Session One: Identifying Values	7
Session Two: Honor and Moral Courage	12
Session Three: Humility and Helpfulness	17
Session Four: Integrity in Action	22
Endnotes	28
Acknowledgments	29
Leaders' Guide Endnotes	28
Resources	29
Adaptations	38
Resources Endnote	45
Acknowledgments	45

Introduction

Hear now the word of God from Matthew 23

> *Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup, so that the outside also may become clean.*
>
> *Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which on the outside look beautiful, but inside they are full of the bones of the dead and of all kinds of filth. So you also on the outside look righteous to others, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.*
>
> *— Matthew 23:25-28 (NRSV)*

It is clear in this passage that Jesus wasn't messing around when it came to hypocrisy. Those religious leaders who said all of the right words, who knew scripture by heart, but kept people from experiencing God in tangible ways were those who got Jesus' blood pumping the most. The Pharisees could correctly identify their values, but had great difficulty embodying them in their organizational policy and relationships.

What does it mean to act and live with integrity? Why is it important within our relationships and communities of faith? We often see ourselves in the scriptures as those who are on the side of Jesus, but what if we are like the Pharisees? How might we heed the call of Christ to turn inward, cleaning the inside of the cup so that the outside also may be clean? As Karoline Lewis writes in her book *SHE, "The outside and the inside must match up. This is real. This is you being a whole person."* ***This study invites you into that deep spiritual reflection in search of wholeness, rooted in biblical faith.***

Built on the wisdom of many, this study was developed to give participants the opportunity to understand themselves, develop self-awareness, and engage in relationship with one another in a way that embodies the life and spirit of Jesus. This journey is a treacherous one, but we are accompanied by Christ and the communion of saints. This journey is not meant to be taken alone, but in the brave fellowship of a faith community, whether that be in a small group, or as an undertaking of a church leadership committee.

What is integrity for United Methodists?

Integrity is a culture in which members know their values and beliefs, and act consistently, faithfully, and reliably in congruence with those values and beliefs.

Accordingly, interpersonal relationships model honor and respect for all people as children of God.

Can People Identify Your Values Based On The Way You Live?

To act with integrity as United Methodists and Christians means consistently, faithfully, and reliably acting with the *honor, humility,* and *helpfulness* seen in Jesus' ministry and teachings, both towards ourselves and others.

Honor is defined as ethically reliable thinking and behavior which, in challenging situations, may require moral courage. Moral courage is the willingness to demonstrate integrity in the face of opposition or potential harm to self. Jesus models honor and moral courage in John 18:1-11, when he presents himself to the Roman soldiers on the Mount of Olives, even though he knows great harm will come to him.

Humility is defined as behaviors and attitudes of deference towards others. This includes respect for and consideration of differing viewpoints, along with an awareness of one's own limitations and imperfections. Jesus exhibits humility throughout his ministry, especially in John 13:1-20 when he washes his disciples' feet.

Helpfulness is defined as an interest in and willingness to assist others in fostering their legitimate goals, interests, or aims. This is faith in action. Jesus teaches helpfulness in Matthew 25:31-46 when he says, "Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me."

The community is formed when we understand the Gospel of Jesus Christ as both social and personal, and intentionally act to bring about the Beloved Community in which each sacred child of God is nurtured into the fullness of their humanity. This is done by acting as Jesus models in his life and ministry, consistently, reliably, and intentionally with ***integrity*** in our relationships with others in our communities and the world.

Each of us is an artist of our days; the greater our integrity and awareness, the more original and creative our time will become.

— John O'Donahue, *To Bless the Space Between Us*

The Study:

The Way of Integrity has two key components:

- Individual participant's reflection on the intentional action and guiding questions at the conclusion of each session, and
- Four sessions during which the group comes together for study and reflection.

These can easily be adapted to fit into a shorter or longer number of sessions.

Each session contains four components: Centering, Sharing, Reflecting, and Acting.

In between each session, participants are invited to participate in the Acting section at the end of each session. They are also encouraged to adopt an intentional action based on what they've learned in the session, and to keep a journal of their responses to the guiding questions at the conclusion of each session.

Session One

Identifying Values

This session:

- Defines integrity
- Identifies personal values, their origins, and their influence on behavior
- Develops a theology of integrity that can lead us to act with integrity in the world, and in our relationships with ourselves, God, and one another

Session Two

Honor and Moral Courage

This session:

- Defines honor and moral courage as part of the definition of integrity
- Identifies what honor and moral courage look like in the Bible
- Illustrates what it looks like to act with integrity in the world as a person of faith

Session Three

Humility and Helpfulness

This session:

- Defines humility and helpfulness as part of integrity
- Identifies Biblical, historical, and contemporary examples of humility and helpfulness,
- Invites participants to identify acts of humility and helpfulness in their contexts and consider the potential impact on their communities and relationships

Session Four

Integrity in Action

This session:

- Illustrates what living in community with integrity and respect looks like
- Invites participants to reflect on how acting with integrity will be carried out in their own communities
- Guides participants through the creation and adoption of a group contract/ Beloved Community Covenant to spread a culture of integrity through their community

Several resources are provided at the conclusion of the study to help you integrate these concepts into various ministries in The United Methodist Church. Ministry settings included are the local church (sermon starters, Sunday school classes, small groups, youth ministry, committees), campus ministries and Wesley Foundations, Residence in Ministries' (RIM) small groups camping ministries (campers and staff), and general agency staff (in-service training, staff retreats, board meetings, etc.). We hope groups will be creative in how they adapt the principles of this study into their unique community.

The Way of Integrity study consistently provides opportunities for participants to engage in personal reflection of one's own values and their origins, how their values inform and affect their relationships with themselves and others, and how they can better live out their values in order to abide in the fullness of Christ's identity of honor, humility, and helpfulness within a community of faith. The ultimate goal of *The Way of Integrity* study is the creation of a strong culture of integrity promoting respect that permeates the full life and ministries of The United Methodist Church.

Therefore, as a result of engaging in *The Way of Integrity* study, participants will:

- Know, understand, and apply the definition of integrity and acting with honor, humility, and helpfulness from a uniquely Wesleyan/United Methodist theological point of view
- Identify personal and United Methodist values, their origins, and how these inform and affect relationships with one's self and others, and understand their importance for United Methodists called to grow in personal holiness
- Respect and engage with the individual and diverse values of others in order to deeply honor the other in relationships within faith communities and one's life
- Perceive an act in situations that require moral courage and understand why this is important as a United Methodist called grow in social holiness
- Recognize one's ability to contribute to the creation of a culture of integrity within the full life and ministries of The United Methodist Church through the creation of a Beloved Community Covenant in their ministry setting

Session One

Identifying Values

CENTERING

Biblical Grounding:

Lectio Divina

The English translation of Lectio Divina is *holy reading* or *sacred reading.* When you participate in the practice of Lectio Divina, you have the opportunity to deeply reflect and meditate on a particular passage from scripture and to hopefully come to a new understanding of the passage and a renewed connection with God. The passage should be read aloud three times.

> *"In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets."*
>
> *— Matthew 7:12 (NRSV)*

First reading:

What word(s) is God speaking to me or stands out to me?

Second reading:

How is my life touched by this passage?

Third Reading:

What is this passage inviting me to do or be in my life?
What does Christ want me to be or do today?
What new insights did you learn from this process?

Theological Grounding:

Prevenient Grace

Prevenient grace is like oxygen. It is a force which animates our lives and is the environment we inhabit. We are so immersed in it that we might not always be aware of it, but it is always present; inviting humanity with every breath to be in relationship with God, the giver of every good and perfect gift (James 1:17 NRSV). Both of these gifts, grace and oxygen, can be denied. Denial of these gifts, however, leads to death, and therefore is not God's intention and hope for the world. Despite this denial, prevenient grace is part of our environment before we recognize it. God's prevenient grace not only *"stirs up within us a desire to know God,"* but also *"enables us to discern differences between good and evil and makes it possible for us to choose good."*[1] The fruit of prevenient grace, then, includes our

values. Because grace is God's ongoing and active presence in our lives, at least some of our values will shift and change over time, and must be continually recognized and reevaluated in order to live with integrity.

Spiritual Grounding:

Pray Together

God, help us to let go of our own egos so we may truly discover what our values are, why we think how we think, and why we do what we do.

Open our ears so we can hear you,

Open our eyes so we can see your presence,

Open our minds so that we may more deeply know you,

Open our hearts so we can better hear others,

Open our lives so we can become a sign and instrument of your presence in the world[2]

Communal Grounding:

Community Covenant

We will begin our study time together by creating a group covenant, or "ground rules" for discussions moving forward. This is a mutual agreement to promote mutual respect for one another and to encourage the expression of honest thoughts and feelings, even when topics are controversial or difficult to discuss.

As a group, based on Jesus' commandment in Matthew 7:12 (do to others as you would have them do to you), answer and discuss the following questions (5 minutes):

1. What two things do you need from others in the group in order to feel safe to express your thoughts and feelings?

2. What two things will you offer to the group so that others will feel safe to express their thoughts and feelings?

An example might be: *I will speak only for myself, from my own experiences. I need clarity and honesty from others in the group.*

SHARING

Many of us are familiar with the *golden rule* as Jesus teaches in the passage above. As Christians, United Methodists believe Jesus Christ's life, teaching and ministry are the ultimate model for Christian living and ethical behavior. In this passage, Jesus is asking us, as followers of his teaching, to consider how we

would want to be treated, and to treat others in the same way. He concludes this commandment by saying this is what the Hebrew Scriptures and the prophets before him also taught about relating to those near us and around the world.

But, how do we want to be treated and why do we want to be treated this way? What do we value? Knowing your values helps you determine what is important, why you do what you do, or why you think how you think.

This session invites you to reflect deeply on your personal values, the source of these values, and how they influence your integrity. We will then consider how Jesus' life, ministry, and teachings can serve as a model for living a life with integrity.

It is important to identify our values since they guide our ethical decisions, how we act, and why.

Activity:

Identifying our Values:

Spend five minutes selecting 12 values from the *Possible Values List* provided, or list other values you have if they are not listed. At the end of five minutes, you should have a list of your 12 most important values.

- Now eliminate three values by crossing them out (take 30 seconds to do this)
- Next, eliminate two more values. You should have seven values left after this (30 seconds)
- Now eliminate two more values leaving you with five values (30 seconds)
- Next, find a partner. Each of you eliminate one of your partner's values. Do not communicate with each other about which value you are eliminating. It is for the *eliminator* to decide with no regard for the other person's beliefs/ opinions. You will have four values left after this (one minute)
- Now, eliminate one more value, leaving you with three cards (30 seconds)
- Now refer back to your list of discarded values. You may exchange 1 of your remaining values with one from your discard list. You will have three values left after this (30 seconds)
- Now eliminate two more values leaving you with one FINAL value (30 seconds)

Take five minutes to write your top three values in your journal, and your reflections on the exercise, using the questions below.

1. How was this activity easy for you? How was it challenging?

2. What was it like to eliminate someone else's value? To have someone else eliminate one of your values?

3. Why might this activity be important?

4. How do you see your top value playing a role in your life?

5. What can you do to consistently live by your values?

REFLECTING

Read aloud as a group Matthew 5:1-16.

Discuss the following questions:

1. Name the values Jesus identifies in Matthew 5:1-16.

2. Are any of the values taught by Jesus in this passage similar to the values you and/or the group identified in today's session? If so, how? If not, why not?

3. Should our values be identical to those Jesus names if we say we are followers of Christ? Is it ok if some of our values are not listed by Jesus?

4. Where did these differing values come from? Why do you think they are important?

5. Would you add anything to Jesus' list? Why or why not?

6. Can people identify your personal values based on the way you live?

7. Do you consistently express your values in the same way?

8. Do your roles influence the expression of your values?

9. Are there any values based on your answers or the values Jesus names that you would like to add to the group's list?

Beatitudes of Reconciliation

Blessed are those who are willing to enter into the process of being healed, for they will become healers.

Blessed are those who recognize their own inner violence, for they will come to know nonviolence.

Blessed are those who can forgive self, for they will become forgivers.

Blessed are those who are willing to let go of selfishness and self-centeredness, for they will become a healing presence.

Blessed are those who listen with compassion, for they will become compassionate.

Blessed are those who are willing to enter into conflict, for they will find resolutions.

Blessed are those who know their interdependence with all of creation, for they will become unifiers.

Blessed are those who live a contemplative life stance, for they will find God in all things.

Blessed are those who strive to live these beatitudes, for they will become reconcilers.[3]

ACTING

Sticky notes:

- Write your top five values on a sticky note and place it somewhere you will see it each morning.
- Read your sticky note again at the end of the day. Try to recall what you did throughout the day and map out where your values align with your actions during the day.
- Record any thoughts and reflections in your journal. You may choose to use the following questions to guide your reflections:

    1. Can people around you identify your values based on the way you live?
    2. Are your values consistently shown in your actions, or does it depend on what role you are living that moment?

Session Two

Honor and Moral Courage

CENTERING

Biblical Grounding:

Lectio Divina

The English translation of Lectio Divina is *"holy reading"* or *"sacred reading."* When you participate in the practice of Lectio Divina, you have the opportunity to deeply reflect and meditate on a particular passage from scripture and to hopefully come to a new understanding of the passage and a renewed connection with God. The passage should be read aloud three or four times.

Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there who had a withered hand. They watched him to see whether he would cure him on the sabbath, so that they might accuse him. And he said to the man who had the withered hand, "Come forward." Then he said to them, "Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to kill?" But they were silent. He looked around at them with anger; he was grieved at their hardness of heart and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. The Pharisees went out and immediately conspired with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

Mark 3:1-6 (NRSV)

First reading:

What word(s) is God speaking to me or stands out to me?

Second reading:

How is my life touched by this passage?

Third Reading:

What is this passage inviting me to do or be in my life?
What does Christ want me to be or do today?
What new insights did you learn from this process?

Theological Grounding:

Justifying Grace

We often speak of conversion as a one-time event, however, we are a people who are converted and ever-converting. Each day provides a new opportunity to be reoriented to God's love, as God's mercies are new each morning. Justifying

grace is the presence and power of God which makes this reorientation, this repentance, possible in the life of faith. Justifying grace frees people from the temptation to earn God's love, assuring people of their status as a child of God, and infuses people with the power to live out of the values God has cultivated in their hearts; to live with integrity. The power which God gives us to live with integrity can be named **honor** and **moral courage.** Integrity matters because we are never without opportunity to express God's love to our neighbor, and to not do so would be hypocrisy. Just as prevenient grace can be rejected, so can these opportunities for living out the values which God has cultivated in us.

"Love of God is always linked with love of neighbor, a passion for justice and renewal in the life of the world."

— Book of Discipline, ¶102

What stands out to you in these theological statements?

Spiritual Grounding:

Pray together

Spirit of truth, direct our attention to the life of Jesus so that we might see what you would have us be. Make us, like him, teachers of your good law. Make us, like him, performers of miraculous cures. Make us, like him, proclaimers of your kingdom. Make us, like him, loving of the poor, the outcast, children. Make us, like him, silent when the world tempts us to respond on the world's terms. Make us, like him, ready to suffer. We know we cannot be like Jesus, except as Jesus was unlike us, being your Son. Make us cherish that unlikeness, that we may grow into the likeness made possible by Jesus' resurrection. Amen.[4]

Communal Grounding:

Remembering the Covenant

How might I be tempted to break the covenant we made together?

SHARING

To act with integrity as United Methodists and Christians means consistently, faithfully, and reliably acting with the *honor, humility,* and *helpfulness* seen in Jesus' ministry and teachings, both towards ourselves and others.

Honor is defined as ethically reliable thinking and behavior, which in challenging situations may require moral courage.

Moral courage is the willingness to demonstrate integrity in the face of opposition or potential harm to self. Courage includes the strength to set firm and clear limits, while staying emotionally connected to people in relationship with you. It requires risk and vulnerability!

Activity #1

Malala Yousafzai

Use the following questions to guide your reflection on the video[5]:

1. What are Malala's values?
2. Where did these values come from?
3. How are her values reflected in her actions?
4. Did her actions require honor and/or moral courage? Both? Why or why not? How?

REFLECTING

Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there who had a withered hand. They watched him to see whether he would cure him on the sabbath, so that they might accuse him. And he said to the man who had the withered hand, "Come forward." Then he said to them, "Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the sabbath, to save life or to kill?" But they were silent. He looked around at them with anger; he was grieved at their hardness of heart and said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and his hand was restored. The Pharisees went out and immediately. conspired with the Herodians against him, how to destroy him.

Mark 3:1-6 (NRSV)

Questions for Discussion

1. What about Jesus' actions made them honorable?
2. Why was moral courage required for that action?
3. What was Jesus' ultimate pursuit in this encounter?
4. What is the point of conflict in the passage? Is this point of conflict similar to points of conflict today?
5. Does Jesus act consistently with moral courage throughout the entirety of this passage? Why or why not?
6. If you answered yes to the previous question, how does Jesus consistently model moral courage in the passage?
7. If you answered no to the previous question, what could Jesus have done differently to act consistently with moral courage?

8. Are there other examples in scripture where Jesus acts with honor and moral courage?

9. What are some other examples in scripture of people acting with honor and moral courage?

10. What examples can you think of in which someone, including yourself, acted with honor and moral courage?

11. What does courage look like to you?

12. How does acting with honor and moral courage relate to tbe overall definition of integrity presented in this study?

13. As a person of faith, why is acting with moral courage important in order to live according to the integrity of Christ?

ACTING

Before Session #3, pay attention to opportunities to act with moral courage. When those opportunities arise, reflect on the following questions:

1. What was the situation?

2. What were your options for action?

3. How were your values reflected in your actions?

4. Did your action(s) require honor and/or moral courage? Both? Why or why not?

5. Would your options/actions be different if you were in a different role? How so?

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord make me an instrument of Your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is darkness, light;
And where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master, grant that I may not
So much seek to be consoled as to console;
To be understood as to understand;
To be loved as to love,
For it is in giving that we receive.
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.

— Saint Francis of Assisi

Session Three

Humility and Helpfulness

CENTERING

Biblical Grounding:

Lectio Divina

The English translation of Lectio Divina is *"holy reading"* or *"sacred reading."* When you participate in the practice of Lectio Divina, you have the opportunity to deeply reflect and meditate on a particular passage from scripture and to hopefully come to a new understanding of the passage and a renewed connection with God. The passage will be read aloud three or four times each time by a different person, and each time with a different focus. After each reading, you will be given a period of silence to reflect on the scripture passage. After the silent meditation time, you will be asked to share our thoughts and reflections based .on the prompts given to you by the group leader before each reading. In the end, this practice promises to leave you with a deeper understanding of scripture, your relationship with God, and of your faith.

God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

God blesses those who are humble
for they will inherit the whole earth.

God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied.

God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

God blesses those whose hearts are pure,
for they will see God.

God blesses those who work for peace,
for they will be called the children of God.

God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

Matthew 5:3-10 (NLT)

First reading:

What word(s) is God speaking to me or stands out to me?

Second reading:

How is my life touched by this passage?

Third Reading:

What is this passage inviting me to do or be in my life? What does Christ want me to be or do today?

Remember: *To act with integrity as United Methodists and Christians means consistently, faithfully, and reliably acting with the* honor, humility, *and* helpfulness *seen in Jesus' ministry and teachings, both towards ourselves and others.*

Do any words strike you having reflected again on the passage from Matthew as this definition is read aloud? If so, which ones?

Theological Grounding:

Sanctifying Grace

God does not leave us alone, but is consistently present in our lives. As God abides with us, we are tended to like plants watered, pruned, and find ourselves in rhythms of darkness and light, all nurturing our growth. This experience, for Wesleyans, is understood as sanctifying grace. Sanctifying grace is "the ongoing experience of God's gracious presence transforming us into whom God intends us to be."[6] To discern whom God intends us to be we turn to scripture, Christian tradition, our life experience, and our values. Two hallmarks of the life of integrity for United Methodists and Christians are **humility** and **helpfulness.**

Theologian Charles Allen says this about The Beatitudes:[7]

To be poor in spirit means to give up our pride; to mourn means to be penitent to the point of surrendering our sins; meekness means that we must surrender our very selves to the plans and purposes of God; our hunger for God means turning away from our ambitions for all things else; to be merciful means to pay good for the evil we have received; for purity we must give up all things impure; to make peace is wholly to choose God. *Those are the seven ingredients of righteousness. They must be bought at a price. Blessed are those who pay the price, 'for theirs is the kingdom of God.*

Spiritual Grounding:

Pray Together

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change;
courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference.[8]

Communal Grounding:

Remembering the Covenant

How might I be tempted to break the covenant we made together?

SHARING

Humility is defined as behaviors and attitudes of deference towards other. This includes respect for and consideration of differing viewpoints, along with an awareness of one's own limitations and imperfections.

Questions for Discussion

1. When in your life do you act with humility? Why?

2. When someone disagrees with your point of view, do you think it is important to change their minds or to listen to their viewpoints? Do you listen to respond to them or listen to understand them? What does this have to do with humility?

3. Can you identify individuals you look to as examples for actions of humility? Who are they and why are they examples for you?

4. Who looks to you as an example of good living? Are you modeling humility for them?

Helpfulness is defined as an interest in and willingness to assist others in fostering their legitimate goals, interests, or aims.

Questions for Discussion

1. When in your life do you exhibit helpfulness towards others? How and why?

2. Where do you see your faith community acting with helpfulness? How and why?

3. Why do you act with helpfulness? Do you expect anything in return?

4. How do you think humility and helpfulness are related? Why are they important in the definition of integrity?

REFLECTING

Activity #1

Humility

Read: John 13:1-20.

Questions for Discussion

1. What character(s) display an action of humility in this passage?
2. How do/does the actions of the character(s) show humility?
3. How could have other characters in the passage shown humility?
4. What do you think kept them from showing humility?
5. How are you moved to grow in humility?

Activity #2

Helpfulness:

Read: Matthew 25:31-46

Questions for Discussion:

1. Where do you see helpfulness taught in this passage? What is the definition of helpfulness in the passage?
2. Who is deserving of our helpfulness? Does helping others offer repayment?
3. In what ways does this call you to be more helpful?

CLOSING PRAYER (5 minutes)

Humility is not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less.
— C.S. Lewis

When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, "Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.
— Fred Rogers

In this life we cannot do great things. We can only do small things with great love.
— Mother Teresa

I am no longer my own, but thine.
Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.
Let me be employed for thee or laid aside for thee, Exalted for thee or brought low for thee.
Let me be full, let me be empty.
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.
I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal. And now, o glorious and blessed God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, thou art mine, and I am thine.
So be it.
And the covenant which I have made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven
Amen.

— Wesley Covenant Prayer:

ACTING

Activity #1:

- Read the sermon "Called to be Blessed" in the **Resources** section of this study
- Use the discussion questions at the end of the sermon and reflect on what you've read
- Write in your journal how this influences your thoughts, behaviors and relationships

Activity #2:

- Write the Wesleyan Covenant Prayer on a piece of paper and post it in a place in your home where you will see it daily
- Say the Wesleyan Covenant Prayer at least once throughout your day while posturing your body in a position of humility or helpfulness. Consider opening your palms upward or outward in a position of openness and offering, kneeling or bowing, or pick your own posture
- Write in your journal how this influences your thoughts, behaviors, and relationships

Session Four

Integrity in Action

CENTERING

Biblical Grounding:

Lectio Divina

The English translation of Lectio Divina is *"holy reading"* or *"sacred reading."* When you participate in the practice of Lectio Divina, you have the opportunity to deeply reflect and meditate on a particular passage from scripture and to hopefully come to a new understanding of the passage and a renewed connection with God. The passage should be read aloud three or four times, each time by a different person, and each time with a different focus. After each reading, you will be given a period of silence to reflect on the scripture passage. After the silent meditation time, you will be asked to share our thoughts and reflections based on the prompts given to you by the group leader before each reading. In the end, this practice promises to leave you with a deeper understanding of scripture, your relationship with God, and of your faith.

In everything do to others as you would have them do to you;
for this is the law and the prophets

— Matthew 7:12 (NRSV)

First reading:

What word(s) is God speaking to me or stands out to me?

Second reading:

How is my life touched by this passage?
Do your actions, the way you treat yourself and others, reflect what is said in this passage?
When do you succeed at this?
When do you fall short? Why?

Third Reading:

What is this passage inviting me to do or be in my life?
What does Christ want me to be or do today?
How can you embody this passage in your actions and everyday life?

Theological Grounding:

Personal Piety and Social Holiness

Just as education does not ensure an excellent practitioner, right beliefs do not ensure an excellent practitioner of the faith. Out of the abundance of grace we have been given, our personal holiness overflows to our communities. John Wesley called this social holiness. In fact, he even wrote that there is "no holiness but social holiness." Living in community is essential to our tradition, because only then, can we become aware of the needs of our neighbor, and meet those needs. It is only then that we are faced with opportunities for God to grow us in holiness. It is only when we are living in community that we are graced with opportunities to act from our values with honor and moral courage in order to be humble and helpful. These opportunities are those in which we can put the integrity we have cultivated into action.

Spiritual Grounding:

Pray Together

Lord, make me what you will.
I put myself fully in your hands: Put me to doing, put me to suffering,
Let me be employed for you, or laid aside for you,
Let me be full, let me be empty,
Let me have all things, let me have nothing. I freely and with a willing heart
Give it all to your pleasure and disposal.[9]

SHARING

Activity:

Reviewing Definitions

Integrity is consistently, faithfully, and reliably acting with the honor, humility, and helpfulness seen in Jesus' ministry and teachings, both towards ourselves and others.

- During your participation in *The Way of Integrity* study, what was a moment in which you were aware that you acted in a particular situation with integrity?

Honor is ethically reliable thinking and behavior which, in challenging situations, may require moral courage;

Moral courage is the willingness to demonstrate integrity in the face of opposition or potential harm to self.

- Did the moment above require honor and moral courage? If so, how? If not, why not?

Humility is behaviors and attitudes of deference towards others. This includes respect for and consideration of differing viewpoints, along with an awareness of one's own limitations and imperfections.

- Did the moment above require humility? If so, how? If not, why not?

Helpfulness is an interest in and willingness to assist others in fostering their legitimate goals, interests, or aims.

- Did the moment above require helpfulness? If so, how? If not, why not?

Questions for reflection/discussion:

1. What is one intentional thing that you will do from each of the parts of the integrity definition to live your life in line with your values?

2. What is one intentional action of honor and moral courage you can take?

3. What is one intentional action of humility? Of helpfulness?

REFLECTING

Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" He answered, "You shall 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 your neighbor as yourself." And he said to him, "You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live." But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.' Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

— Luke 10:25-37 (NRSV)

Questions for Discussion:

1. According to Jesus' teachings in Luke 10:25-37, who is our neighbor? Is anyone ever not our neighbor? Why or why not?

2. Why does Jesus explicitly state the Samaritan is the one who helped the man in the story?

3. How is love of neighbor related to living with integrity? To honor and moral courage? Humility? Helpfulness?

4. Have you ever experienced a similar situation in which someone unexpectedly offered assistance? Or in which you offered assistance?

5. How did that make you feel? Did that change you in any way?

ACTING

Action #1:

Community Integrity Covenant[10]

Love of neighbor crosses the boundaries of nation, race, and social class. Anyone in need is our neighbor. By depicting the Samaritan as the example to be followed and the representatives of conventional religion as the examples to be avoided, John Wesley claims that the parable issues a challenge to people of faith. "Let us go and do likewise, regarding every man as our neighbor who needs our assistance. Let us renounce that bigotry and party-zeal which would contract our hearts into an insensibility for all the human race, but a small number whose sentiments and practice are so much our own, that our love to them is but self-love reflected."[11] John Wesley outlines "The Character of a Methodist" in his 1742 pamphlet of the same name. These characteristics include:

- 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.

- Methodists are "pure in heart" (Matthew 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.

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

- They do good to all- neighbors, strangers, friends, and enemies [12]

The United Methodist Social Principles state: *We affirm that all persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God. All persons need the ministry of the Church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship that enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self. We affirm that God's grace is available to all. We will seek to live together in Christian community, welcoming, forgiving, and loving one another, as Christ has loved and accepted us.*[13]

Acting with integrity means aligning our values with our actions. Our values come from our personal values and our communal values. We established these in the first session. Now, given what you have defined as your personal and communal values, and what you've learned about how Jesus models our communal values, and after reading John Wesley's interpretations of Wesleyan character/values, consider what you need to do in order to bring your actions in line with your personal and communal values.

Write: Two intentional actions on the sticky notes provided by your group leader, keeping in mind the quote from John Wesley's Character of a Methodist and the above passage from the Social Principles of The United Methodist Church. The first intentional action should be one intentional action that aligns with your personal values and the second should be one intentional action that aligns with the larger group's identified communal values.

Examples:

My personal value is to care for all of God's creation. My intentional action is that I will advocate during the next committee meeting that the church begin a recycling program.

My personal values are professionalism and leadership. As a result, I will be more intentional about what my role is as a youth pastor and set better boundaries with the youth. This means I will no longer have the youth over to my house once a week to watch movies. We will instead watch movies in the youth room.

Our communal value as United Methodists is that God's grace is available to all and that all persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God. Our intentional action as a group is to advocate that a woman preach one Sunday a month during regular worship services.

Action #2:

Sing together: "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling" UMH 384

Closing prayer:

Lord make me an instrument of Your peace.
where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith; where there is darkness,
light; and where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master, grant that I may not
so much seek to be consoled as to console;
to be understood as to understand;
to be loved as to love,
For it is in giving that we receive.
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born
to eternal life.

— Saint Francis of Assisi

Benediction:

May you awaken to the mystery of being here and
enter the quiet immensity of your own presence.
May you have joy and ·peace in the temple of your senses.
May you receive great encouragement when new frontiers beckon.
May you respond to the call of your gift and find the courage to
follow its path. May the flame of anger free you from falsity.
May warmth of heart keep your presence aflame
and may anxiety never linger about you.
May your outer dignity mirror an inner dignity of soul.
May you take time to celebrate the quiet miracles that seek no attention.
May you be consoled in the secret symmetry of your soul.
May you experience each day as a sacred gift woven around the heart of wonder.[14]

Endnotes

1 http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/our-wesleyan-heritage

2 Paraphrased from the prayer found here: http://www.dolr.orglpravers/enqlish#sthash.LYQ5R8Lf.dpuf

3 Sisters of St. Joseph, Concordia, Kansas. Found in Thurston, page 100-101.

4 Make us Like Him by Stanley Hauerwas. From Prayers Plainly Spoken, page 27. Available online at https://books.google.com/books?id=C99KAwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false

5 Watch: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FnloKzEAX7

6 http://www.umc.org/what-we-believe/our-wesleyan-heritage

7 Charles Allen, p. 60-61, The Beatitudes:

8 Reinhold Niebuhr.

9 John Wesley, The United Methodist Book of Worship, 288.

10 See samples in the Resource section

11 John Wesley, Notes, 241-42.

12 John Wesley: holiness of heart and life by Charles Yrigoyen, Jr, pages 98-99

13 Social Principles, The United Methodist Church 2013-2016, Paragraph 161F

14 John O'Donahue, A Blessing,Eternal Echoes: Celtic Reflections on our Yearning to Belong.

Resources

POSSIBLE VALUES LIST

Ability
Abundance
Acceptance
Achievement
Adaptability
Adequacy
Adventure
Affection
Affluence
Alertness
Aliveness
Ambition
Amusement
Appreciation
Approachability
Artfulness
Assertiveness
Availability
Awareness
Awe
Balance
Beauty
Benevolence
Bravery
Brilliance
Calmness
Camaraderie
Capability
Care
Certainty
Challenge
Charity
Cheerfulness
Clarity
Cleverness
Comfort
Commitment
Compassion
Competence
Confidence
Congruency
Connection
Consistency
Contentment
Control
Conviction
Cooperation
Cordiality
Courage
Courtesy
Creativity
Curiosity
Daring
Decisiveness
Dependability
Desire
Determination
Devotion
Devoutness
Dignity
Discernment
Discipline
Discovery
Discretion
Diversity
Drive
Duty
Effectiveness
Efficiency
Elegance
Empathy
Encourage
Endurance
Energy
Enthusiasm
Excellence
Excitement
Fairness
Faith
Fame
Fearlessness
Fidelity
Flexibility
Focus
Fortitude
Freedom
Friendliness
Frugality
Fun
Generosity
Genuineness
Grace
Gratitude
Growth
Happiness
Harmony
Health
Helpfulness
Heroism
Honesty
Honor
Hopefulness
Humility
Humor
Imagination
Independence
Integrity
Intelligence
Intuition
Joy
Justice
Kindness
Leadership
Learning
Liberty
Logic
Love
Loyalty
Maturity
Moderation
Modesty
Motivation
Open-mindedness
Optimism
Originality
Passion
Peace
Perfection
Perseverance
Philanthropy
Pleasure
Practicality
Proficiency
Professionalism
Purity
Reliability
Resilience
Resourcefulness
Respect
Sacrifice
Satisfaction
Self-control
Selflessness
Sensitivity
Serenity
Service
Simplicity
Sincerity
Sophistication
Spirituality
Spontaneity
Stability
Strength
Sympathy
Teamwork
Temperance
Thoughtfulness
Tradition
Tranquility
Trust
Trustworthiness
Truth
Understanding
Uniqueness
Unity
Utility
Vision
Warmth
Wealth
Wisdom
Zeal

Community Values Activity

Materials needed:

- Newsprint (preferably large sticky kind)
- Markers
- Participant's top 3 values on index cards

Instruct the group that they are now going to consider their community values. Let them know they will work in small groups to develop values for the entire group of participants. Have the participants break up into groups of 3 or 4. If your number of participants is smaller, you may invite them to divide into pairs. Pass out pieces of large newsprint and a few markers to each group. You may also opt to have these already on tables before the session begins.

1. Instruct participants to take turns in their small groups or pairs sharing their top 3 personal values they identified in the last activity, and name 1 additional value they consider important for a successful community. Let them know they have 5 minutes to do this.

2. After 5 minutes, invite each person in the small group to place the index cards of any values that were named more than once in the middle of the table. These are their community values for their small group. If they do not have common values once everyone has shared, instruct them to work in their groups to identify at least 2 values they would want the entire community to uphold.

3. Instruct each group to write the values their group agrees upon on the newsprint provided.

Leaders: *Invite the groups to report their values to the larger group, repeat the process beginning at step 3 above, using any common values identified by the smaller groups to create 5 values that the entire group of participants will uphold as a community. Write these on a separate sheet of newsprint which will be displayed during the duration of* ***The Way of Integrity*** *study.*

Note: *If your participant group is a part of a larger church community (Sunday School class or youth group within a local church, etc), consider sharing these values identified by your class with your larger community in a creative way. An example might be to print a brief explanation of the study and the values in the bulletin the following Sunday. Your group might also opt to print these along with a brief explanation of the study, and post them in a central location in the church.*

Community Values Activity

Materials Needed:

- Study Guides
- Large Newsprint
- Markers

Leaders: *Instruct the group to divide into smaller groups of 3-4 participants. Distribute a piece of newsprint and markers to each group. Instruct each group to choose a scribe to record their answers and a reporter who will report the group's answers back to the larger group. Invite participants to read the following passage quietly in their small group. They may choose to take turns reading aloud or to read silently. Allow the groups 10 minutes to read and answer the questions following the passage.*

Read:

United Methodist theology comes from the writings and work of John Wesley. In his work, Wesley advocates for the importance of a life of social holiness as well as personal holiness. Read the 2 quotes from John Wesley aloud as a group:

John· Wesley says this about humility:

"True humility is a kind of self-annihilation, and this the center for all virtues."

— Selections from the Journal of John Wesley

John Wesley says this about social holiness and helpfulness:

"Directly opposite to this is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Solitary religion is not to be found there. 'Holy solitaries' is a phrase no more consistent with the gospel than holy adulterers. The gospel of Christ knows no religion but social; no holiness but social holiness."

Leaders: *After 10 minutes, invite the small groups to share their answers with the larger group. When each group has shared, use the following questions to complete the conversation:*

1. What surprises you about John Wesley's call to personal *and* social holiness?
2. How does this relate to integrity, especially humility and helpfulness?

Crucible Moments

Materials Needed:

- Copies of this worksheet for each participant
- Journals
- Pens/Pencils

I am Malala by Malala Yousafzai was selected as the inaugural book for the First-Year Common Reading program by the Emory Integrity Project. Not only does the book address a wide-variety of themes, but also Malala exemplifies integrity and moral courage, acting with honor, humility, and helpfulness in the face of adversity. In this activity, we will be thinking back to the video we watched at the conclusion of session two.

This activity will look at Malala's life and understand how she stood up for what she believed in. In addition, you will use the crucible moments worksheet to explore your own values and passions. Some common themes Malala touches on in the short video clip you watched include family relations, education, women's rights, terrorism, and some of the beliefs of Islam. She is known for her passion for education and women's rights. These passions shape her life.

Like Malala, each of us have major themes in our lives that mark key experiences and have shaped who we are today and our passions. Let's explore our individual life themes a bit more. However, rather than referring to them as themes, we choose to call them crucible moments.

As a crucible is used to refine metal, a crucible moment is an experience that molds us into the person we have become. These are moments of significance in our lives that impact who and what we are. Sometimes these are easily defined, other moments may be more hidden in your memory.

Activity:

Take a 10 minutes to discern possible crucible moments in your life. To identify them, reflect on the significant moments in your life thus far. What impact has this moment had? How has it shaped your values and actions? How does this influence the choices you make?

Crucible Moments Activity

Now that you've reflected upon your crucible moments, take 5 minutes to share them with a partner. Keep in mind that within your crucible moments, you identified values that were reinforced because of a significant experience. For example, each time her access to education was diminished, Malala's values for justice, compassion, courage, and a passion for learning were reinforced for her. One of Malala's greatest crucible moments is arguably when she was shot by the

Taliban on her way to school at fifteen. This inevitably reinforced the values we just mentioned, as well as fueled her drive to continue to stand up for what she believes in: equal access to education.

As participants in *The Way of Integrity* study, you are learning about the definition of integrity and a lot about yourself including your values and how these may or may not influence and be in congruence with your actions. Likely, the crucible moments you have experienced and the values that you have developed and reinforced are driving something that you care about. Take a few moments to discuss how being a person of faith in a Christian community has or has not shaped your values and inspired (or not inspired) you to act with the honor and moral courage required for integrity.

Contemporary Saints

Materials Needed:

- Study Guides
- Large Newsprint
- Markers

Leaders: *Instruct the group to divide into smaller groups of 3-4 participants. Distribute a piece of newsprint and markers to each group. Instruct each group to choose a scribe to record their answers and a reporter who will report the group's answers back to the larger group. Invite participants to read the following passage quietly in their small group. They may choose to take turns reading aloud or to read silently. Allow the small groups 10 minutes to read and answer the questions following the passage.*

Read:

United Methodist theology comes from the writings and work of John Wesley. In his work, Wesley advocates for the importance of a life of social holiness as well as personal holiness. Read the 2 quotes from John Wesley aloud as a group:

John Wesley says this about humility:

"True humility is a kind of self-annihilation, and this the center for all virtues."

— Selections from the Journal of John Wesley

John Wesley says this about social holiness and helpfulness:

"Directly opposite to this is the gospel of Jesus Christ. Solitary religion is not to be found there. 'Holy solitaries' is a phrase no more consistent with the gospel than holy adulterers. The gospel of Christ knows no religion but social; no holiness but social holiness."

Leaders: *After 10 minutes, invite the small groups to share their answers with the larger group. When each group has shared, use the following questions to complete the conversation:*

1. What surprises you about John Wesley's call to personal *and* social holiness?

2. How does this relate to integrity, especially humility and helpfulness?

Sermon: Called to Be Blessed[1]

Matthew 5:1-11

As we approach Matthew 5, this Gospel already seems to be moving at an alarming rate. Following Jesus' baptism, in chapter 4 alone we see Jesus fasting in the desert for forty days and nights, thwarting temptation on three occasions, and finally, calling his disciples. Then, almost immediately, we find hordes of people following Jesus, and "when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them."

We know the teachings of Jesus that follow this whirlwind of activity as the "Beatitudes" — from the Latin word for "happiness" — or, as I thought of them as an undergraduate, "those extreme teachings of Jesus that begin with 'Blessed are the fill-in-the-blank' and that are also too numerous and similar to memorize for a test." Upon further review, however, the Beatitudes should be easy to memorize precisely because of the common thread that runs through them — humility — and because of the astonishing fact that the one man who could have afforded to be a little full of himself, was not. "Anyway," Jesus is saying here, "it is persons who are living in a state of true joy who do not need to puff themselves up."

In order to see why Jesus would think like this, let's flash back to that fourth chapter, where we find a very human Jesus, a Jesus "led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil" (Matthew 4:1). We find in this narrative, not the questioning, seemingly hesitant Jesus of the early chapters of Mark but the Jesus who is "tempted." We are prone to think that *humans* are tempted — not God! Down through the centuries, the church has proclaimed Jesus to be "fully human and fully God." The most emphasized part of this claim is that Jesus is the only human ever to *be* God. Yet for Christians striving for true growth, it is just as important to say that as the *only* human to endure all temptation and emerge sinless, Jesus is the sole human to be "fully man," to use the language of the early church; the only "fully human, human." This was why the crux of the work of the medieval saint Anselm was important among the early Reformers, including Martin Luther and John Calvin, and played an especially crucial role in the work of John Wesley. Their point: all of us are called to become fully human.

It was universally and paradoxically acknowledged, at least until Wesley, that all of us share this vocation, but that none of us are there yet. Since the fall of humankind, we are less than fully human, less than what we were created to be.

At the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, however, Jesus gives his disciples the keys for unlocking the gate that leads us back to the path toward full personhood. While we who live in the twenty-first century talk about reason, the ability to reflect upon your own existence, and human rights as indicators of the differences between people and the other parts of creation, Jesus goes in a decidedly different direction. For Matthew's Jesus it is crucial that, in order for people to be what they were created to be, they focus not upon the self but upon developing the strength and security to be vulnerable to God and to other persons. Thus, the happy, or the "blessed" — those living in an already realized state of joy — are the poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and the persecuted.

The question that arises, however, is "do we have to? Is this a requirement, Jesus?" After all, Jesus, fully God and fully human, doesn't use the word *saved* here, doesn't say, "You must be meek, you must be a peacemaker." Jesus uses the word *blessed* here; the common usage of this word in Jesus' day conveyed a sense of joy.

For those of us who consider adherence to this section of the Sermon on the Mount optional — just as many have called the Sermon's strict admonitions against anger, lust, and other evil desires impossible — a simple reading of other sections of Matthew will remedy such an easy escape. In chapter 16, for example, we find that humility is not one of many ways to God, but the only posture of a follower of Jesus. There again Jesus addresses his disciples, telling them that he will soon perish, that he will suffer and die in the hands of the religious elite in Jerusalem, but that the community of faith will live on. There is one requirement for membership in this church, however, Jesus tells the disciples: "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:24).

Being a follower of Jesus is not easy. Then again, unlike the world we inhabit, faithful Christianity has never assumed that an easier life is "the good life." The Jesus we encounter at the Sermon on the Mount is already telling us that the way to the blessed life is to turn the values of the world upside-down. That is, while the world calls us to regularly make sure that our self-esteem balloon is fully inflated, Jesus calls us to be poor in spirit and meek. While the demands of our lives and of the economy may command us to get on with life after a loved one's death, Jesus calls us to take time to mourn. In a warring world where the ability to kill quickly and precisely is valued by nations, Jesus calls us to be peacemakers. Easy? No. Required of Jesus' followers and therefore of persons who desire to be like Jesus, to be truly human? Yes. We are called to be blessed.

Reflection Questions:

1. What do you personally find challenging about Jesus' teachings in Matthew 5:1-11? How and why?

2. What do you find personally unchallenging? How and why?

3. How do you see humility as a "common thread" throughout all of the Beatitudes?

4. Do your personal values echo the teachings of Jesus in this passage? Why or why not?

5. Do the values of your faith community echo the teachings of Jesus in this passage? Why or why not?

6. What one, intentional thing could you do to change a behavior so your actions better align with the teachings in this passage?

Sample Community Covenants

Community Covenant

In our community/church/Sunday School class/etc., we value:

- Honesty
- Openness
- Safety
- Sacred worth for all living beings
- Service and helpfulness
- Humility to admit when we are wrong
- Patience
- Faith in Jesus Christ

Because of these, we covenant as individuals and as a group to:

Speak the truth to one another in each moment.

Listen to understand and not to respond. If we do not understand, we will ask clarifying questions.

Maintain confidentiality within this group. We will ask permission from our integrity partners and others to share the contents of private conversations.

We will act with intention so as to prevent harm of others — physically, psychologically, and spiritually. We will not berate those who think differently than us. Instead, we will seek to understand why they think how they think.

We commit to participate in one service project a month within our local community as individuals, as a group, or both.

We covenant to admit if we make a mistake and to forgive others when they make mistakes.

We covenant to stop and take a breath when we feel ourselves reacting out of anger, or misunderstanding.

We covenant to always model our behaviors on the integrity of Jesus Christ — how he would talk, act, and treat others

Community Covenant (for children)

Listen
We promise to listen when someone is speaking. We will not talk when others are talking

Respect
We will treat others like we would want to be treated

Honest
We will only say something about someone who is in the room

Help
We will offer help to others when they need or ask for our help

Faith
We will pray for one another

Adaptations

Various groups within the life of a local church can participate in the The Way of Integrity study and then work to create a culture of integrity* across *the entire life of the church. Examples of these groups and ways they can continue to engage with the study within the life of the church are below.

CHURCH COMMITTEES:

- Each committee within the local church can work through the entire study after which they create and adopt a community integrity covenant to guide their behaviors together
- Each committee member chooses or is assigned a partner from within their committee whom they work through the "acting" sections of the sessions. You may also choose for participants to partner with someone from a different committee as all committees work through the entire study simultaneously
- Once all members of all committees participate in the study, work together to form a Church-wide Community Covenant. Hang the covenant in a prominent place (church narthex, etc)
- Print the covenant in the church bulletin each Sunday
- If only one committee participates in the study, print their covenant in the church bulletin
- Each committee member commits to 1-2 intentional actions they will take based on their values
- Read the covenant together at the beginning of each committee meeting

SUNDAY SCHOOLS:

- Each Sunday School class in the local church can work through the entire study after which they create and adopt a Community Covenant to guide their behaviors together. You may choose to use the curriculum over a year, a few months, or a few weeks. You can title the series 'The month/year of Integrity" and advertise it in the bulletin before the study begins
- Each student chooses or is assigned a partner from within their class whom they work through the "acting" sections of the sessions. You may also choose for students to partner with someone from a different class as all adult classes work through the entire study simultaneously

- Once all classes participate in the study, work together to form a Church-wide Community Covenant. Hang the covenant in a prominent place (church narthex, etc)
- Print the covenant in the church bulletin each Sunday
- If only one class participates in the study, print the individual class covenants in the church bulletin
- Each committee member commits to 1-2 intentional actions they will take based on their values

Suggestions for use in the Local Church

- Read the covenant together at the beginning of each Sunday School Class meeting
- Each Sunday School class adopts 1-2 intentional actions they will do as a group to model integrity for the entire congregation
- Each Sunday School class participates in a service or mission opportunity within their community. Discuss the links between the Christian value of service and integrity

Small Groups:

- Hold a small group series at your church during which each group will work through the entire study. This series can be 4 weeks or 4 months, or can meet over an entire year
- Each small group adopts a Community Covenant that each member signs
- Each member of each small group commits to 1-2 intentional actions
- Members of each small group choose or are assigned partners from within their group
- They might also choose or assign partners from a different group
- Hold a retreat at the conclusion of the small group series in which participants reflect and the study

Youth Ministry:

- The youth group works through the entire study after which they create and adopt a community integrity covenant to guide their behaviors together. You may choose to use the curriculum over a year, a few months, or a few weeks

- Each member of the youth group chooses or is assigned a partner from within the group whom they work through the "acting" sections of the sessions
- Create a youth group Community Covenant and hang the covenant in a prominent place (church narthex, etc)
- Print the covenant in the church bulletin each Sunday
- Each youth commits to 1-2 intentional actions they will take based on their values
- Read the covenant together at the beginning of each youth group meeting
- Participates in a service or mission opportunity as a group within the local community
- Discuss the links between the Christian value of service and integrity
- Begin the study series with a special youth retreat during which you work through the first session of the study (definitions and values). Or, you may choose to work through the entire study depending on the length of the retreat
- Encourage youth to continue meeting with their partners after the study concludes

Sermon Starters:

The Beloved Community Sermon Series:

- Week One: Introduction — what is the integrity of Christ?
  - » Scripture: Matthew 5:1-16
  - » Values and the importance of living one's life in accordance with your values
  - » Ask the question: Can people identify your personal values based on the way you act or live?
- Week Two: Honor and Moral Courage
  - » Scripture: John 18:1-11 — What if Jesus hadn't stepped forward? Why did Jesus step forward?
  - » What is honor and moral courage and why is it important as people of faith?

  - » Use the story of Malala Yousafzai as an example. You might choose to show a brief video about her life if your church has the audio/visual capabilities to do so

- Week Three: Humility and Helpfulness
  - » Scripture: Matthew 5:3-10 — the values of Christ
  - » Humility — John 13:1-10
  - » Helpfulness — Matthew 25:31-46
  - » John Wesley: "True humility is a kind of self-annihilation, and this is the center for all virtues." and "The Gospel of Christ knows no religion but social; no holiness but social holiness."
- Week Four: Integrity in Action — now what?
  - » Scripture: Luke 10:25-37
  - » Discuss the concept of crucible moments and what those are in the story
  - » Ask the congregation: *What are your crucible moments? What will you do? How will you act?*

A culture of integrity across the entire life of The United Methodist Church also includes the official boards and agencies of the denomination. Below are suggestions for using *The Way of Integrity* study in this context

- Staff trainings
  - » Offer the study to staff for in a 4 week or 4 month series. Assign Integrity
  - » Partners for participating staff
  - » Initiate an integrity group for those who participated to remain in touch.
  - » Ask that each new hire read *The Way of Integrity* study and assign them a partner from the group to help them work through the acting portions of the sessions
- Staff meetings:
  - » Have staff participate in one session during each staff meeting. If not the entire session, have staff work through one activity (the values activities are ideal for this)
- Staff retreats:
  - » Incorporate the study into a staff retreat. Organize the sessions depending on length of the retreat (4 days = 1 session a day). You can also do the study over multiple retreats during the year
- Audiences:
  - » Utilize the study with the various audiences your board or agency works with

Examples would be using the study during missionary trainings, or when seminar groups participate in the Seminar Program with the General Board of Church and Society

The Way of Integrity on campus

Campus ministries and/or Wesley Foundations affiliated with university and colleges are a natural setting in which to use *The Way of Integrity*. Many campus ministries and Wesley Foundations have weekly bible studies, mission service opportunities on and off campus. Wesley Foundations and campus ministries serve as a meeting place for college students to engage in community, and faith formation and spiritual growth. Below are a few ways to engage with and integrate the concepts learned in *The Way of Integrity* study.

- Weekly or monthly Bible study — work through the study over a certain period of time (1 session a week for 4 weeks, or 4 months)
- Post the Community Covenant in a prominent place within the campus ministry space as a reminder to students and visitors
- Retreats — have students participate in the study during a retreat at the beginning of the year. Have the students create and adopt a Community Covenant. Post this in a prominent place within the campus ministry space as a reminder to students and visitors
- You can also choose to do a series of retreats. You will need to organize the sessions based on the length of your retreat
- Partners — match each new student with a partner that is a returning student. This is also a great way for the various classes to get acquainted and build community
- If a stated value of your group is sustainability/care of creation, and your campus ministry or Wesley Foundation has a weekly meal, consider adopting ethical eating practices — sustainability, recycling, etc.
- Encourage students to hold a similar study in their residence halls

With Campers:

Many, if not all, Annal Conferences have at least one camp that children and youth can attend during the summer months. Camp is a time for recreation, fun, making new friends, and learning and growing in one's faith individually and within a community. Camp also teaches young people independence and relationship skills that will influence their abilities for forming relationships far into their futures. Camp can also be a time when some children are bullied or made fun of because they might be different, more shy than other kids, or just home sick. For this reason, *The Way of Integrity* study can be an important

study on which campers and staff can build a solid foundation for relationships with self, others, and with God. Below are a few suggestions for how *The Way of Integrity* study can be used within the camp setting. Because camps vary in length, location, ages and number of campers and staff, this is by no means an exhaustive list. We encourage you to be creative for your particular camp and group of campers.

- Send the study to parents ahead of time once they confirm their child will attend
- Instruct parents to read through the study. They may even want to read the study with their child, or discuss the definition of integrity
- During the first day of camp invite campers to participate in Session One: Identify Values. If there is not time to engage with the entire session, you can choose to just use the Identifying Values activity from session one of the study
  - » Note: It is important to train counselors on facilitating this material. A good way to do this is to lead counselors through the entire *The Way of Integrity* study during their training
  - » You may choose to have each cabin do the Values activity this rather than in one large group
- Once campers complete the values activities in their respective cabins, have each cabin create and adopt a Community Covenant that they each sign and hang in a prominent location in the cabin. In addition, each cabin can identify one Intentional Action their cabin will do to combat bullying at camp. One example could be "Cabin 1 promises to only say things about others that they would want said about them"

Cabin Integrity Contest:

- Have a check in time in each cabin at the day in which campers are asked to name one intentional action they did that day to follow the Community Covenant. Each time a camper names an intentional action, the counselor will place a sticker on a piece of newsprint that hangs beside the cabin Community Covenant. At the end of camp, the cabin with the most stickers is rewarded. Maybe they invite one other cabin to have a private campfire night or movie night. Be creative!
- You can also assign partners for each camper. At the start of each day the partners meet and ask one another to name one intentional thing they will do that day based on a particular value the group has identified during their initial meeting. The partners can check in and ask the same question again at the end of the day

- These are just a few examples. We encourage you to be creative. What is important is that campers know their values and why it is important to base their actions on those values even when no one's watching

With Camp staff/Counselors:

Have camp staff and counselors work through the entirety of the study during their training before camp begins.

- At the conclusion of the study, the group will create a Community Covenant
- Have each member of the staff sign the agreement and post it in the main office. If you have weekly staff meetings, revisit the covenant by reading it aloud together
- Or, you may choose to do one session of the study during each weekly staff meeting for the duration of camp. You can call this the summer of integrity during which each staff person identifies 2-3 intentional actions they will live out during camp
- Pair staff with a partner and have them work through the "acting" sections at the end of each session

With Ordinands:

The Way of Integrity study is a useful resource for those in the ordination process. One such example is within the provisional elder's resident in ministry training group session.

- During each meeting, the group can work through one session from the study, or one exercise from the study. Have the group create and adopt a Beloved Community Covenant. Write out the covenant and have each participant sign it. You can send out an electronic copy and suggest each person post it in their office, or somewhere they will see it each day.
- Assign partners for provisional members. Ask them to meet and work through the "Acting" portions of each session
  - » Note — due to hectic schedules, it may not be possible for participants to meet in person. It is ok to utilize video conference technology (Google Chat, Google Hangout, Facetime, etc.) to work through the "Acting" portions of each session
- You may also choose to assign a partner with someone from the class immediately preceding the one of the participants
- You may also choose to have their candidacy mentor serve as their partner

Resources Endnote

1 http://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/2518/sermonseries-the-sermon-on-the-mount (Scott Bullard)

Acknowledgments

This resource was adopted in part from the Emory Integrity Project at Emory University. Special thanks to Amanda Mountain, M.Div, Deaconess, for her part in writing this curriculum.

General Commission
on the Status and
Role of Women
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH