



March Church School Outline



The Department of Christian Education & Formation

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GENERAL INFORMATION

In this quarter, we explore the fullness of faith as a response to God's desire to be in relationship with us. To be faith-less is to turn away from God—to put trust in something, or someone, other than God. The lessons of this quarter ask: Is your faith steadfast? Are you contending for the faith? In Old and New Testaments, there are as many examples of spiritual fidelity as there are examples of spiritual infidelity. What can today's Christians draw from these ancient accounts that will help us grow more deeply in faith? The lessons of this quarter guide the learner to a reaffirmation of their confidence in God, because without faith it is impossible to please God.

Unit I, "Faith-FULL Versus Faith-LESS," has five lessons drawn from Jude, Second Corinthians, First Peter, Acts, and Mark that invite learners to turn the challenges of life into opportunities for nurturing a vibrant faith instead of giving up, turning away from God, or rejecting faith. Jude appeals to us to contend for the faith that was once entrusted to the saints. The second letter to the Corinthians warns Christians to examine themselves to make sure they are living in the faith. Peter urges his readers to defend their faith with humility, gentleness, and reverence. Acts encourages the church to be obedient to the faith using Stephen as an example. In Mark, God raised Jesus from the dead and in so doing unlocks the door to Resurrection faith.



**DEPARTMENT OF CHRISTIAN
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OF THE CHRISTIAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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Week 1

March 3, 2024

Build Yourselves Up or Sustaining Our Faith

Jude 17-25 (*Common English Bible*)

Unifying Principle (Focus)

A “shortcut to success” may persuade some people to compromise their standards. How do people remain true to their values in the face of enticing trends? Jude writes to the community of faith, assuring them of God’s promises: to keep us from falling and to make us stand without blemish in God’s presence. Goals for the learners

Goals for the Learners:

1. To discern the factors that create tension when Christian values clash with societal values.
2. To deepen our trust in God’s promise to restore us when we fall.
3. To build faithful practices that reflect God’s restorative work in us.

Challenges for the Week

1. What is the background on the possible author of Jude. What was his connection to the birth family of Jesus? Why did the influence of certain teachers trouble him?
2. Examine the connection between Jude 17-18 and 2 Peter 3:2-3. Then consider other predictions, warnings, or promises that are repeated throughout the Bible and why these repetitive reminders are valuable.
3. What are some examples of conflicts Christians today may experience between their faith values and the faithlessness often exhibited in the nation and the world.
4. What are actions that Christians may take to restore the church to faithful witness?
5. What is a hymn study that both calls Christians to faith and celebrates the faithfulness of God in Christ?
6. Study the Key Verses, concentrating on the verbs Jude uses in admonishing readers to faithful living. What actions can you take toward practices in faithful living.



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Week 2

March 10, 2024

Examine Yourself or Testing Our Faith

2 Corinthians 13:5-11 (*Common English Bible*)

Unifying Principle (Focus)

Everyone has principles they are challenged to uphold. How and where do we find the courage to live authentically, keeping true to our ideals? Paul challenges believers to examine themselves as they rely on the power of Christ in keeping the faith imparted to them.

Goals for the Learners:

1. To evaluate our concept of self-examination in the Christian faith.
2. To embrace critical self-reflection in the Christian faith.
3. To practice ongoing self-examination in the Christian faith.

Challenges for the Week

1. Recall why Paul wrote letters to the young churches, giving particular attention to Paul's earlier association with the church at Corinth. Note that his letters often express a desire to visit a particular church soon.
2. Create a list of ways in which modern believers often fail to follow Christ. How do such failures affect our testimony of faith and our total outlook in life.
3. Concentrate attention on 2 Corinthians 13:5. Why do we often fail to pass the test of faithful living? What does it mean to realize that Jesus Christ is in us?
4. List three or more ways in which you feel weak in your faith. Find a way to overcome at least one such weakness through the power of Christ.
5. What are ways to do ongoing self-examination that emphasize our opportunities for growing in faith and at the same time helping others grow in their faith?



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Week 3

March 17, 2024

Righteous and Humble Actions or Defending Our Faith

1 Peter 3:8-17 (*Common English Bible*)

Unifying Principle (Focus)

Adhering to dominant norms is a safe and convenient way to live. How do we voice objections to these norms without inviting conflict? In 1 Peter, Christians are encouraged to defend their faith through righteous and humble actions even at the risk of suffering.

Goals for the Learners:

1. To comprehend how Christians are to react to suffering and challenges to their faith.
2. To value the challenge that Peter sets forth as a response to suffering for the faith.
3. To defend the faith when facing suffering for Christ.

Challenges for the Week

1. Recall the suffering of Jesus and many of the early Christians, including Peter. Be careful to distinguish between sufferings told about in the New Testament and traditional stories handed down from other sources.
2. Reflect and name the most intense suffering you have experienced/are experiencing. How did/do you deal with your pain? How can suffering play a valuable part in their Christian testimony of faith?
3. Note that there is both physical suffering and spiritual suffering. How are the two are connected.
4. Cite examples of people who have suffered for doing right. Contrast their suffering with that of people who have done wrong.
5. Use art or writing materials to express how God has transformed your past suffering into a blessing, for you or for other people.



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Week 4

March 24, 2024

When the World Is Against Us or Living In Faith

Acts 6:7-15 (*Common English Bible*)

Unifying Principle (Focus)

People who are falsely accused and persecuted often feel that the whole world is against them. What sustains us in the face of injustice and persecution? The testimony of Stephen encourages us to be obedient to the faith inspired by the grace, power, and wisdom of the Holy Spirit.

Goals for the Learners:

1. To consider ways that Stephen was strengthened when faced with false accusations and persecutions.
2. To acknowledge ways that the love of Christ and the Holy Spirit encourage and strengthen our faith
3. To bear witness to our faith and trust in Christ in the face of threat and danger.

Challenges for the Week

1. Investigate the background of Stephen, based on Acts 6:1–8:1. What makes him a model for living his faith?
2. Write a story of someone who has been unjustly accused of wrongdoing in our lifetime, including how that person suffered and endured.
3. What are the possible consequences of sharing your faith in active ways?
4. Examine the long-term results of Stephen's faithful witness, including the possible influence his testimony had on those who persecuted him. What enabled Stephen to remain faithful when some opposed him? What might have been the connection between Stephen's service in "distributing food" and his testimony to Christ? How did Stephen's suffering affect Saul (Paul)?
5. Engage in a brief time of worship, including a hymn and a prayer asking for power and strength to remain faithful when threatened with persecution for your faith.
6. This is Palm Sunday, remembered by many as a day when all the people praised God and proclaimed Jesus the Savior (Matthew 21:8-9). Contrast the situations in which it is easy and in which it is hard to profess faith in Jesus.



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