



Living Branches

Moravians Growing
in Faith, Love & Hope

Upper Elementary
Grades 3-5

The Moravian Church in America
Northern & Southern Provinces



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About this Curriculum

The question is often asked, “Who are the Moravians?” And someone answers, “They are the people that hang those lighted stars on their porches,” or “Those are the people that have lovefeasts and candlelight services during holidays,” or still “They sing such beautiful hymns.” As a matter of fact, these traditions are often an easy way for young Moravians to describe their church, too.

In his August 12, 1917 address to Home Moravian Church in observance of the “spiritual birthday” of the Renewed Moravian Church, Bishop J. Kenneth Pfohl spoke these words:

“But however beautiful they may be or however much they may be of service, such customs cannot make a church a means of grace and blessing. They are more like the outer garments, the dress, or the framework of the church. If you want to know a Church you must get close to her heart, you must understand her spirit, you must gain her point of view, you must feel her passion, and you must see her purpose. There is where individuality lies. And there is where you will find that which makes the Moravian Church a church, one with and yet distinct from her sister churches.”

It is the hope that this curriculum material will lead the young people of our congregations to understand and express that the outward things – the beloved music and traditions of the Moravian Church- are not simply decorative, but also significant, being grounded in a history rich in a passion and single-minded purpose for Christ.



Curriculum Notes

- Lessons are intended to be 60 minutes in length, from introduction to closing. In each lesson plan, the introduction is separate from the activities to provide churches the option of offering a 15-minute introduction prior to students moving to their Sunday School classrooms and teachers.
- Certain aspects of the lessons (the map and story) are designed to give students the “big picture” while others (the timeline, hymn, scripture, and activities) are designed to explore the most important details related to the “big picture.”
- The scriptures (CEV-Common English Version Bible), hymns, and stories have been printed in such a way that two-sided copies can be made and given to students.
- Materials that are not typically found in a Sunday school classroom will be listed in **bold** font throughout the lessons.
- If an activity requires special advance preparation, this is indicated in the activity description.
- Some directions in the lessons may seem repetitive, but this is intentional in the event that different people teach lessons to the students during the unit.
- Each lesson contains a story. Suggestions for sharing the story can be found in the “Resources for Teachers” section.
- All lessons refer to a large world map and timeline that has been posted in the classroom in advance of the first lesson. The “Resources for Teachers” section offers a way to create and share these visual aids with students. Please feel free to add your own creative spin to the suggested materials and methods.
- Images, dates, events, etc. for the timeline and world map are included in the “Resources for Teachers” section.
- Handouts for students are included in the “Resources for Students” section.

Lesson Two:
John Hus



Today's Scripture

I Corinthians 15:58

As a result of this, my loved brothers and sisters, you must stand firm, unshakable, excelling in the work of the Lord as always, because you know that your labor isn't going to be for nothing in the Lord.



Today's Hymn

(#675) What Brought Us Together, Verse 1

What brought us together,
what joined our hearts?
The pardon which Jesus,
our High Priest, imparts;
tis this which cements
the disciples of Christ,
who are into one
by the Spirit baptized.



TODAY'S STORY

John Hus

Jan “John” Hus was born in a place called Bohemia. He was a poor boy who took care of farm animals, but he had a beautiful singing voice and he sang songs to God while he worked the farm. At that time, only rich boys could go to college, but John wanted to go, too. The college said that if he sang in their choir, they would pay for him to attend classes. John studied hard and became a teacher and a Catholic priest in the city of Prague. He became very popular, preaching to thousands of people. His fans included a queen, rich noblemen, and teachers, along with regular men, women, and children. But the more he preached, the more John angered other priests and bishops, and even popes and kings.

During this time in history, people had no choice but to join the ancient Roman Catholic Church, which was a part of the government. It was very dangerous to speak out against this church, but Hus felt strongly that Christians should live like Jesus and follow the laws of Jesus.

Because he preached to thousands of people and broke the laws of the church, John got into a lot of trouble. The church leaders put him in prison, and on July 6, 1415, after a very unfair trial, it was ordered that John be killed by being burned to death. The last thing John Hus did before he died was sing about Jesus.

Some call John Hus the founder of the Moravian Church, but that's not quite true. John was a Roman Catholic when he was born and when he died. But his life and death did not go unnoticed. John Hus believed all people—people like you and me—should be able to live out their faith without fear of being arrested or killed. His ideas survived through the years among lots of people, including future Moravians. And every year, on July 6, the people of the Moravian Church remember John Hus' life and work.



By The End Of Lesson 2, Students Should Know...

- There was a time long ago when there was only one kind of church, and the government insisted that everyone had to be a member of this one particular church.
- There were men and women who disagreed and spoke against some of the beliefs and practices of this one church, John Hus being one of them.
- Even though John Hus wasn't the one who started the first Moravian Church, our history can be traced all the way back to his idea that faith should be centered on Christ.

Students May Need Help In Understanding...

- The Catholic Church believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, just like the Moravian Church; however, different Christian churches have different practices, traditions, and scriptures that they focus on as their core belief system.
- The Catholic Church is different today than it was during ancient times and continues to make changes just like the Moravian Church makes changes. As an example, in 1999 Pope John Paul II apologized for the execution of Jan Hus in 1415.

Lesson 2: Introduction

- Welcome students and explain today's topic by sharing **new pictures, dates, events, and locations added to the map and timeline** (see "Resources for Teachers").
- **Print today's hymn verse in large, bold marker on chart paper and hang this on the wall.** Say: *Today we will be learning about John Hus. John Hus wrote hymns on the walls of Bethlehem Chapel in order to teach the songs to the worshipers.*
- Students will repeat each stanza after you (first time through, read it; second time through, sing it). This pattern of learning hymns can be repeated for the hymns in future lessons.
- Ask students to open their **Bibles** and read the scripture verse(s) together.
- Explain that today's hymn verse(s) and scripture passage(s) were chosen especially for today's lesson. Ask students to listen for how they relate to today's story and activities.



Lesson 2: John Hus

Lesson 2: Activities

Activity 2.1: Students are introduced to today's topic in Moravian history.

Idea to Reinforce: See "By the End of Lesson 2, Students Should Know..."

Gather students in the storytelling area and share "John Hus."

Storytelling Suggestions

It will be helpful for students to refer to the **Czech Republic map** from last week while you are reading. Be sure to pause and give time for discussion and clarification as needed, especially with unfamiliar places and words.

Activity 2.2: Students will learn how Moravians view forgiveness.

Idea to Reinforce: The early Roman Catholic Church required people to pay money so that their sins could be forgiven. Hus preached that only Jesus can redeem (save) us.

Before Sunday

- Make **play money** in denominations from \$5 to \$100, one per student.

On Sunday

- Give each student one piece of play money. Line students up from the smallest amount to the greatest dollar amount on his/her card. Make a big deal about the ones with \$100. Say "We were just pretending, but how did you feel about the amount of money you were given? (Students respond.) This is not what God had in mind when he redeemed all of us. "Redeems" means "forgives" or "saves." According to God, we are all worth \$100. In fact, in God's eyes, we are priceless. God saved us by sending his Son, Jesus. Jesus is the one who paid the price for our sins to be forgiven. John Hus believed this, and because he spoke out loudly about his beliefs 600 years ago, today when we do something wrong, we can talk with God and ask him to forgive us.



Activity 2.3: Students will experience the frustration of being unable to read God's Word and that being able to read God's Word whenever we choose is a gift to us from our early history.

Idea to Reinforce: Hus believed that the Bible should be written in the language of the people, but the church that he belonged to didn't agree with this.

Before Sunday

- Purchase or secure donations of **brown paper lunch bags** and **newsprint**.

On Sunday

- Give each student the first half of the **handout "Decode It, Then Stow It"** (see Resources for Students), and ask them to tell you what it says (which they obviously won't be able to do). Then give each student the second half of the handout so that they can "translate" the message to reveal a scripture passage in their native language. (This scripture passage, I John 3:18, relates to Hus' viewpoint that believing in God is not enough, but that one's faith must be completed in love, by which he meant love for one's neighbor.) Next, students will create a loaf of bread using **brown paper lunch bags** stuffed with newsprint in order to hide their deciphered Bible verse inside and finally sealing the "loaf." (Tell students that during and after Hus' life, translated Bibles were hidden in loaves of bread because the authorities were burning every copy they could find.) Then take students to the sanctuary to count the Bibles to underscore the significance of Hus' radical idea on the lives of modern day Christians.

Lesson 2: Closing

- Read today's scripture (1 Cor. 15:58) and hymn verse (#675 vs. 1) again, asking students to comment on how the words connect with today's story and activities. Sing the hymn if time permits.
- Students help clean up and return lesson materials to their proper places. Students should keep all maps and story sheets in a personal folder throughout the 13-week unit.
- Close in prayer.



Preparing for Teaching • Timeline Layout

The purpose of the timeline is to list the key events in Moravian history.

Directions

- ❑ Copy images from the “Resources For Teachers” section to post above timeline dates.
- ❑ Dates can be written on strips of construction paper, color-coded for each lesson (e.g., Lesson 2 dates are on green paper, Lesson 3 dates are on blue paper).
- ❑ Events can be listed on white or buff 12x18 construction paper.

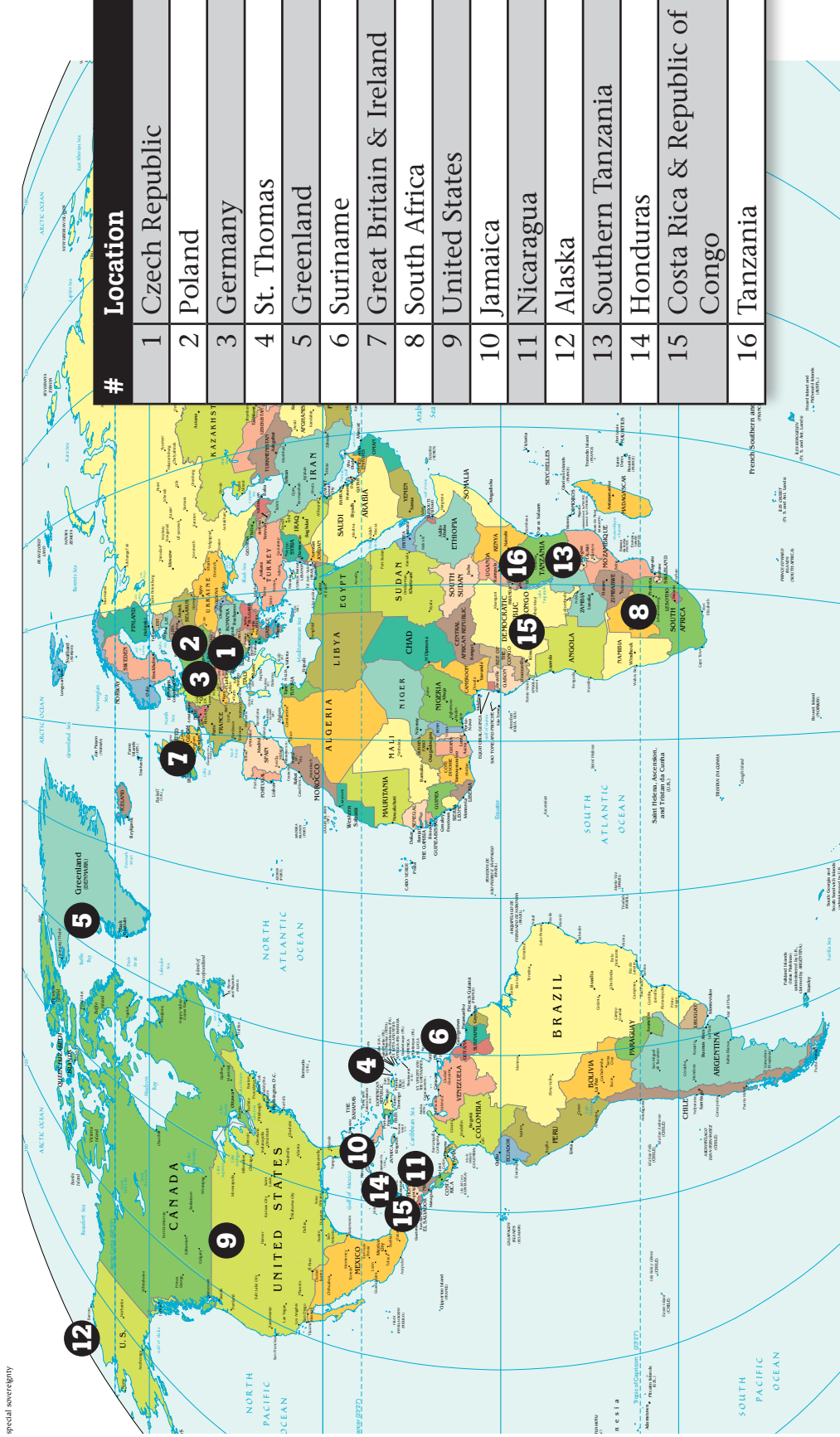


1402	John Hus becomes the Catholic priest of Bethlehem Chapel in Bohemia.	July 6, 1415	John Hus is martyred.	March 1, 1457	Gregory the Patriarch and other Hussites meet in Kunwald to form the Unity of the Brethren. This is our church’s birthday.	1505	The Unity of the Brethren publish the first Protestant hymnal.
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Preparing for Teaching • World Map Layout

The purpose of the world map is to show the movement of the Moravian Church throughout the world..



Directions

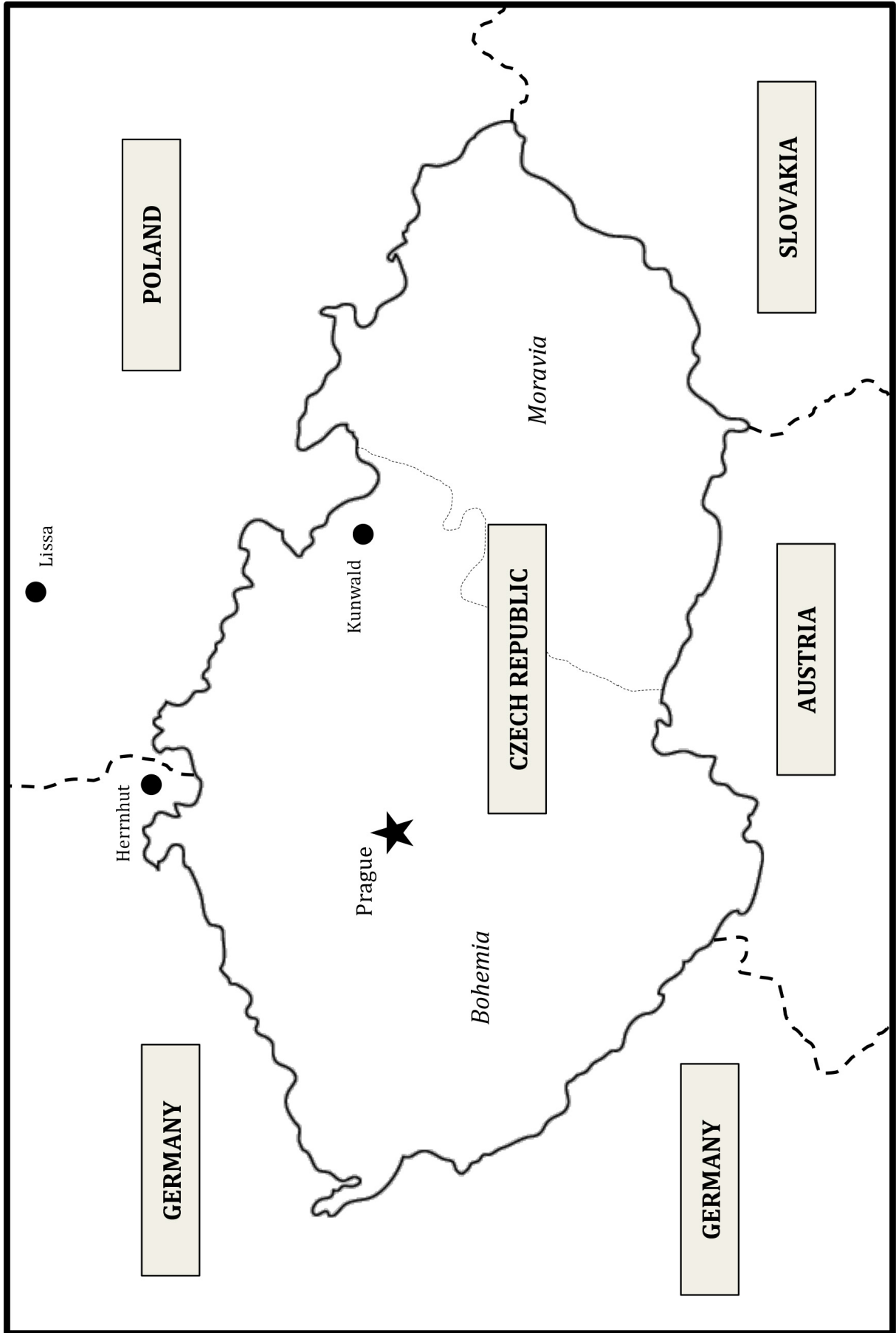
- ☐ 1. Buy a large world map to hang on the classroom wall.
- ☐ 2. Use dot stickers to label places on the map.
- ☐ 3. Create a map key that lists the name of the place that each dot represents

Map: CIA World Factbook 2015



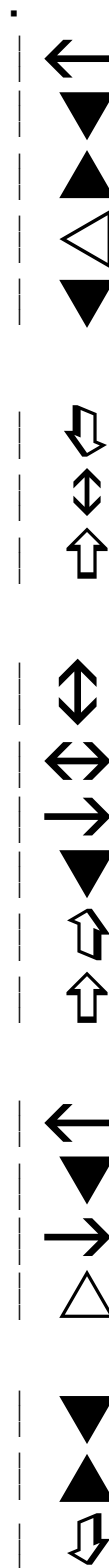


Lesson 1: Unity of the Brethren Map





Lesson 2: Decode It, Then Stow It



A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
↕	↗	↘	↙	↖	←	→	↗	↖	↗	↘	↙	↗	↔	↔	↖	↗	△	▽	▼	▲	▽	△	▲	▼	◼