



# COMPANION TO THE MORAVIAN CATECHISM

This **Companion to the Moravian Catechism** is designed to be used alongside the *Moravian Catechism*. It dovetails with the framework and sequence of that document and is not to be used as a stand-alone piece. While the primary focus of many of the suggested activities, discussions, and supplemental resources are aimed at middle/senior high confirmation classes, we have also included options for engaging adults who may be encountering the catechism in a small group or inquirers/new members setting. As with any teaching material, age leveling is largely subjective. In other words, as the class facilitator you know your audience and are encouraged to select the options that best meet the needs, maturity, interests, and learning styles of your context.

The Lesson Activities and Engagements are divided into **DOING**, **SEEING**, and **HEARING** in an attempt to diversify the approach and offer the teacher / facilitator a menu of suitable options from which to choose. In addition to learning styles, the class duration may weigh heavily on which and how many options you can reasonably incorporate. As a good rule, try to follow the example set forth by Comenius: strive to engage more than one learning style and lean on experiential learning.

The **DIGGING DEEPER** of each section provides additional resources worth further exploration. These include supplemental online videos, discussions, books, other curricula, and activities that might enhance your group time.

The **ADULT DISCUSSIONS** offer conversation starters for adult studies and/or new member classes.

Throughout this “Companion to the Moravian Catechism”, each section is identified with the related page numbers of the Moravian Catechism.

*(Example: A. CREATOR...pages 6-8)*

It is suggested that the instructor first share the desired content from the *Moravian Catechism* then, if desired, select from the various **optional activities in each section of the Companion to the Catechism**.

It is the hope and prayer of the writing team that this companion piece will further strengthen the confirmand's understanding of the Moravian Catechism and help prepare them to make their personal profession of faith.

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All scripture references are from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) of the Bible.

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# 1. ESSENTIALS

The Moravian Catechism, Pages 6-24

## GOD'S PART: Essential Actions on the Part of the Divine: Create, Redeem, Sustain

### A. CREATOR: God's Good Will Towards Creation

*The Moravian Catechism - pages 6-8*

#### LESSON ACTIVITIES/ENGAGEMENTS

Select from the following options based on the nature, interests and time limitations of your group.



DOING

##### **Option a: Improv Exercise**

Improv is a creative and collaborative process with one another. Today, create something from nothing. Have several random objects available to your group. Give them a set amount of time to create something amazing with items available. (ex-an invention, a story, a magic trick) Have the group share their creation! How does it feel to design and create? How do you imagine God feels towards God's creation?

##### **Option b: Creation Care**

Humans are the only creatures given the responsibility of caring for creation. God's fingerprint is on our DNA, and God gave us the responsibility to care for the rest of creation. Have each student create a playdough creation of his or her self in the act of taking care of a piece of God's creation. Share the playdough caretaking creations. How is your self-concept changed when you hear that God's fingerprint is on your DNA and you are designed to love and care for creation.



SEEING

##### **Option a: Image of God**

Have students draw their own image on mirrors with dry erase markers. Then instruct them to add descriptors of their own characteristics, gifts, etc. Go around the circle and share. Once each student has shared, invite students to look up Genesis 1:26-27.

*Genesis 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make humanity in our image to resemble us so that they may take charge of the fish of the sea, the birds in the sky, the livestock, all the earth, and all the crawling things on earth." 27 God created humanity in God's own image, in the divine image God created them, male and female God created them.*

**Emphasize:** You are made in God's image. You are the essence of God's creative energy. Each of us is beautifully and wonderfully made. Discuss.

### **Option b: Nature Walk**

Take the students outdoors for a quiet nature walk. Instruct the students to pay attention to what images, scents, sounds they notice. Stopping along the walk, ask, “How does it make you feel to be surrounded by nature? What does it tell us about what God is doing? What does it tell us about our role in caring for creation?”

### **Option c: God Cares**

As you invite your group to consider God’s presence in the world, look at a newspaper (or look at an online newsfeed). Find one story that would give God joy. Find one that would make God weep. Invite the group to pray for the situations you read about as well as others happening in the world around us, asking for God’s presence in each one as we realize God cares for everyone and everything in God’s world.

## HEARING

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### **Option a: Names of God**

Look at the list of names for God (page 7 in *The Moravian Catechism*, or see below) and select a few names and scripture references to read aloud. Discuss how the stories demonstrate that particular characteristic of God? As time permits, choose one or two names and tell why you relate to that name.

### **Some Names and Images of God**

We cannot fully comprehend or imagine God’s being. Here are some biblical names and images offered by our spiritual ancestors that shed light on who God is:

- \* Creator (Genesis 1:1; Job 38-39; Psalm 104; John 1:1-5)
- \* Father (Matthew 6:9; Psalm 89:26; Jeremiah 3:19; Malachi 2:10; Romans 8:15)
- \* Mother (Isaiah 66:13; Matthew 23:37; Hosea 11: 3-4; Deuteronomy 32:11-12; Isaiah 42:14; Isaiah 49:15; Psalm 131:2)
- \* Lord (Yahweh/YHWH) (Exodus 3:14-15)
- \* I Am (Exodus 3:14-15)
- \* Shepherd (Psalm 23; Genesis 48:15; Psalm 28:9)
- \* Savior/Redeemer (2 Samuel 22:3, 47; Psalm 89:26; Psalm 19:14; Isaiah 48:17)
- \* King (Psalm 44:4; Psalm 47:7; Zechariah 14:9)
- \* Righteous Judge (2 Timothy 4:8; Genesis 18:25)
- \* Pillar of Cloud/Fire (Exodus 13:21; Exodus 40:34-35)
- \* Burning Bush (Exodus 3:2)
- \* Still, Small Voice (1 Kings 19:12)
- \* Rock (Deuteronomy 32:4, 15, 18, 30, 31; 1 Samuel 2:2; Psalm 18:2, 31)
- \* Refuge (Psalm 46:1; Psalm 91:2; Jeremiah 16:19)
- \* Fortress (Psalm 46:7, 11; Psalm 91:2; Jeremiah 16:19)

### **Option b: Rap/Poem Writing**

Review the list of names for God and the scripture references as found on page 7 of *The Moravian Catechism*. As a group, select one or two of the names and write a rap, a poem or song incorporating that name and characteristic for God.

## DIGGING DEEPER

- \* Yahweh video [Yahweh - LORD - YouTube](#) to show how one name of God came to be through the generations of God's people
- \* We are partners, co-creators with God, watch the Bible Project video on "Covenant": <https://youtu.be/6v4jKkFj3TI>
- \* Use the children's picture book [The Creator in You](#) by Jordan Raynor with your youth confirmands. Discuss our role as co-creators. God's creation is not past tense, but is also present and future tense, and we are God's partners in it.
- \* Another children's picture book, [Because Nothing Looks Like God](#) by Lawrence Kushner, is a good resource for discussion about the ways our images and metaphors for God are limited and/or limiting and provides a reminder that God is bigger and more expansive than we can easily comprehend.

## ADULT DISCUSSIONS

- \* What does being a partner and co-creator with God ask of me? What gifts and habits can I commit to use in partnering with God, not just this week, but as a lifestyle commitment?
- \* "The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation." (Colossians 1:15) If we understand Christ's essence to be present in all of creation, how might this impact our interactions with creation/the natural world? How are we changed by the understanding that, when we hurt or are apathetic toward creation, we hurt Christ and injure the presence of God within Christ?
- \* How does our identity as *creatures of God* lead us into a healing and nurturing relationship (rather than a degrading or exploitative relationship) with all other creatures in God's creation?
- \* "Sabbath living" might be one of the hardest pieces to model and teach. How can we embody this invitation to lean into the gift of sabbath? (See pg. 8 *The Moravian Catechism*)

## B. REDEEMER: The Saving Work of Jesus Christ

*The Moravian Catechism - Pages 9-12*

### LESSON ACTIVITIES/ENGAGEMENTS

Select from the following options based on the nature, interests and time limitations of your group.



#### ***Option a: American Sign Language***

Pick several names of Jesus (pg. 9-10 *The Moravian Catechism*) and teach students the ASL sign. Pick the ones whose signs visually portray the characteristics of God. Discuss which of these characteristics most speaks to you. What does the ASL sign capture about this characteristic of God? ([www.handspeak.com](http://www.handspeak.com) is a great online ASL dictionary)

#### ***Option b: Reflecting the Light of Love***

Place a mirror in the hands of each student and spread out in a zigzag pattern (straight hallways with a number of corridors or doorways work well). Shining a flashlight into the view of the first mirror, attempt to bounce/reflect the light to the next mirror, and so on. The goal is to have the light passed between all the mirrors. Discuss how we both receive and reflect the light of Christ, our Redeemer.

#### ***Option c: Being Renewed***

Supplies needed:

- \* bowl (clear glass is best)
- \* vinegar
- \* salt
- \* old pennies (oxidized/tarnished, no longer shiny)

Pour ½ cup of vinegar into the bowl and add 2 teaspoons of salt. Lightly stir until salt dissolves in the vinegar. Invite confirmands to place pennies into the liquid and watch as the layer of tarnish dissolves and leaves behind a fresher, shinier copper surface.

Discuss what the group observes and what they think may be happening in this experiment. Invite them to consider how this experiment could be a metaphor for Christian discipleship. How might a lifelong relationship with Christ continue to work within our lives like the vinegar and salt mixture works to renew and reveal the beauty of the copper when it has become tarnished. What if Christ seeks to be in relationship with us in ways that continue to help us reveal our truest selves and know ourselves to be the beloved children of God?

### **Option a: Unconditional Love**

At the start of class, play a simple game and keep score on an etch-a-sketch board. Using the board as a visual, what happens at the end of the game if we lift and shake the board? Lift/Shake to completely erase the score. Like the points on the board, our sins are gone. God values us as beloved and worthy children. (Hebrews 8:12)

### **Option b: Scripture Scramble - (see [Resource 1](#))**

Use copies of the “Scripture Scramble” worksheet that is based on the names and images of Jesus listed on page 9 of *The Moravian Catechism*, for this option. These names and images are scrambled on the worksheet and each scramble is linked to the scripture(s) that use these names and images. (Be sure to have them put away copies of the catechism for this activity so they rely on either their puzzle skills or the scripture texts to complete the worksheet.)

Once unscrambled, discuss how they notice Jesus demonstrating or living into each name in scripture. How do we connect with some of these names or images for who Jesus is? Why do you think some names or images for Jesus connect for people in ways that are unique to each one of us?

### **Option c: Knowing God through Jesus**

Often, we know about people by what they do. Show images of people wearing easily identifiable work uniforms. For example, a person wearing scrubs is in medicine and is known for healing and care. A person in a helmet and fire jacket is a firefighter, who is known for rescuing.

Similarly, we begin to understand who God is by who Jesus was and what he did while here on earth. This embodies the earthly incarnation of our heavenly God. Reading through the images on page 9-10 of *The Moravian Catechism*, discuss that Emmanuel means *God with us*. Jesus came near to embody God and reflect God in the world so that humans could see God and could feel and know their worth in the eyes of God.

### **Option a: Worthy**

Where have you heard the word “Redeemed” used outside the church? Discuss what it means to “redeem” something, like a coupon as it relates to value. Redeeming a coupon reveals its value. How is our full value made complete in Christ? Discuss the people in our culture that our culture considers “unworthy of love or respect” or lacking value. Who are these people? Who are their friends? These are the people Jesus sought out and valued and spent time with. What does that say of God’s nature?

### **Option b: Listen and Discuss (see [Resource 2](#))**

Listen to or read the lyrics of the camp song “I’ve Been Redeemed.” What do these words really mean when we say “blood of the lamb?”

### **Option c: Gift of Grace**

Name a gift you received on your birthday or Christmas. What did you do to earn it? Gifts are given, not because they are earned, but because someone loves you. It is the intention of the giver that matters. How does this relate to the idea of grace and redemption?

## DIGGING DEEPER

- \* What does it mean to live our life in Christ? Think about the phrase in the prayer that follows baptism in our liturgy, “therefore live, yet not you alone, but Christ live in you.” Look at Philippians 2:1-13 as a good place to think about what this work of “letting Christ live in us” might include. What might it mean to have the same mind as Christ?
- \* On newsprint, draw an outline of a human head. Call on youth to draw inside the head any symbols, words, or images that signify having the same mind as Christ. These could include Jesus’ attitudes, actions, and characteristics—things that Paul calls on Christians to imitate. (Big God, Big Questions, Session 4, page 23. Curriculum available for purchase at [pcusastore.com](http://pcusastore.com))

## ADULT DISCUSSIONS

- \* An alternative form of the Jesus Prayer reads, “Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a beloved child of God.” How does this change our response to God?

*We have a uniquely Moravian invitation to use this language...*

*Consider that Bishop John Amos Comenius writes at the beginning of “The School of Infancy” a couple of key tenets. The first is, “That children are a priceless treasure of God,” and a second joins this, “Also, when God speaks of [God’s] love towards us, [God] calls us children as if there were no more excellent name by which to allure us.” Comenius reminds us that we can hope for no better name than to be called Children of God.*

- \* Consider parables as a way of exploring the “mind of Christ”.
  - + Suggestions include: The Sower and the Seed; The Kingdom of God is like...; Rich young man; Wedding Feast; Good Samaritan; Lost Sheep/Lost Coin/Prodigal Son.
  - + Why might it be important that Jesus taught by asking questions?
- \* Visio Divina\*/Contemplative Prayer- Jesus as Good Shepherd (see [Resource 3](#)) Reflect on images about the elements of this metaphor:
  - + Where is/are my sheepfold/safe places?
  - + What is my good, green grass?
  - + Where do I find the cool, clear water?
  - + Where or what are my dark patches or places of danger/discomfort?
  - + How do I experience (where do I find) the good shepherd showing up?
  - + How are people around me being the hands and feet of Christ (Good Shepherd)?
  - + How can I be the hands and feet of Christ for others?
- \* \* *Visio Divina*: a form of meditative prayer based on contemplation of an image. It might be described as seeing with the eyes of one’s heart.

## C. SUSTAINER: The Presence of the Holy Spirit

*The Moravian Catechism - pages 12 -15*

### LESSON ACTIVITIES/ENGAGEMENTS

Select from the following options based on the nature, interests and time limitations of your group.



#### **Option a: Scavenger Hunt for the Spirit**

Using the following list, have participants read the scripture passages, identify how the Holy Spirit is described, then find a depiction, take a photo, or draw a picture of the image/description.

- \* Genesis 1:2; Acts 2:1-4
- \* Genesis 2:7; John 20:22
- \* Mark 3:16; Mark 1:10
- \* John 14:16-26; John 15:26; John 16:7
- \* John 17:17; John 15:26; John 16:13
- \* Proverbs 8; Isaiah 11:2; Ephesians 1:17

#### **Option b: There's Something In the Air**

A common image for the Holy Spirit is wind/breath, deriving from the Hebrew word for spirit, *ruach*, which also means wind/breath. Like the Holy Spirit, air cannot be seen, but the effects of it can be seen and felt. There are many things one can do with a group to make them more aware of the air around them, including:

- \* Play with balloons. As an added element, put strips of paper with a name/image and scripture reference to the Holy Spirit inside each balloon. Have the group pop the balloons to reveal the paper inside.
- \* Have everyone hold their breath.
- \* Lead a centering prayer or meditation focusing on breathing.
- \* Make paper airplanes or sailboats and have races/competitions.



#### **Option a: Spirit at Work**

Look at the lists in *The Moravian Catechism* on page 13 (names) and page 14 (evidence) and name/talk about where everyone has seen the Holy Spirit at work.

#### **Option b: The Spirit Alive in People**

Referring to the list of names and images on page 13, consider someone who exemplifies that image of the Holy Spirit in their life. Take a few minutes to record these people and the qualities they demonstrate. Consider displaying these names as a word cloud or poster.



### **Option a: Listen to the Lyrics**

Close your eyes and listen to the lyrics found in the *Liturgy for Pentecost* found in the [Moravian Book of Worship](#) (page 99). After listening, make a list of the verbs you hear. Then make a list of the imagery used to describe the spirit.

Spirit of truth, and grace, and power,  
blow through your church, we pray.  
Transform us from this very hour  
in all we do and say.

Anoint us all to be good news  
to sad and weak and poor.  
Make us the instruments you use  
to praise the Savior more.

Pour out your gifts, wrap us in flames  
of energy and drive;  
and make our goal, our guiding aim,  
that Jesus' church would thrive.

## **DIGGING DEEPER**

- \* Graceful Step (Unit III, Session 4, Pg. III-15-17) ([See Resource 4](#))
  - ✦ Latin “anima” means spirit/vital force/breath.... Relate this to “animation.”
    - ✦ God gives us a spirit of life
    - ✦ How by our act of living are we bringing God to life? Use the example of comicon/anime conventions, where people bring to life a cartoon or comic character
  - ✦ The Holy Spirit makes us a Holy Temple/God lives in us/God inhabits us
    - ✦ 1 Corinthians 3: 16-17
- \* [Breathe](#) (children's picture book by Laura Alary)
- \* Connect to this [book on the author's website](#)
- \* A brief [activity guide](#) is also available
- \* Bible Project video: [Understand How the Holy Spirit Works in the Bible](#)

## ADULT DISCUSSION

- \* Throughout Moravian tradition, the Holy Spirit is often referred to as 'mother.' Look for feminine nurturer references in scripture, liturgy, and hymns.
- \* Fruit of the Spirit/Spiritual Gifts: Complete a Spiritual Gift Assessment and discuss the results as a group.
- \* Using the lens of August 13th Lovefeast, "Moravian Pentecost," discuss how the Holy Spirit binds us together into a church.
- \* The presence of the Holy Spirit propels us to be the church sent out into the world. Moravians were sent out from Herrnhut within 5 years of the August 13th, 1727 experience. How are we still a spirit filled church?
- \* The Holy Spirit serves as guide/equipper/inspirer (Romans 8:26-27). When we feel ill-equipped or incapable, the spirit intercedes.
  - Explore together a sampling of Biblical call stories. ([See Resource 5](#))
  - To what calling(s) do you feel the spirit...?
- \* The term "sustainable" is used to describe farming, environmental stewardship, etc... How does this idea of lasting permanence relate to the Holy Spirit as a sustainer?
- \* What are some tangible examples of how followers of Christ help sustain one another individually, in community, and the world? (i.e. food ministries) What are less tangible/visible examples of sustaining one another? (prayer)
- \* Read together the Pentecost liturgy in the *Moravian Book of Worship*. Notice in the liturgy we say we "can't do it on our own."

## D. THE TRINITY

*The Moravian Catechism - page 15*

### LESSON ACTIVITIES/ENGAGEMENTS

Select from the following options based on the nature, interests and time limitations of your group



#### **Option a: Trinity Analogies**

As the instructor, begin class by sharing a favorite analogy for explaining the trinity. Popular examples include the apple (see book suggestion in Digging Deeper), egg, phases of matter (water, ice, vapor), and three pieces of a puzzle. Discuss as a group what works and what does not work about the analogy. Spend time in small groups developing your own analogy and share with the class.



#### **Option a: Trinity Images - (See [Resource 6](#))**

Display some images commonly used to represent the trinity (triquetra knot, trinity cross, triangle, three rings, trinity shield, three leaf clover, etc). Discuss together how these images do and/or do not represent the mystery of the trinity.



#### **Option a: What is God Like?**

Read and discuss together the book [What is God Like](#) by Rachel Held Evans and Matthew Paul Turner.

### DIGGING DEEPER

- \* Picture of a Triquetra knot (in Resource 6)
- \* [3 in 1: A Picture of God](#) by Joanne Marxhausen
- \* [Because Nothing Looks Like God](#) by Rabbi Lawrence Kushner and Karen Kushner

### ADULT DISCUSSIONS

Frederich Buechner says “If the idea of God as both Three and One seems far fetched and obfuscating, look in the mirror someday. There is (a) the interior life known only to yourself and those you choose to communicate it to (the Father). There is (b) the visible face, which in some measure reflects that inner life (the Son). And there is (c) the invisible power you have that enables you to communicate that interior life in such a way that others do not merely know about it, but know it in the sense of its becoming part of who they are (the Holy Spirit). Yet what you are looking at in the mirror is clearly and indivisibly the one and only you.” Discuss together how this example further reflects the ways in which we are made in the image of God.

# OUR PART - Essential Actions on the Part of Humanity: Faith, Love, and Hope

## E. FAITH

*The Moravian Catechism - Pages 16-18*

### LESSON ACTIVITIES/ENGAGEMENTS

Select from the following options based on the nature, interests and time limitations of your group.



#### **Option a: Standing in Community**

Gather a kitchen serving tray and at least 31 Solo cups.

Using one Solo cup, ask the confirmands if the Solo cup, placed opening down on the floor, will hold them up if they stand on it. Have a volunteer try. The cup will crumple.

On the floor, place double-stacked Solo cups, openings down, in a rectangle of 3 rows of 5 cups:

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x x x x x
x x x x x
x x x x x
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Then place the tray on top of the rectangle of cups. Ask a volunteer to stand on it. The cups will hold the weight. Ask: How is this like our faith as we live in community?

*We are upheld by others living in faith with us. If we can't bear the weight of life and its challenges alone, our community of faith can uphold us. We are stronger together. A person of faith needs a community of faith and needs to be part of that community of faith for others.*

#### **Option b: Mystery of Faith**

Faith reaches beyond our comprehension, which means we don't "get it" all; but we often see the effects. It is ok to wonder and question as we realize, in faith, that we cannot grasp all that God is and does.

- \* Microwave a marshmallow. Can we explain everything about the process of how and why a microwave works? Probably not. However, we can see that it DOES work by the effect on the marshmallow.
- \* Ask confirmands, "Have you ever heard music that isn't in your own language and yet it caused you to sense emotions in ways you couldn't fully understand?" Sometimes, while we can't put it into words, faith is a knowing or a sensing like this.
- \* Gather a large blanket or comforter and a storage container or box that is obviously smaller than the volume of the blanket/comforter. Instruct the confirmands to place the blanket/comforter completely within the container. Trying our best, we cannot make it all fit. Does that mean that the part of the blanket that doesn't fit in the container isn't real? Our faith, and our understanding of God can be like this.

*Sometimes God's ways are not within our ability to understand and explain. That doesn't mean God's ways aren't real, but our ability to understand and explain is finite and bound by our human understanding and senses. It is okay to wonder and to question. God is bigger than our ability to understand and God's ways are beyond our ability to explain. We simply cannot grasp all that God is and does. That is faith.*

- \* Read Hebrews 11:1.

## SEEING

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### **Option a: Trapeze Artists**

Show a video of trapeze artists. When one lets go of the trapeze bar, the space between their hands and the hands of the person who is going to catch them is filled with faith (Suggested Link: <https://youtu.be/O9xpiyDBITs?si=Sj9H2cLt-OgZmHVi>).

Discuss: How does this metaphor help you to think about the ways that God has already said, "I gotcha"?

### **Option b: Graffiti Question Wall**

Faith is not knowledge. There is room for questions. What BIG questions do you have for God? For the pastor? For the president? For someone else?

Do a "silent graffiti" activity where everyone writes their questions on a big paper/board. Questions of faith show that our faith is active and ongoing; faith and questioning are not opposites... they are congruent.

## HEARING

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### **Option a: Generational Faith Stories**

Interview members of your congregation. Share how you were introduced to Jesus. These interviews could be video recorded and shared with the class, or just documented and read together.

Discuss that faith is passed down and our "cloud of witnesses" includes the people who share their faith stories and become part of our own faith stories.

## ADULT DISCUSSIONS

- \* See Hearing, Option a: *Generational Faith Stories* above. Share with one another.
- \* Mr. Rogers, from *Mister Rogers Neighborhood*, (the Rev. Fred Rogers) had a meditative practice in which he would ask people to ponder "*who has loved you into being?*" Take 30 seconds and prayerfully consider your answer(s) to this prompt. Share your responses as a group and offer these names as a prayer of gratitude for the cloud of witnesses that have loved you into being.

**F. LOVE**  
**The Moravian Catechism - pages 19-21**

**LESSON ACTIVITIES/ENGAGEMENTS**

Select from the following options based on the nature, interests and time limitations of your group.



**Option a: God's Valentine Activity - (see [Resource 7](#))**

- \* Distribute the [worksheet](#) to everyone in your group/class.
- \* Have everyone journal their responses to each of the questions on the worksheet. When everyone is done journaling, invite your group/class to share their answers.
- \* Then, cut along the dotted lines (and only the dotted lines). When all cutting is completed, the sheet of paper will become a large loop.
- \* Have each person stand in their loop. Emphasize that they are surrounded by their loop just like everyone and everything is surrounded by God's love.
- \* While everyone is standing in their loops, close with prayer.

**Option b: "Loving Your Neighbor"**

Think of something simple that the class could do for others to show they are loved. Be creative. This could take the form of a song, a card, a gesture, or something else.



**Option a: Expressions of Love**

Looking at page 21 in *The Moravian Catechism*, "Examples and Images of Love", assign each example to a small group and discuss how love is expressed. Share your ideas as a list on a poster board.

**Option b: Agape Video**

Watch [Love \(Agape\) Advent Word Study \(bibleproject.com\)](#). Agape love is not primarily a feeling that happens to people. This kind of love is a choice to act in ways that offer well-being to others.

Using Paul's definition of love from [1 Corinthians 13:1-7](#), consider how Jesus loves us.

Discuss:

- \* How is Jesus patient, kind, humble, and selfless toward us?
- \* How does this kind of love challenge more popular, modern notions?

### ***Option a: Board of World Mission Discussion***

As a group, visit the **[Board of World Mission website](#)** and identify the following:

- \* Where are Moravians in ministry?
- \* Has there been a recent crisis (storm, famine, etc.) to which they are called to respond?
- \* What are they doing?
- \* How does this demonstrate “feeding” Jesus’ sheep and showing love?

### ***Option b: Music Study: “What Is Love?”***

Compare different popular songs about love. Play the song and provide printed lyrics (you can usually find these using an internet search). Using the printed lyrics, compare these songs to Psalms or passages where Jesus mentions love. Analyze the difference between how *we* talk about love today versus how Jesus talks about love. Some more recent *love* songs include:

- \* “Love Story” by Taylor Swift
- \* “All of Me” by John Legend
- \* “Perfect” by Ed Sheeran
- \* “We Found Love” by Rihanna
- \* “Just the Way You Are” by Bruno Mars

These might be good songs for studying the lyrics and what they say about love and physical attraction, compared to the Psalms or passages where Jesus mentions love.

*\*This could be an introduction to the different kinds of love that are presented in scripture.*

## **DIGGING DEEPER**

- \* Before class, listen to the podcast **[Love Your Enemies on Bible Project.com](#)**. Jesus says that the ultimate standard of authentic love is how well you treat the person you can’t stand—your enemy. Let that settle in as you read **[Luke 6:27-36](#)**. Notice how God shows kindness to ungrateful, dishonest, and violent people. What does this say about God’s character? Consider how [verse 36](#) describes God. How do you think love and mercy relate to one another?

\*Throughout the course of your discussion on love, it may be appropriate to discuss love of self, which includes setting healthy boundaries. Particularly as teens are likely to encounter the topic elsewhere, the church should not remain silent on matters of preventing abuse and ensuring personal safety. A few resources worth consideration are:

- \* What are Healthy Boundaries? How do I set Healthy Boundaries?
  - ✦ [Infolist - Healthy Boundaries Tips](#)
  - ✦ [Worksheet - Setting Boundaries](#)
  
- \* Reflect on our sensory experiences of love using our 5 senses. ([See Resource 8](#))
  - ✦ What does love look like? Sound like? Smell like? Taste like? Feel like?
  - ✦ Use the [journaling page in the appendix](#) or brainstorm on chart paper.
  
- \* Show some or all of the Bible Project - [The Shema Series](#) which offers a word study video on each of the Hebrew words of the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4-5), the first and most important commandment - What does loving God look like?
  
- \* Using the graphic in [Resource 9](#), introduce the 4 different Greek terms that are all translated as “love” in English.
 

Storge = familiarity or fondness	Eros = passion
Philia = friendship	Agape = unconditional

Each of these are distinct, even as there may be some overlaps among them as demonstrated in this infographic.

- ✦ How are we aware of or experiencing each of these types of love?
- ✦ What are examples of each of these?

## ADULT DISCUSSIONS

- \* Read together the John 21:15-19 “If you love me feed my sheep” passage and point out that Jesus asks if Simon Peter has *agape* love, but Simon Peter responds with *philia* love. Discuss the difference.
- \* Love has been called “God’s energy at work in the world.”
- \* What does this image of love bring up for you as you look at our world today?
- \* On page 19 in *The Moravian Catechism*, under the section “love,” which of these words is most important and needed as you seek to be a person of love in our world?



**G. HOPE**  
*The Moravian Catechism - pages 22-24*

## LESSON ACTIVITIES/ENGAGEMENTS

Select from the following options based on the nature, interests and time limitations of your group.



### ***Option a: Creating a Symbol of Hope***

Read the following scriptures relating to hope and invite students (individually or collectively as a class) to create a symbol (using any medium, magazines, computer, that they feel best illustrates “hope.” Share and explain.

**Scriptures:** Isaiah 40:31; 1 Peter 1:3; Romans 15:13; Jeremiah 29:11; Romans 12:12; Hebrews 11:1; Romans 8:24-25; Psalm 130:5; Ephesians 4:4; Hebrews 10:23; Romans 5:3-4

### ***Option b: Obstacles to Hope***

Supply needs: Poster board or large sheets of paper (one needed for each side of room), pan/bucket of stones.

On one side of the room, have a poster board / large sheet of paper with heading “Obstacles to Hope.” Instructor should list a few “obstacles” (illness, death, suffering, etc.) and then invite students to add to the list. On the other side of the room have a poster with the heading “Hope.” Write out scripture passages relating to hope” (from option a.) on that poster.

Place a bucket / pan of stones in the middle of the room and each time an obstacle is read aloud from the “Obstacles to Hope” sign/poster, students who relate to that obstacle of hope are invited to take a stone and place it below that “obstacle.”

Then read aloud, one at a time, the scripture passages on hope from the “Hope” poster, and invite students to take a stone from the “obstacle” side and place it below the “hope” scripture passage they feel offers the best connection/comfort for that “obstacle.”

Note to students that it is “hope” that enables us to overcome the obstacles we face daily and carry us from hopeless to hope in Christ.



### ***Option a: Symbols of Hope (see [Resource 10](#))***

Look at the various pictures of symbols of hope. Identify which symbol best illustrates your understanding of hope, and explain.

### ***Option b: Searching for Hope***

Have students go to website: [mbwconcordance.org](http://mbwconcordance.org), or, using a *Moravian Book of Worship* (page 915), instruct them to search the word “hope” to see the listing of hymns with the word “hope” in our Moravian Book of Worship. Suggest each student select a hymn and share how the word “hope” is used.

### **Option a: Encountering Hope in Scripture**

Read the following scripture passages to the class. After reading each scripture, invite students to share which passage is most comforting or helpful to them. Invite them to explain why they find it comforting or helpful.

**Scriptures:** Isaiah 40:31; 1 Peter 1:3; Romans 15:13; Jeremiah 29:11; Romans 12:12; Hebrews 11:1; Romans 8:24-25; Psalm 130:5; Ephesians 4:4; Hebrews 10:23; Romans 5:3-4

### **Option b: Listen to Songs of Hope**

Invite students to share a song that gives them hope. What about the song is hopeful, or when have you turned to it to offer hope? This might lead to an interesting discussion on the differences between *happiness* and *hopefulness*. Some suggestions include:

- \* “Lovely Day” by Bill Withers
- \* “Brave” by Sara Bareilles
- \* “I Can See Clearly Now” by Johnny Nash
- \* “Don’t Stop Believin’” by Journey
- \* “Pocketful of Sunshine” by Natasha Bedingfield
- \* “Mr. Blue Sky” by Electric Light Orchestra.

## **DIGGING DEEPER**

- \* [Hope \(Yakhal\) Advent Word Study \(bibleproject.com\)](https://www.bibleproject.com/Advent/Advent-Word-Study/)

## **ADULT DISCUSSIONS**

- \* On page 22 of the *Moravian Catechism*, it says “our hope in the future informs and shapes our actions in the present.” What are some barriers or obstacles for you in living “hopefully” in today’s world? Where do you see the church acting and serving with bold hopefulness today?
- \* Where do you see the church acting with bold and courageous faith today? Where do you see it in your specific congregation?

## II. MINISTERIALS

### The Moravian Catechism, Pg. 25-42

#### A. The Bible

*The Moravian Catechism - pages 25-30*

### LESSON ACTIVITIES/ENGAGEMENTS

Select from the following options based on the nature, interests, and time limitations of your group.



#### ***Option a: Bible as a spiritual “road map” directing and pointing us to God***

##### **Material Needed:**

- ✱ A road map of your choosing (state or county)

**Guiding Scriptures:** Psalm 86:11 Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart to revere your name.

**Process:** Using the map, give the class a task of finding a route and listing the directions from one point to another. Discuss how the value of a map is that it allows us to get from one point to another or to find our way when we are lost. Similarly, the value of the Bible is that it directs us to God, and teaches us how to live in holy relationship with God and others. In order for a map or GPS to help us we have to know how to use it.

#### ***Option b: The Bible is a collection of different types of writing (Catechism, page 29)***

##### **Materials needed:**

- ✱ A child's toy shape-sorter
- ✱ Labels for each of the various kinds of Biblical writings (i.e. law, history, poetry, prophecy, gospels, history of the church, epistles, apocalyptic)
- ✱ Tape one label for each of the writings on each shape of the sorter. (triangle, law; history, circle, etc.)
- ✱ Wall chart (or other item) showing different kinds of biblical literature

**Note:** An alternative to the shape-sorter could be pieces of a puzzle with the names of the various Biblical writing genres written on each piece.

##### **Process**

- ✱ Take turns inserting the shapes into the shape-sorter. As each shape goes in identify as a group, a book of the Bible which fits the category (example: law: Deuteronomy) Proceed until all shapes are in.
- ✱ Have each confirmand or participant introduce and share a favorite Bible story either by reading a portion of it or by paraphrasing it.

**Note:** This would be a good time to have a Concordance on hand and help them use it to find the scripture passage for their favorite Bible story.



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### Option a: Symbols and Images

- \* Turn to the list of symbols and images on page 29 of the *Catechism* (lamp, mirror, sword, etc.)
- \* Brainstorm together a list of songs that use any of these.
- \* Now ask confirmands to take a moment alone to consider this list of symbols, asking, “Which resonates the most deeply with you? Why?”
- \* Consider having your confirmands share their chosen symbol and why it resonates deeply with them, leaving space for privacy if a group member would prefer not to share.
- \* Ask confirmands to identify another image, not on this list, that might symbolize the Bible. Share and discuss.

### Option b: Tomato/Tomahto

- \* Set a tomato in the midst of your confirmands.
- \* Ask: Is a tomato a vegetable or a fruit?
- \* Allow the group to discuss.
- \* By the more scientific classification, it is a fruit because the seeds are fully encased on the inside, protected by the flesh.
- \* However, because of the way it is commonly used, tomatoes are often considered vegetables in a more practical classification.
- \* The tomato’s classification is interpreted differently based on who is interpreting and why. The same can be true of the Bible.
- \* As an example, consider the creation stories in Genesis. Briefly refresh the confirmands’ memory regarding these stories.
- \* Ask: Is the purpose of the stories to explain HOW the world came to be (in a literal sense)? Or is the purpose to explain WHY the world came to be (in a relational sense)? Discuss, validating all reasonable interpretations.
- \* Just as there may have been differing opinions in your group regarding the creation story, there can be differing interpretations of all scripture.
- \* Together, look through the points on page 30 regarding “How Moravians Interpret the Bible”, paying special attention to points #5 and #13. Discuss.



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### Option a: Gospel Comparisons

Compare/Contrast the Christmas and Easter narratives between the four gospel accounts. Discuss why we need all the variations and refer to *Catechism* pg. 26 *We do not believe Jesus points us to Scripture so that we can find the answers there, but rather that the Scripture points us to Jesus so that we can find the answers in Him (Faith and Order, Guiding Principles of Biblical Interpretation, 2012).*

### **Option b: Bring a Bible**

Invite each participant to bring a Bible from a family member and share the story of how their family member acquired it, who gave it to them, etc. Look up a favorite Bible story of the person whose Bible they brought (on their phone and in their Bible).

## **DIGGING DEEPER**

- \* Chart with the books/genres of the Bible
- \* *Basic Points About the Bible* From *A Graceful Step* Unit 1, Session 2 - ([See Resource 11](#))
- \* Listen to the Bible Project's podcast: [Literary Genres and the Stories We Tell Ourselves](#)

## **ADULT DISCUSSIONS**

- \* Read together the list found on page 30 of *The Moravian Catechism* regarding *The Guiding Principles for Biblical Interpretation* approved by the Unity Committee on Theology in February, 2017. Discuss which of these points are most helpful or most difficult in embracing our understanding of Biblical interpretation.
- \* How is the last guiding principle listed on page 30 of the Moravian Catechism important to you today? How is it helpful? How does it inform our behavior as we interact with others who have a very different interpretation of scripture than we do?"

## B. THE CHURCH

*The Moravian Catechism - pages 31-36*

### LESSON ACTIVITIES/ENGAGEMENTS

\*Select from the following options based on the nature, interests and time limitations of your group



#### **Option a: Create a Video**

Interview members of your church, and ask them “*what does it mean to be part of our church?*” Some answers might be related to fellowship (part of a community) and some might be related to service, prayer, worship, praise, education, etc. Share the videos and discuss as a group. Maybe share the compilation video as part of worship?

#### **Option b: Church Roots Research**

As a group, search the church records or invite a church “historian” to discover the roots of your particular church. Walk around the outside of the building and identify the corner stone or any markings of dates. Was this the original building? Were additions made? When was the steeple installed? How many pastors have served this congregation?



#### **Option a: Identifying Church Symbols (See [Resource 12](#))**

See resource 12 for a copy of each image in the list of “symbols and images of the church/God’s people” on page 32 of *The Moravian Catechism* and its accompanying verse and allow the participants to define/describe/expound on the relationship to the church.

#### **Option b: “If these walls could talk” Activity**

Take a tour of the church building to imagine or encounter stories of the ways the building is used and the people who make use of those spaces.

- \* Visit different spaces as a group and have them wonder about the activities, discussions, decisions, and people who have been in each space. Consider recording observations as you go and then adding these to a floor plan of the church building to think about what really builds the walls and foundations of those spaces - is it the bricks and mortar or the people engaging together in those actions?
- \* Invite key leaders/workers of the congregation to be in various spaces around the church doing one of the key activities that typically happens in each distinct space. (sacristan = where communion and baptism materials are prepared or stored, organist = organ console/pipe cabinet, candlemaker = candleroom, board member = meeting room).

Have the group(s) visit each person/space and have the person in that place share stories about the activity that happens there, key information about that activity, and why they serve there. Allow the group to ask questions, share ways some of what happens there impacts the life of the community of that congregation.

*\*You may find it useful to record this activity for the sake of sharing with the whole congregation at a later time. It is a great way to mark the life of the church.*

## HEARING

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### **Option a: Camp Conversation**

Discuss together the juxtaposition of **the church “at camp” and the church “at home”**. What feelings do you have in those camp experiences and how might some of those be transferred into your church? How might some of those feelings be shared?

### **Option b: Church is the People**

Choose several key people who have been prepared to share key stories about their experience of living out faith beyond the walls of the church. Invite them to recall stories of service, discipleship, and outreach. Where possible, invite confirmands to join in future service and outreach opportunities.

### **Option c: Build a Church**

Using the list on pg. 34 (“Our discipleship is expressed as we...”), have each small group **“start a church from the ground up.”** What would the church you create be like and how would each characteristic be expressed?

Now step back and take a look at the church you have created.

- \* What about this church model is a strength? What excites you about it?
- \* Where are the holes? Where are the weak spots?
- \* Where do you need another person’s gifts to make the most vibrant church?
- \* How can the strengths of your model church be brought to life in our church today?

### **Option d: “We are the church together”**

Remind the group and/or listen to the song “I am the church, you are the church, we are the church together.”

Discuss what the church does that helps us understand that *we are the church* instead of the church being only a physical place we go. How could your church “be church” if you didn’t have a building.

## DIGGING DEEPER

- \* <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/acts/> to view a video about the development and growth of the early church as found in the book of Acts
- \* [https://youtu.be/8ZWa7GHnP4k?si=I8yh541E3\\_bDRRCp](https://youtu.be/8ZWa7GHnP4k?si=I8yh541E3_bDRRCp) to view a video about the similarities and differences between several denominations with which we are in partnership

## ADULT DISCUSSIONS

- \* Take a closer look at the bullet points on bottom of p. 31 of *The Moravian Catechism*. Talk within your group about developing a rank or ordering about where your church seems to prioritize its energy. What pieces are opportunities for growth?
- \* Discuss together the idea of the church as an *isolated haven* versus the church of *engaged servants* of the world. How can the church balance being a place of refuge while simultaneously serving the needs of the world?
- \* Under “Characteristics/Functions of the Church” on page 32 of *The Moravian Catechism*, the final bullet states that “the church has a prophetic role”.
- \* How do you see the church/your congregation living out that role today?



## C. SACRAMENTS AND RITES

*The Moravian Catechism - pages 36-40*

### LESSON ACTIVITIES/ENGAGEMENTS

Select from the following options based on the nature, interests and time limitations of your group.

#### SACRAMENTS - Ways we mark our covenant with God:



##### Option a: Everyday Sacraments

Invite the group to brainstorm examples of covenants from everyday life or scripture. As each example is given, be sure to have the group (list) note a few characteristics of each covenant example.

- ie. Noah/Flood - *between God and Noah, marked by the symbol of the rainbow, God will never wipe out creation again + will support Noah's family and all the creatures in restoring the earth, Noah will continue to be faithful and seek to pass this faithfulness along*
- Classroom Covenant - *between teacher and students, symbolized by a set of guidelines/expectations posted: Teacher will care for, respect, and support students, Students will respect teacher and one another.*

Note with the group that our sacraments, Baptism and Holy Communion, are symbols of the covenants God initiates with us.

##### Option b: Connecting with Scripture

Have the group look at their list for the covenant stories in scripture that might connect to these sacraments, e.g.

- Baptism - Jesus' baptism, Exodus journey through the water to freedom;
- Holy Communion - Jesus' last supper with the disciples, the Passover meal before the Exodus journey



##### Option a: Connections

Look up and read closely together the Old Testament text and at least 1 of the New Testament texts from each column:

###### Baptism

Exodus 14:10-31  
Mark 1:9-13  
Matthew 3:13-17  
Luke 3:21-22

###### Holy Communion

Exodus 12:1-20  
Mark 14:12-26  
Matthew 26:17-30  
Luke 22:7-20

As these texts are read, have the group note anything they notice about these covenants that we mark, remember, and recreate in our celebration of the sacraments of Baptism and Holy Communion.

Discuss:

- \* Who initiates the action in Baptism? in Communion? Why?
- \* What does Jesus receive in his baptism? What do we receive in our baptisms?
  - Some common elements worth highlighting here: affirmation from God, a sense of identity, acceptance into community with God, being blessed by God, receiving God's grace
- \* What is Jesus offering to his disciples in the Last Supper?
- \* What are we offered as we participate in Holy Communion as modern disciples?

Use the questions above to highlight the statements on pg. 36-37 of the Catechism:

- \* "Sacraments use visible signs (water, bread, juice/wine) to symbolize God's invisible grace."
- \* "The baptism of a child reminds us that God's love precedes any act of faith on our part."

## HEARING

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### ***Option a: Defining a Covenant***

Have either different dictionaries available or ask students to search online for several different definitions of *covenant*. Jot this variety of definitions on a whiteboard or chart paper.

For example:

- **Merriam-Webster.com** - a usually formal, solemn, and binding agreement/compact;
- **Dictionary.com** - an agreement or promise, usually formal, between two or more people or groups to do or not do something specified;
- **Britannica.com** - a binding promise of far-reaching importance in the relations between individuals, groups, and nations. It has social, legal, religious, and other aspects

Have the group then listen to or read aloud the words of the liturgies we use for Baptism and Communion. Be curious together about how what we hear and say in these liturgies for the Sacraments fit these definitions they have found for "covenant".

## Baptism

### *The Moravian Catechism - page 36*



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#### ***Option a: “As you present yourselves...”***

If there is a baptism on the congregation’s calendar during the confirmands’ journey, plan for them to attend that week’s worship service and hold a session either that day or soon thereafter to discuss the act of baptism they witnessed.

If one of the young people will be received by baptism, consider walking everyone through this liturgy and its actions in preparation for this to take place. As you do so, pause for questions and point out important information that helps explain the how and why of what happens during this liturgy - connecting the tangible doing with the meaning and purpose that guides these actions.



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#### ***Option a: “Give to these parents and sponsors...”***

Find and show a variety of pictures of baptisms taking place. (If your congregation has a recent recording of a baptism, show that portion of the service recording to the group.) Have the group notice:

- \* Which people are present
  - ✦ What is important about these relational connections?
- \* What takes place
  - ✦ What are we all reminded of in these actions?
  - ✦ Who is doing what?
  - ✦ How is the whole community a part of this?
  - ✦ Why does this occur during worship versus a private service?



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#### ***Option a: “The Lord bless you and keep you...”***

Invite at least one parent, caregiver, or sponsor/mentor to join in this session with the confirmands. Prepare these caregivers ahead of time to be ready to share either stories and mementos of their confirmand’s baptism (if this young person has already been baptized) OR to share their own baptismal story.

When the group has assembled for this session, have parents/caregivers take turns sharing with the whole group their stories and/or keepsakes. At the end of each parent or caregiver’s sharing, ask them to name at least one hope they have for this journey of faith in their young person’s life.

Consider reading aloud each Gospel’s account of Jesus’ Baptism in the Jordan River and discussing what they notice in hearing this story told. What might Jesus’ story have in common with the other Baptismal stories they have heard in this session?

## Holy Communion

### *The Moravian Catechism - page 37*



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#### **Option a: “Welcome to My House”**

Have a range of drawing and collage supplies available.

Invite the group to think about what happens at the meal table during a special occasion for either an immediate family or extended family gathering. Using the drawing and collage supplies, have each person create a depiction of some of the important symbols, rituals, or traditions that might be a part of such a gathering. (What might they eat? Are there special plates or things on the table? Is there something they always do?) For those less excited about an art project, invite them to make a list to describe what’s happening instead of trying to show us.

After giving time for creation, invite everyone to share some of the things they find most important in their art or writing.

Invite the group to then think about and compare this special family gathering to the way the church family gathers together at Communion. What do these two special meals have in common? How might they differ?

#### **Option b: Walk through a Communion Liturgy**

Gather the group in the sanctuary or worship space and walk them through a Moravian Communion service. You might consider breaking down the liturgical movements, pausing for conversation & questions about each step’s meaning as you go.

##### Suggested Breakdown:

invitation to the table	greeting
right hand of fellowship (beginning)	prayer of thanksgiving
words of institution	promise of Christ’s coming
right hand of fellowship (ending)	benediction

Ask if anyone has experienced a Communion service in a different tradition or congregation and do some sharing about what they might have noticed in other settings. Share in conversation about why there are differences and what might be unique when they share in Communion in a Moravian setting.

(Some key points to consider: surplice, pastor going out to serve the elements among the laity, waiting to share/partake in the elements as a community - not when each person is served)



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#### **Option a: “I Spy”**

Make copies of picture - [Resource 13](#) - of pastor consecrating the elements of communion.

As a class, study the picture. Name the things you notice in the picture, and discuss purpose.

### Option b - “What’s in a Name”

Using [Resource 14](#), print a copy for each participant. Together, look through the three names often used to identify the sacrament (The Lord’s Table, Holy Communion, Eucharist). Discuss times they have heard (if ever) each name used. Talk about how those names emphasize different and important aspects of the practice and understanding of the sacrament. Ask participants to share if one name seems to resonate more than another.

## HEARING

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### Option a: Do you hear what I hear?

Read aloud at least one of the Gospel accounts of the Last Supper.

- \* Matthew 26:26-29
- \* Mark 14:22-25
- \* Luke 22:14-20

Invite the group to note what they hear in the description of that shared meal. What is happening? Who is there? What is special about this meal?

If it is not one of the things they notice, remind the group that Jesus was sharing the Passover with his disciples and he took symbolic parts of that meal (the unleavened bread and the cup of wine) and gave them new significance in his actions and words in that moment - ones we remember when we share in them now and that all Christians have been sharing in since Jesus did these things. Consider together what these symbols of bread and wine meant at the Passover table ([See Resource 15](#)) and what additional meaning that Jesus gave to them. Discuss what it might mean to you that we continue to tell this story and remember the meaning of these symbols regularly when Christians gather together in worship.

## DIGGING DEEPER

- \* <https://www.churchpublishing.org/wegatheratthistable> for a wonderful book out of the Episcopal tradition on communion
- \* [Watch: Water of Life Video | BibleProject™](#)
- \* [Watch: The Baptism of Jesus, Luke 3-9 - Luke-Acts Series Video | BibleProject™](#)
- \* Adapt one or more of the “Remembering Your Baptism” practices that are offered in *Loving Hearts United*, ([See Resource 16](#))

## C. SACRAMENTS AND RITES

*The Moravian Catechism - pages 36-40*

### rites (Confirmation, Ordination, Marriage, Memorial Service/Burial): Ways we mark, in community, the significant moments in our journey of faith



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#### Option a: Who, what, when, where and how

Offer confirmands and adults working with them a simple set of questions they might use to tell the story (or stories) of a significant faith moment or life experience they have had. Possible questions to address:

- \* Who was a part of it?
- \* What happened?
  - ✦ Was something celebrated in some way? What led to that celebration?
- \* When did it happen?
  - ✦ When did the journey begin that led it?
  - ✦ Were there steps along the way?
- \* Where did it take place?
- \* How did this come about?
  - ✦ Was it happy, sad, scary, or what other emotion might describe it?

After reflection on these questions and an opportunity for everyone to share at least one story, invite the group to consider that, in addition to the sacraments, the church has chosen a set of key life events for which the Christian community comes together to celebrate through a defined liturgy.

These four key life events are:

- \* the *confirmation* of a baptized child's affirmation of faith
- \* the *ordination* of a minister as a Deacon (the 1st order of Moravian ministry) - which is a moment marking this life commitment, which can later be followed by consecration as a Presbyter or a Bishop
- \* the *marriage* of two people who are covenanting to commit their lives to each other
- \* the *conclusion* of a person's earthly life and entrusting their eternal life to God

**Discuss/Brainstorm:** What might these four rites seem to have in common? Be sure to highlight:

- \* we hold these basic sets of actions in common, from congregation to congregation,
- \* we consider them to be "important liturgical actions by which participants affirm their Christian faith and dedicate themselves to a life consistent with that faith." (*The Moravian Catechism*, pg. 38).

Be curious together about how the church marks other significant milestone moments for people of faith, even though these may not be "Rites". What might be other milestones the church could consider marking and why?

*\*Consider that this activity may bring up experiences of grief or loss for participants.*

*Be prepared to support a conversation or follow up activity that models ways to think about and grieve major life changes, deaths, or other significant transitions like divorce or chronic illness.*

## SEEING

### Option a: "Rite" before our eyes

For each rite, brainstorm:

- \* What might you see demonstrated through or what might you see happens as a result of that rite in a person's spiritual journey?
- \* What do you think is important about what we see happening through, or as a result of that rite in a person's spiritual journey?

	<i>See Demonstrated/ Happens as a Result</i>	<i>Is Important About</i>
<b>Confirmation:</b> You confirm promises of earlier infant/child baptism		
<b>Ordination</b> What do pastors do? How is this unique?		
<b>Marriage</b> May be helpful to refer to: <i>Moravian Covenant for Christian                      Living</i> , III. The Witness of the Christian Home, A. Marriage		
<b>Memorial Service/Burial</b>		

## HEARING

### Option a: "I will"

The rites of confirmation, ordination, and marriage each ask the person (or 2 people - in the case of marriage) participating in them to speak vows that are addressed toward God and the community of faith (Confirmation: MBW p.170-171; Marriage: MBW p.175). Using a dictionary or the internet, look up a variety of definitions of the word vow.

Consider and discuss:

- \* What is unique about making or speaking a vow?
- \* How might making or keeping a vow extend to the other people who hear and witness the vow being spoken?

For example:

- + that by speaking it aloud in community, others help hold us accountable;
- + that it is a type of promise-making speech;
- + it expresses a set of things we will intentionally do in our life

### ***Option b: Lebenslauf (Spiritual Autobiography) Writing & Storytelling***

Define the word Lebenslauf as we use it to describe the tradition of composing a spiritual autobiography that tells the story of the ways someone is in relationship to God and lives out that relationship as a disciple of Christ in the world. Acknowledge that we often use or work from a person's Lebenslauf when a pastor or other ministry leader writes a person's Memoir for their memorial or funeral service.

Be sure to note the difference between this faith-impact story as compared to a eulogy, where more emphasis is placed on life's accomplishments.

Invite a church member who has written a Lebenslauf to share this story of their faith life with the confirmation group. Ask the confirmands to listen for:

- \* what are significant moments or experiences that impacted the person's faith development
- \* who might have been a part of these moments
- \* how these moments influenced or offered the person direction in their life

Allow confirmands to ask questions about either the life stories the person has shared or the process of noticing, remembering, and telling the stories of these significant moments.

## **ADULT DISCUSSIONS**

- \* Introduce and discuss the concept of paradox.
  - ♦ Work with the phrases describing the Christian life in paradoxical terms:
    - ♦ in order to gain your life, you must lose it;
    - ♦ that we are buried into the death of Jesus, that we might rise and live as Christ in the world
    - ♦ therefore live, yet not you alone, but Christ live in you
  - ♦ Consider the practice of a controlled burn in forest management as a metaphor for this embrace of death so that resurrection and/or new life might be brought forth
- \* Consider the symbolism of water throughout the arc of scripture.
  - ♦ Importance of water for life and the variety of its uses
  - ♦ Significance of water as a symbol
  - ♦ Ways the importance of water as symbol and essential element for sustaining life might encourage care for creation/environmental stewardship
  - ♦ What impact might an awareness that we are birthed surrounded by water, cleansed by water, and nourished by water have on our Christian identity?
  - ♦ How might this inform the significance placed on entering the Christian life through the waters of baptism? What does God do with water? (creation, exodus)



## Creeds and Doctrines

### *The Moravian Catechism - page 41- 42*

## LESSON ACTIVITIES/ENGAGEMENTS

\*Select from the following options based on the nature, interests and time limitations of your group.



### **Option a: Apostles Creed Tetris - (See [Resource 17](#))**

Using the Apostles Creed Tetris template, cut the pieces out according to color, put them in a ziplock bag, and give them to the students to reassemble. If they're still getting familiar with the creed, have students work in pairs.

For a bigger challenge, cut them up, cell by cell, word by word and treat it as a puzzle rather than a game of tetris.

### **Option b: Act Out the Apostles Creed**

Using two versions of the Apostles' Creed - (see [Resource 18](#)) (one traditional and one a more contemporary adaptation), be creative and develop a skit or set of interactive motions to help in understanding and remembering this central shared statement of Christianity that is meant to help us describe God.

This activity can be done as youth/mentor pairs, a total group, or other combinations. Consider each image or verb phrase as a great target for an action. What you develop with this may simply be a fun and interactive way to learn, but it could be something that is brought into worship with the whole congregation (either as a unique part of the confirmation journey or something that continues to be incorporated).



### **Option a: Compare/Contrast the Moravian Book of Worship**

Look at different *Moravian Book of Worship* editions to see how the creeds take form (1969, all creeds are in first person singular/1995, creeds in the plural)

Does a change in the pronoun matter?

### **Option b: Creeds in our Liturgy**

Using the 1995 (Blue) *Moravian Book of Worship*, compare/contrast the creeds/creedal statements in the liturgies.

- \* liturgy 1: pg 3
- \* liturgy 2: pg 16
- \* liturgy 3: Nicene pg 22
- \* liturgy 4: pg 29
- \* liturgy 5: pg 34

### Option a: Scout's Honor

If there is a Girl/Boy Scout in the room, ask them to recite their pledge statement "On my honor..." Have a discussion about how they memorized it, when they say it, what promises are made, and how those promises have been demonstrated.

### Option b: Easter Morning

Read aloud as a class the Easter Morning liturgy—the Moravian statement of faith—on page 82 in the Moravian Book of Worship. How is this a statement of belief and what does it say that we share this, often in a graveyard.

## DIGGING DEEPER

### See: Moravian Covenant for Christian Living

\*For Covenants (general), see section on Essentials, God as Creator\*

- \* [BibleProject video on Covenant](#) (move to Covenants w/ God)
- \* Big God Big Questions Infographics on Nicene and Apostles Creeds. (Available for purchase through the [PCUSA Store](#).)
- \* Make a "We Believe Wall" Re:form traditions anti-workbook pg. 15. (Available for purchase through [Sparkhouse/Cokesbury](#).)
- \* Use *Jesus Still Lead On* (by Craig Atwood, available through the [IBOC](#)) for a deeper group study on this topic.

## ADULT DISCUSSIONS

- \* Using the Moravian Book of Worship, compare and contrast the creedal statements (see list above) to the ancient creeds (Nicene and Apostles).
- \* Words like "Artful Weaver", for example, found in the Liturgy for Creation, might speak to some, but not others. What words or phrases speak to you and why?
- \* Revisit the creeds and substitute "I give my heart to" for "I believe."
- \* Does it change your feelings or understandings of the creed?
- \* Page 41 of the Catechism states "The Unitas Fratrum maintains that all creeds formulated by the Christian Church stand in need of constant testing in light of the Holy Scriptures."
- \* Test the Creed in terms of the **Wesleyan Quadrilateral** - [Resource 19](#)

*What is the Wesleyan Quadrilateral?*

*A way of developing and testing our Christian understandings, taught by John Wesley, that expressed its reliance on an understanding that, "the living core of the Christian faith was revealed in **Scripture**, illuminated by **tradition**, vivified in personal **experience**, and confirmed by **reason**," has been used widely in the Protestant tradition.*

*Each of these four perspectives (Scripture, tradition, experience, and reason) when brought to bear on any subject, clarifies or challenges whatever idea or concept someone is seeking to understand about God or the Christian life.*

- ✦ Scripture - any particular passage of the Bible
  - ✦ Tradition - the teaching of the Christian community - local or global
  - ✦ Experience - the sense of what is right within the Christian's inner spirit or outer experience
  - ✦ Reason - rational thought, based on logic or evidence
- 
- ✱ Compare the Easter Morning Liturgy to the two ecumenical creeds (Nicene Creed and Apostles' Creed)
  - ✱ Discuss the continual search for sound doctrine. What does that look like and how does that affect your faith? How have you experienced that search?
  - ✱ What does it say about us as Moravians that the Ground of the Unity says, "we look to 2000 years of ecumenical Christian tradition and the wisdom of our forebears in faith to guide us."
  - ✱ Discuss.

### III. Incidentals

*The Moravian Catechism, Pg. 43-44*

## LESSON ACTIVITIES/ENGAGEMENTS

\*Select from the following options based on the nature, interests and time limitations of your group.



### **Option a: “Yes or No” Game**

Create a list of hypothetical choices and tell kids to walk to the side of the room marked “yes” or “no” with each question. (Substitute any local context and practices.)

Examples include:

- \* If you order pizza with a cauliflower crust, is it still a pizza?
- \* If you serve sugar cake instead of buns, is it still lovefeast?.
- \* If you don’t have candles on Christmas Eve, is it Christmas Eve?
- \* If you don’t sing from hymnals, is it worship?
- \* If you don’t take up an offering, is it worship?

Conclude the activity by discussing together: The incidentals are a learning tool that point us back to the ministerials. Worship is an attitude of our heart and an offering to God that can be expressed in ways that are not always fixed or immovable.

Acknowledging that incidentals vary from church to church, what would it look like if your church suddenly had to let go of Christmas candles or something that was cherished?



### **Option a: Word Cloud Sort**

Using [Free Word Cloud Generator](#), ask students to contribute words about their faith. Helpful prompts for the word cloud include:

- \* \*Words that would appear in your statement of faith (creed)
- \* \*Words that show or tell us about our faith
- \* \*Words that remind us of favorite faith events and practices

Share the cloud and decide together if each word best fits as an essential, ministerial or incidental. If there is a category for which nothing fits, discuss why that category remains empty and how you would fill it.

### ***Option a: Incidental Analogies***

Remind the class that “Incidentals are specific customs in the church that can be changed according to time and circumstance.” Develop together some analogies for ways to understand the incidentals. An example to start might be...

1. We always need food (Essential)
2. We will eat lunch (Ministerial)
3. What is on the menu? (Incidental)

### ***Option b: Customizing Customs***

List some traditions in your local church. Incidentals are customs/traditions intended to “build up” our experience of faith. What local practices in worship have “built up” your experience of worship? What traditions/practice(s) might you want to change?

## ADULT DISCUSSIONS

- \* Many church disagreements are about incidentals. What if we looked at the incidentals as an evaluation opportunity; meaning- look at each aspect of worship through the lens of “how is this showing/ demonstrating/leading towards faith, love, and hope? In other words, incidentals are meant to be evaluated and revised.
- \* Ask what incidentals are particular to our congregation? Invite participants to brainstorm and create a list of the ways they experience the ministerials uniquely within their local context...
  - + encounter with Scripture
  - + church as a gathered community
  - + participation in Holy Communion
  - + how Baptism is shared
  - + how Confirmation happens
  - + how a marriage is conducted
  - + how an ordination is acknowledged
  - + how a memorial service or burial is acknowledged/conducted
  - + What are other ways we gather or practice our faith together? (ex. Praying the Lord’s Prayer or not, which version or words we pray...)

## RESOURCES

1. Jesus Name Scramble
2. "I've Been Redeemed" Lyrics
3. Good Shepherd Visio Divina
4. Defining the Spirit/What the Holy Spirit Does  
    excerpted from *Confirmation: A Graceful Step* (Unit III, Session 4, Pg. III-15-17)
5. Call Stories  
    excerpted from *Confirmation: A Graceful Step* (Unit II, Session 3, Pg. II-10-11, Appendix II-F)
6. Symbols of the Trinity
7. God's Valentine
8. Sensory Experiences of Love
9. Love Diagram
10. Symbols of Hope
11. Basic Points About the Bible  
    excerpted from *Confirmation: A Graceful Step* (Unit 1, Session 2 & Appendix 1-A)
12. Symbols and Images of the Church/God's People
13. I Spy
14. What's in a name
15. Passover Table
16. Remembering Your Baptism
17. Apostle's Creed Tetris
18. Act out Apostles Creed
19. Wesleyan Quadrilateral for Moravians

RESOURCE 1  
Jesus Name Scramble



# SCRIPTURE SCRAMBLE

COMPANION TO THE MORAVIAN CATECHISM

Essentials: God's Part

SCRIPTURE	SCRAMBLE	NAME FOR JESUS
Matthew 3:17, 16:16; Mark 1:1; Romans 1:4; Hebrews 4:14	<b>DNOFOSOG</b>	_____
Luke 2:11; 2 Timothy 1:10; 2 Peter 1:1; 1 John 4:14	<b>RVASOI</b>	_____
Mark 1:3; John 13:14, 20:28; Philippians 2:11; Revelation 17:14	<b>RODL</b>	_____
Luke 8:24, 17:13	<b>ARMTES</b>	_____
John 6:35; 6:48	<b>EBOLIFFARED</b>	_____
John 4:7-15	<b>VAILETWRING</b>	_____
John 10:11, 10:14	<b>POEDROGHSHE</b>	_____
John 1:1-6, 8:12	<b>GLHIT</b>	_____
John 11:25	<b>REFENDEARS CURIOTTHELIN</b>	_____ _____
John 14:6	<b>EWAITHERHYTH UTTEFALTHEND</b>	_____, _____ _____
Luke 18:18; John 13:13	<b>REECHAT</b>	_____



**REDEEMER**

THE SAVING WORK OF JESUS CHRIST

# SCRIPTURE SCRAMBLE

COMPANION TO THE MORAVIAN CATECHISM

Essentials: God's Part

Luke 15:2	<b>NERDSFORFIENNIS</b>	_____
Isaiah 52:13-53:12	<b>VAUNEFFS</b> <b>RESTGRIN</b>	_____ _____
Ephesians 1:7; Titus 2:14	<b>EMEDERER</b>	_____
John 1:1-14	<b>DORTHEW</b>	_____
Matthew 23:37	<b>BEHIRMOTRD</b>	_____
John 10:7-10	<b>TEAGTHE</b>	_____
Matthew 28:16-20	<b>MALNUEME</b>	_____
John 1:29; Revelation 5:12	<b>DOLMFOGAB</b>	_____
Matthew 1:16; Mark 13:21	<b>SHISEAM</b>	_____
John 15:1-8	<b>NETIVEH</b>	_____



## **“I’ve Been Redeemed” Lyrics**

I’ve been redeemed (I’ve been redeemed)  
by the blood of the Lamb. (by the blood of the Lamb.)

I’ve been redeemed (I’ve been redeemed)  
by the blood of the Lamb,  
I’ve been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb,  
filled with the Holy Ghost I am.

All my sins are washed away,  
I’ve been redeemed.

And that’s not all; (and that’s not all)  
there’s more besides. (there’s more besides.)

No, that’s not all; (No that’s not all;)  
there’s more besides.

No, that’s not all; there’s more besides.

I’ve been to the river,  
and I’ve been baptized.

All my sins are washed away,  
I’ve been redeemed.

**RESOURCE 3**  
***Visio Divina/Contemplative Prayer - Jesus as Good Shepherd***



## **RESOURCE 4**

### ***Defining the Spirit/What the Holy Spirit Does (Excerpt from Confirmation: A Graceful Step, Unit III, Session 4, Pg. III-15-17)***

#### ***Session 4: God the Holy Spirit***

The purpose of this session is to be familiar with the names, work, and fruits of the Holy Spirit.

#### ***Defining the Spirit***

There are a few unanswered questions in the realm of science. One of them is the mystery of how inanimate molecules [non-living molecules] changed to become able to reproduce themselves. How did they become animate, alive? If something is alive, it is able to reproduce itself which means it can survive and grow. How did God create a world in which some things are inanimate, like rocks and sand, and some things are animate, like bacteria, trees, and animals? What do you think?

The word for “animate” comes from the Latin word, “anima,” which means “spirit,” “vital force,” “soul,” or “breath.” Living things have a spirit in them. It certainly is not the same spirit in bacteria as it is in a fish or a human being. There are obviously levels of spirit. For example, we use the word “animated” or “animation” for cartoon characters. The characters in a television or movie cartoon are not alive. They are images or pictures, but the artist draws them so that they move. The artist gives them a certain “look” or spirit and special characteristics. Someone else gives them a voice or sound effects. They seem to be alive.

The Spirit of God is something like the spirit that gives life to things. The Hebrews gave us a wonderful picture of how we human beings changed from the clay or dust of the ground [which is inanimate] to living beings. We read about this in Genesis 2:4-7. God breathed into our nostrils the breath of life, and we became living beings. The word for “breath” in Hebrew is “ruah” and it also means “spirit” and “wind.” To a certain degree God is like that artist who draws cartoon characters and makes them move and talk. God gives us animation, a spirit in us that makes us human and full of life. We were clay, and still are, but God has breathed into us the spirit or wind of life.

We use these words and don’t think about their origins. Athletes take “wind sprints” where they run quickly from one place to another and then do it again and again until they can hardly breathe. They are “winded.” They are “breathed out,” worn out from their efforts to get enough air to breathe so their bodies can keep moving.

And speaking of athletes and competition, have you ever heard the term “team spirit”? What is “team spirit”? What gets into people who are on the same team or go to the same school? Is it something you can explain or does it just happen? How or where have you experienced this?

The Holy Spirit is as hard to explain as team spirit is to explain or as changing dust into a living being is to explain. Knowing some science helps us understand some of this, but a certain mystery remains. The Holy Spirit is the power and mystery of God to change us from ordinary human beings into the children of God, children of the covenant community that we find through Jesus Christ.

## ***What the Holy Spirit Does***

But before we go any further, let's make a list of what you know or have heard about the Holy Spirit. Who is the Spirit and what does the Spirit do?

Part of the difficulty in our understanding the Holy Spirit is that the word "Spirit" is different from some of the other words we use for God, such as "Father," or "Son," or "Jesus Christ." We can picture God as something like a person. And Jesus was a man, even though we don't know exactly what he looked like. Artists paint him in various ways. But the Spirit is hard to grasp in our minds. Nevertheless, we can try to define some things the Holy Spirit does. Here are some answers:

1. The Spirit was involved in creation [Genesis 1:2] and in giving new life to dead bones, as described in Ezekiel 37:1-10. Basically, the Spirit gives us life and new life with God.
2. The Spirit motivates people to serve God. See the story of Gideon for a reference to this in Judges 7:34. The Spirit inspired people to speak God's words to the people and eventually to write the Bible. See Numbers 24:2ff. for Balaam's message and 1 Samuel 10:6 for Samuel's prediction that Saul would be a prophet, and Acts 4:8 for Peter's preaching. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 speaks of the inspiration that resides in all scripture. Please note that the word "inspiration" comes from the Latin word "to breathe" along with "in" or "into." To be inspired is to have God's Spirit breathed into us. Jesus did this to the disciples after his resurrection. He breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit." See John 20:21-23.
3. The Spirit guided Jesus when he was on earth. His birth [Luke 1:35], baptism [Matthew 3:16-17], temptation experience [Matthew 4:1], the very theme and nature of his ministry [Luke 4:14-21], as well as his power to cast out demons [Matthew 12:28], were from the Holy Spirit.
4. The Spirit gave birth to the Early Christian Church, as noted in Acts 2; and guided the church to preach in various places as with Philip in Acts 8:29,39; helped it grow [9:31] and led the church to include the Gentiles in the fellowship [10:19-23,44-48] so that there was one body of Jews, Greeks, slaves and free, male and female [1 Corinthians 12:13; Galatians 3:27-28].
5. The Spirit is a Counselor or advocate [from the Greek word "Paraclete," which means, "called to the side of"] for the followers of Christ and gives us guidance in the meaning of the teachings of Christ [John 14:15-17,25-26; 15:26; 16:7-11].
6. The Spirit is sought as a gift to us at the time of our baptism, a practice described first in Acts 2:38-39; 8:14-17. And the Spirit gives gifts for the life and ministry of the church (1 Corinthians 12:4-11).
7. The Spirit enables us to confess that Jesus is Lord (1 Corinthians 12:3) and converts us to a new birth or new life [John 3:1-8].
8. The Spirit gives us a new and fruitful life in contrast with our life in the flesh and our frustrated efforts to follow a law [Torah] that does not save us. See Galatians 5:16-26 and Romans 8:1-11.
9. The Spirit helps us in our weakness and prayers [Romans 8:26-27] and makes of our bodies a holy temple (1 Corinthians 3:16-17).

Notice the key words associated with the person and work of the Spirit:

- giver of life
- giver of new life
- source of inspiration
- guide for Jesus
- counselor
- source of fruitfulness
- leader of the church
- helper
- giver of gifts

## RESOURCE 5

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### CALL STORIES

*(Adapted from Confirmation: A Graceful Step, Unit II, Session 3)*

Many Bible stories tell us about certain persons who were “called” by God to do things God wanted them to do. Build a list of reasons we like to be called upon.

#### **Examples:**

- \* It makes me feel important, needed
- \* It means someone has noticed me
- \* It means I can be part of a group project or mission
- \* It means I have something to contribute

Build a list of reasons why we *don't* like to be called?

#### **Examples:**

- \* I feel inadequate to do what I'm asked to do
- \* I've never done that before
- \* I don't know what I'm supposed to do
- \* Someone else could do it better

Working in groups, explore the following call stories on page 2 of resource 5, responding to questions. Identify how God reached certain persons, what God asked them to do, and how they responded.

#### **BIBLICAL CALL STORIES:**

- \* Moses: Exodus 3: 1-4:23
- \* Jonah: The book of Jonah
- \* Gideon: Judges 6 and 7
- \* Samuel: 1 Samuel 3:1-4:1
- \* Abraham: Hebrews 11:8
- \* Mary: Luke 1:1-56 and 2:1-7
- \* Peter, Andrew, James and John: Matthew 4:18-22
- \* Women at the tomb: Matthew 18:5-8
- \* Saul/Paul: Acts 9:1-22

After each group has responded to the questions, list the persons called, and note the similarities and differences in the stories. Were any of these persons looking for a call or an answer to a need they had? Did God send a “helper” or another voice to confirm the call? Did those called feel inadequate to respond? Other observations?

#### **Wrap-up**

***“Do you think God only calls capable, talented, and heroic persons to do God’s work?”***

## Call Stories Handout

### BIBLICAL CALL STORIES

(from Confirmation: A Graceful Step, Appendix II-F)

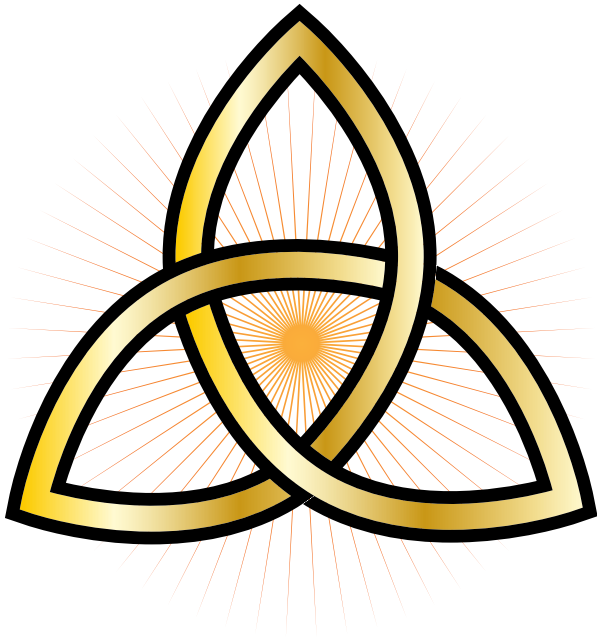
*You may not find answers to all of these questions but find as many as you can.  
Use the back of this paper if you need more space to write.*

This is about the call of \_\_\_\_\_ and is to be  
found in \_\_\_\_\_.

- \* In what geographical place or places did this call happen?
- \* Around what period of time in history did this call take place?
- \* Who initiated or began this call?
- \* Do you have any idea why this person in particular was called? In other words, what need was there for this person to be called?
- \* Who brought the call to this person, and how was it brought?
- \* What happened to help to prove that this was a divine calling? In other words, was there some kind of sign given?
- \* Did the person resist the call? If so, how?
- \* How did the person begin to carry out the call?



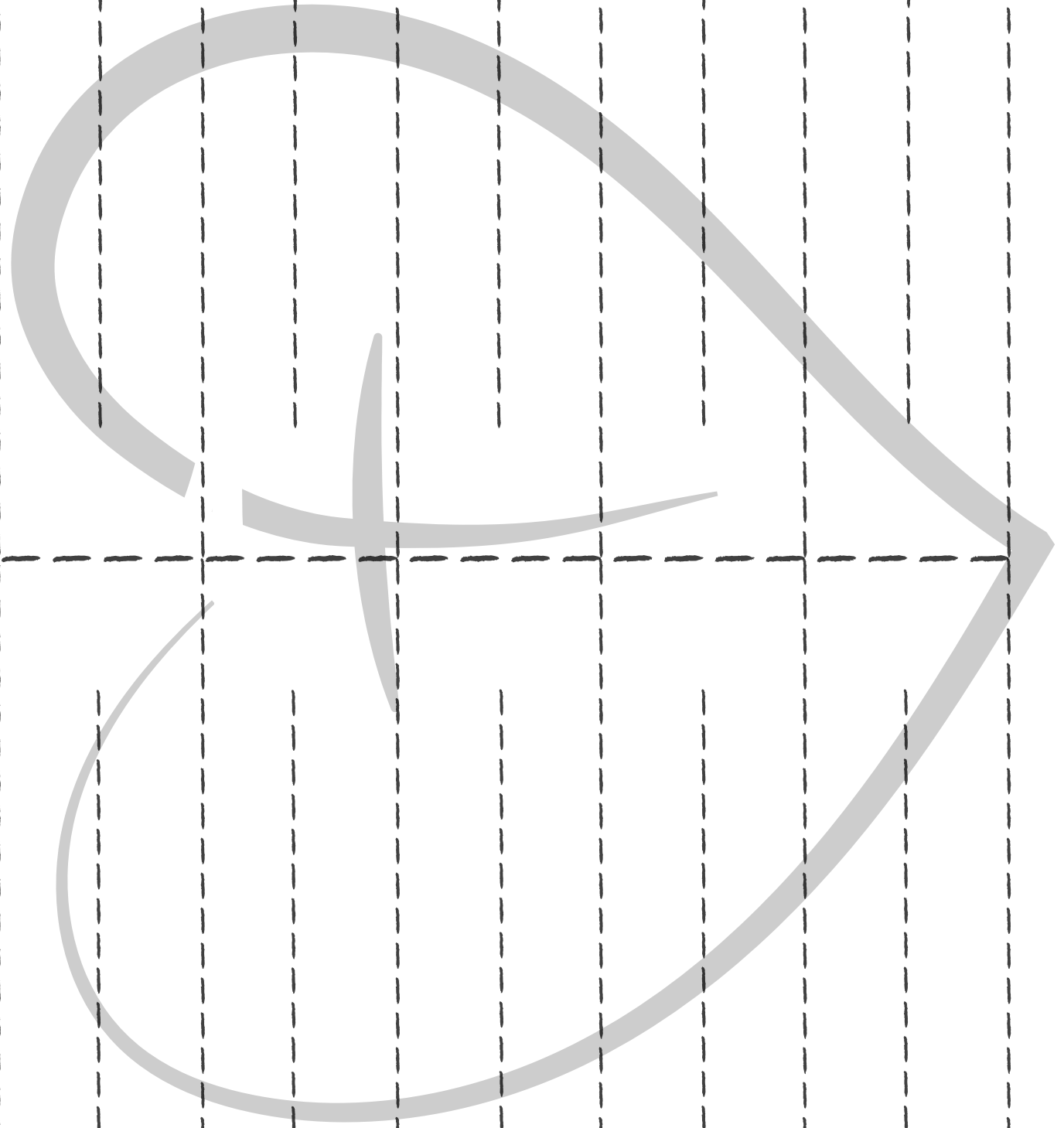
# Trinity Symbols



# God's Valentine

WHO does GOD, JESUS, SPIRIT love?

WHAT does GOD, JESUS, SPIRIT love?

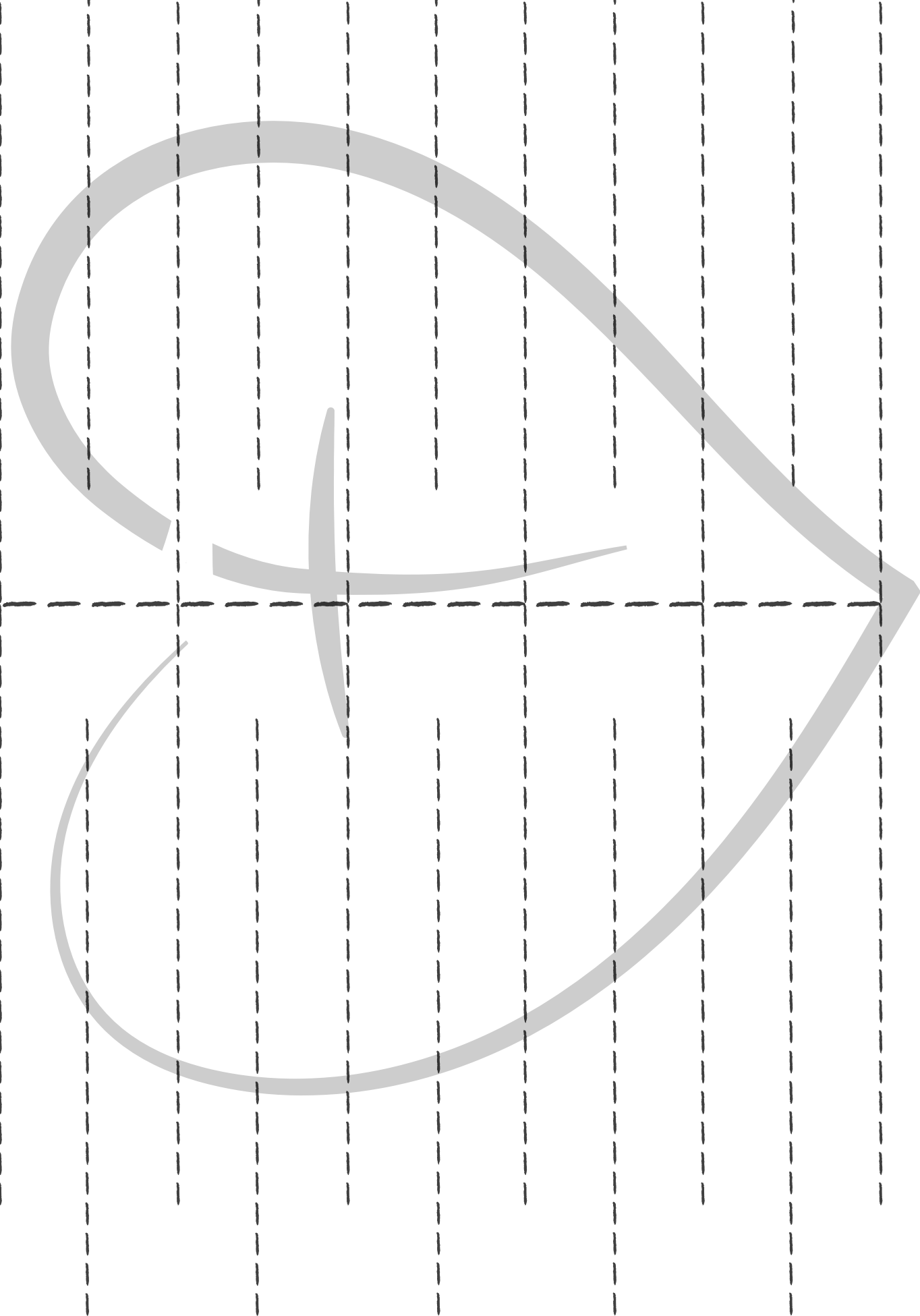


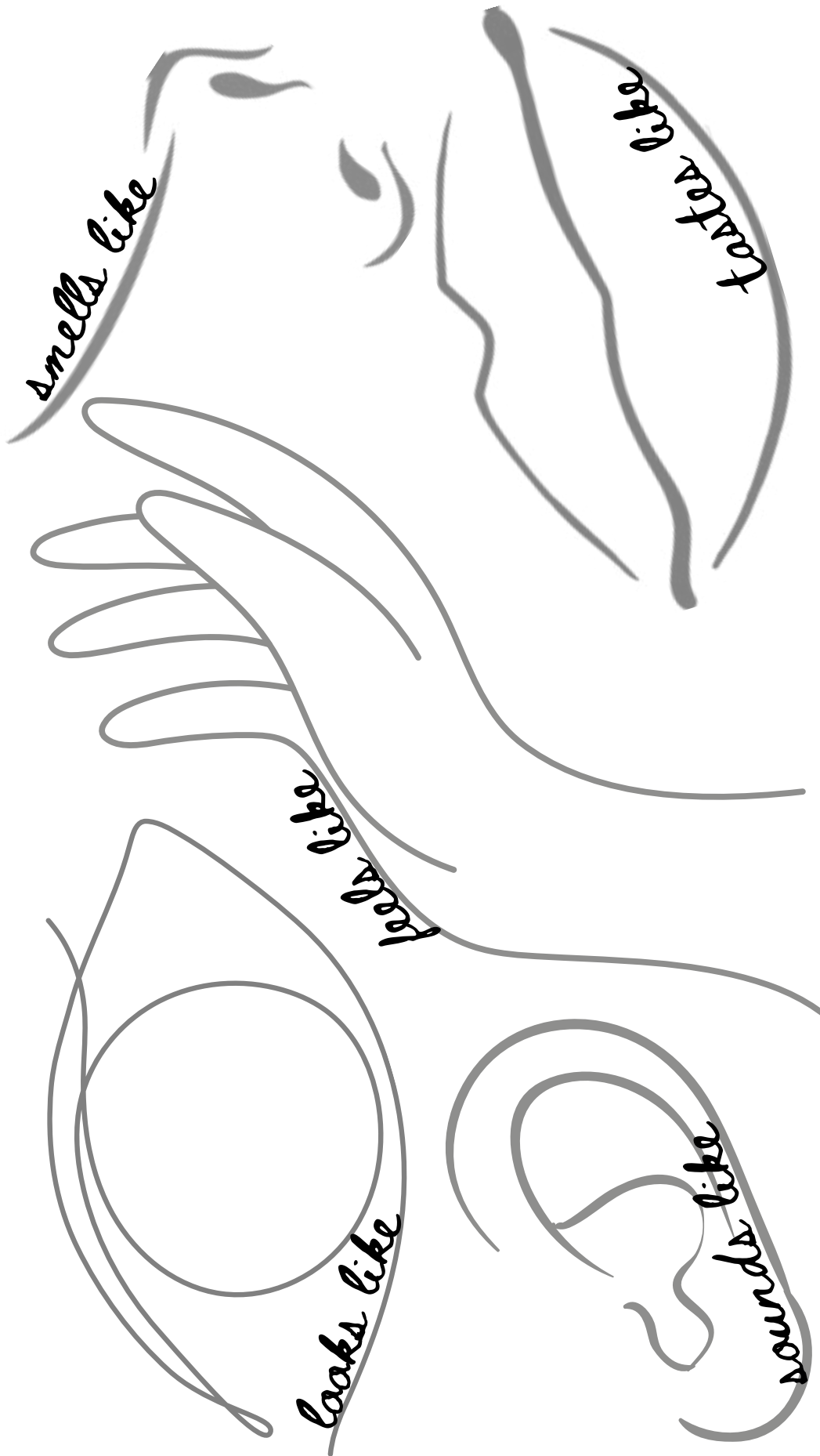


# God's Valentine

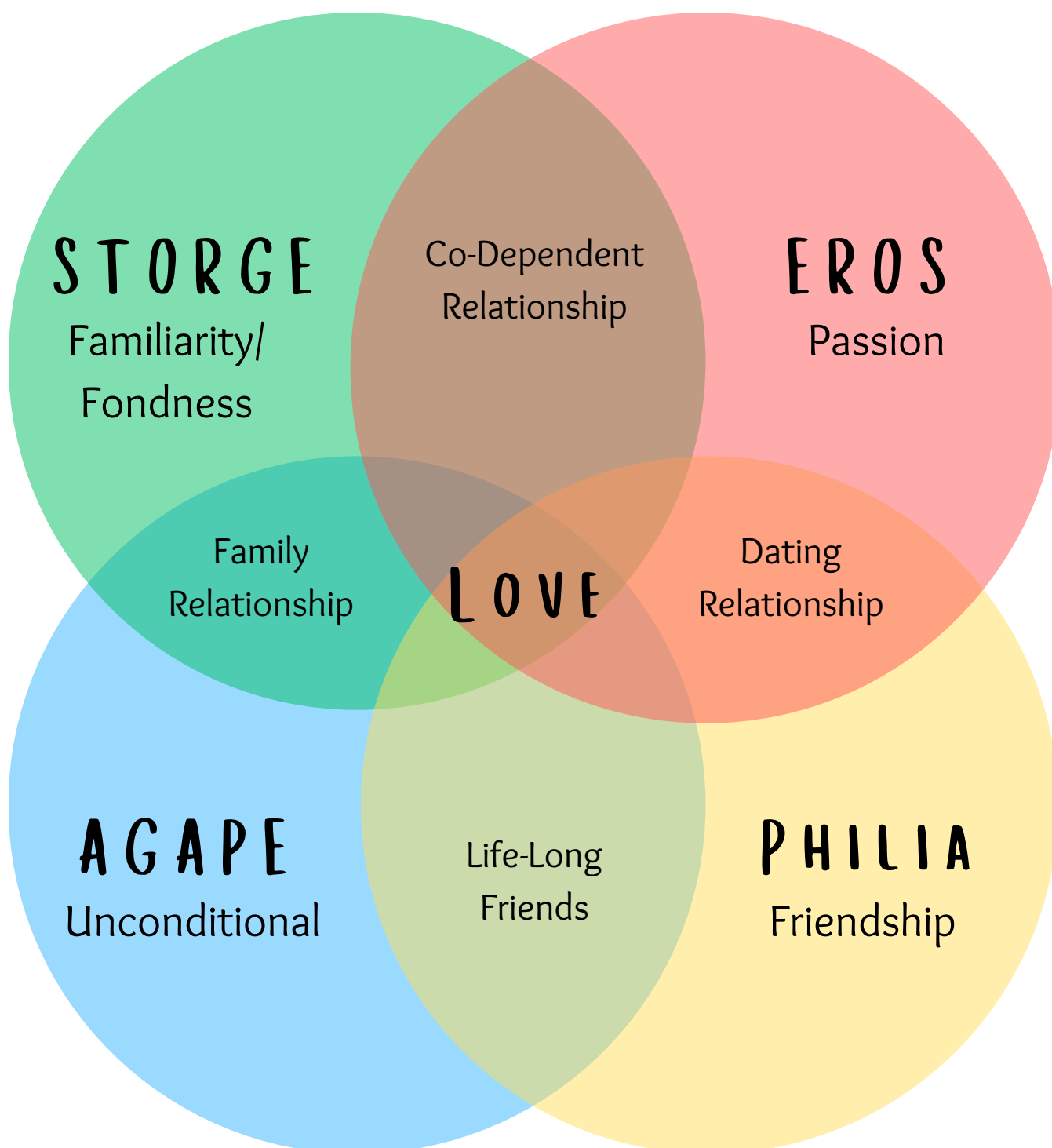
WHO/WHAT do I love?

WHO/WHAT do I need to work on loving?





# The Four Loves



## Symbols of Hope



## Basic Points About the Bible

*(Excerpt from Confirmation: A Graceful Step, Unit 1, Session 2, Pg. 1-5-7)*

**The purpose of this session is to explain some basic facts about the Bible,  
and give guidelines on how to read and study the Bible.**

**Basic Points about the Bible** - Pastors and teachers, feel free to take the material offered here and modify it to suit your views. I am offering what I think is basic information, but you will need to help with the interpretation of the statements I am providing as you work with your students.

The first thing I want to give you (students) is a handout called Basic Points About the Bible (1-A). It contains fifteen statements that can help you think about what the Bible is as you read it. Follow along as I comment on each one of these. Feel free to interrupt and ask me questions at any time.

### **1. We need to know what the Bible is and is not, what questions it answers and what questions it does not answer.**

This means that we have to be careful not to make the Bible into something that it was never intended to be. It is not a science or algebra book, which means it does not explain in scientific terms exactly how the world was created. It says “how” God did it (by giving the command and by breathing life into the dust) but it does not give scientific explanations. Mostly the Bible answers other basic questions such as “why” we were created and “what” our human nature is like and “who” God is and “what” our mission is. The Bible is not a science book but it is a book with lots of poetry in it. The way the Hebrews wrote poetry was to make a statement and then repeat the same statement but with different words. Read Psalm 27:1 as a random example.

Do you know what kind of writings besides poetry are in the Bible? Some answers are: stories, prayers, wise sayings or proverbs, genealogies, parables, prophecies, laws, oracles, dreams and visions, descriptions of battles and other events (history), songs, gospels or biographies of Jesus, letters, creeds, apocalyptic writings, and philosophical discourses (Ecclesiastes).

### **2. We need to realize the Bible was translated from other languages, contains ancient, Near Eastern culture, and has a variety of types of writing in it.**

We’ve mostly explained this statement already, but we do need to know that anytime we translate language (the Bible was originally written in Aramaic and Hebrew and Greek), we do not always get the same meaning. For example, we have one word for “love,” but the Bible has several: one for sexual love, one for brotherly or sisterly love, and one for God’s unconditional acceptance love. Some of the customs, like having more than one wife or having a servant (Hagar for Abraham and Sarah) bear one’s child, were simply customs in the Near East at the time the Bible was written.

### **3. The Bible has to do with God’s involvement in human history, making it “holy history.” But the involvement has not ended.**

The Bible tells us of the way our God, named Yahweh, first met and called a few people to be a covenant people. This involvement in human history has made this story, this history sacred or holy. The Bible covers a portion of human history but not all of it. The Bible was completed in terms of its contents about seventy years after Jesus ascended into heaven and the Christian Church had begun to spread. We have to remember that God is still involved with us but we won’t add more books to the Bible.

**4. The Bible does not hide the blemishes of its participants or edit them out, but shows how God uses our imperfect human nature.**

One of the great things about the Bible is that the writers didn't try to smooth over or hide their own faults. It may be painful to hear the truth, but the truth is what makes us realize where God wants to move us and take us. Jacob, for example, cheated his brother Esau out of the birthright, but God worked with Jacob and changed him and used him and eventually brought about a reconciliation between Jacob and Esau. God uses sinners. We are all sinners and God is using us to do good.

**5. Archaeological explorations and research have never contradicted the history and truths of the Bible, but have often verified customs.**

Some people have not wanted to believe some of the events reported in the Bible, but research into the customs and places where the Bible took place has shown that the Bible is accurate. Some events were reported and interpreted by different persons or tribes within the history of Israel, so there are some differences in accounts.

**6. We must let the Bible speak to us when we read it. The church is a servant of the Scriptures.**

The Bible is our authority and calls us to listen to its teachings and truths. We have to be careful to stand under this authority rather than give inaccurate interpretations and views that simply suit what we want to believe.

**7. We need to see the Old Testament or Covenant as a basic foundation for the New Testament or Covenant and see Jesus as the best revelation of God there is.**

The Old Testament (or Old Covenant) has a number of concepts and practices that serve as a preparation for who Jesus was and what he did. Things like sacrifices, laws, priests, prophets, the Passover, justice, suffering, and mercy have their foundations in the Old Covenant. All God's efforts to express love for us prior to the time of Jesus fall short of the image of God and love of God as we find it in this one man, Jesus. God has come to us in a Person, a human being.

**8. The Bible keeps taking on new and fresh meanings as we ourselves grow and change. Lifelong study of the Bible is essential.**

Hopefully we will grow in our understanding of the Bible. You see it one way today based on how you understand words and God and history and people. But you will gain new insights as you experience life more and differently in years to come. The Bible never gets outdated. It is always waiting for us to see it anew.

**9. We ought to read the Bible in the same way we would read a personal love letter first and then check with various other interpretations.**

The best thing to do when reading the Bible is to take it personally, somewhat the way you would read a love letter from a friend. Do that first rather than depend on what someone else says the Bible says. This is basic to our Protestant heritage. The responsibility to read the Bible is in our hands.

**10. We ought not to get so caught up in deciding whether the Bible has no errors in it and has to be taken very literally. Finding the message the Bible has for us is a better emphasis.**

There has always been a variety of opinions about how accurate, how inerrant, how literally true the Bible is and there will probably always be a variety of opinions. We can use up a lot of energy arguing about these things and end up like the Pharisees who focused so much on the details of the Sabbath laws that they forgot about the mercy and compassion of God and created an inaccurate picture of God in their own minds.

**11. The Holy Spirit inspired the persons who wrote the Bible and we count on the Holy Spirit to inspire us rightly to understand it.**

The Spirit of God will guide you rightly to interpret the Bible. Trust the Spirit and pray for guidance and you will find the insights that you need for where you are.

**12. There are some subjects the Bible does not address and therefore we have to find the basic principles in the Bible to help guide us to understand our responsibilities in such matters.**

The Bible doesn't cover everything that we have to deal with. It doesn't talk about watching television or biological warfare or genetic engineering and many other subjects. We have to take the basic principles and truths contained in the Bible and apply them to our situation. That's what helps to make the Bible relevant in every time and place.

**13. There is often a gap or a progression of theology between the Old and New Covenants in how they deal with certain issues.**

Some of the things in the Bible have changed. We don't have a temple or an ark of the covenant or keep the laws about clean and unclean foods. We don't offer sacrifices either. And very few Christians believe in utterly destroying their enemies as the early Israelites were told to do in what were regarded as "holy wars." And God made God's own self more clear to people as time went by.

**14. The Bible contains pre-historical stories, historical stories, and non-historical stories and we ought to recognize those differences and see the truths that each offers us.**

The Bible has some stories in it that happened before anyone saw them, such as how the world was created. We call these pre-historical stories. It has historical stories of what certain people did like David or Solomon. And it has non-historical stories such as some of the parables that Jesus taught. Jesus said, "A certain man had two sons" but he doesn't place these people in a specific historical setting. But those parables tell us truths we need to hear, based on incidents that may have happened.

**15. The Bible witnesses to the reality of God and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, but we have to make a "leap of faith" ultimately.**

The Bible tells us the truth. It tells us that here is a God and a Savior who loves us and is worthy of our trust. But hearing these stories and seeing them acted out in dramas or knowing them by heart is not enough. The main thing is to take the leap of faith and trust in God and in Jesus Christ and bet your whole life on who they are and what they have done for you.

## **Basic Points About the Bible Handout** *(from Confirmation: A Graceful Step, Appendix I-A)*

1. We need to know what the Bible is and is not, what questions it answers and what questions it does not answer.
2. We need to realize the Bible was translated from other languages, contains ancient, Near Eastern culture, and has a variety of types of writing in it.
3. The Bible has to do with God's involvement in human history, making it "holy history." But the involvement has not ended.
4. The Bible does not hide the blemishes of its participants or edit them out, but shows how God uses our imperfect human nature.
5. Archaeological explorations and research have never contradicted the history and truths of the Bible, but have often verified customs.
6. We must let the Bible speak to us when we read it. The church is a servant of the Scriptures.
7. We need to see the Old Testament or Covenant as a basic foundation for the New Testament or Covenant and see Jesus as the best revelation of God there is.
8. The Bible keeps taking on new and fresh meanings as we ourselves grow and change. Lifelong study of the Bible is essential.
9. We ought to read the Bible in the same way we would read a personal love letter first and then check with various other interpretations.
10. We ought not to get so caught up in deciding whether the Bible has no errors in it and has to be taken very literally. Finding the message the Bible has for us is a better emphasis.
11. The Holy Spirit inspired the persons who wrote the Bible and we count on the Holy Spirit to inspire us rightly to understand it.
12. There are some subjects the Bible does not address and therefore we have to find the basic principles in the Bible to help guide us to understand our responsibilities in such matters.
13. There is often a gap or a progression of theology between the Old and New Covenants in how they deal with certain issues.
14. The Bible contains pre-historical stories, historical stories, and non-historical stories and we ought to recognize those differences and see the truths that each offers us.
15. The Bible witnesses to the reality of God and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, but we have to make a "leap of faith" ultimately.



## Symbols and images of the Church/God's People



Covenant People - Genesis 9:9-17



Vineyard - Isaiah 5:1-7



Flock - John 10:1-18; Isaiah 40:11



Body of Christ - 1 Corinthians



Disciples - Matthew 28:16-20



Family of God - Galatians 4:4-7





### ***Blessing / raised hands***

The pastor raises his/her hands over the elements (cup and bread) to make them sacred as the pastor refers to Jesus' actions at the last supper as printed in the Book of Worship communion service: "Our Lord Jesus Christ on the night he was betrayed..." "In the same way, our Lord Jesus Christ took the cup..." This action is called "consecrating the elements."

### ***White robe worn by pastor:***

This is called a surplice. It was used for the first time in 1748 and has been used throughout the Worldwide Unity ever since. The wearing the surplice indicates that he or she is serving in a specific sense as a representative of the Lord and that in the sacrament the blessing comes directly from God. No other adornment is worn with the surplice, as simplicity is demonstrated in the garment.

### ***Trays***

The trays holding the cups for Holy Communion vary in appearance from church to church. They hold the individual cups of juice used for Holy Communion.



### ***White cloth on communion table***

White is the liturgical color always used for communion Sundays regardless of the season in which the communion is held. Frequently, churches will use the liturgical color of the season for the pulpit parament (meaning "to adorn") and use white for the communion table. Some churches use white for both the pulpit parament and the communion table.

### ***Paten***

This tray, called a paten, is specifically used to hold the wafer or bread for Holy Communion. In some Moravian congregations, it is customary for the pastor(s) to bring the paten (bread tray) in at the beginning of the communion service and to then remove it after the benediction. This custom can be traced to the Ancient Unity and was likely a reaction against the Catholic practice of adoring the host (pre-consecrated communion bread that was left in a tabernacle above the altar). As with any custom to which we ascribe theological meaning, bringing the paten in and out may also originate from a time in the ancient Unity when the celebration of Holy Communion was a separate service following regular worship.

# What's in a Name?

## **Holy Communion**

Stresses the union between self, God, and others partaking

## **The Lord's Supper**

Recalling the actual meal at which Christ took symbolic elements of a Seder table and transformed/ascribed them a new meaning

## **Eucharist**

from the Greek 'thanksgiving'; offering thanks for the gift of God through Christ Jesus

## Holy Communion: Relational



*In receiving the elements of Holy Communion with faith and prayer we are truly joined to God in Christ and the Spirit. As we unite with our fellow members in the church in this act of worship, we also join with believers of all times and places who have celebrated this sacrament in the past. Moreover, as we share in this sacramental meal in the present, we anticipate the eternal banquet of God's eternal and heavenly kingdom. In the Holy Communion, then, past, present, and future come together.*

## The Lord's Supper: Symbolism



*As we celebrate the Holy Communion, we are doing several things at once. In the first place, we are obeying Christ's command, given at the last Supper, to "do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:24-25). This is a special sort of remembering, however; for, as we share in the sacrament, it becomes for us the living sign of Christ's sacrifice upon the cross, made for us once and for all time.*

## Eucharist: "Give Thanks"



*In Holy Communion we give thanks to God for all that God has done in creating and sustaining us, and, most of all, for redeeming us in Jesus Christ. We pray for the Holy Spirit to make this sacrament of our crucified and risen Savior effective and real for us so that we may receive renewed assurance of the forgiveness of our sin and be strengthened to live new lives in Christ for witness and service in the world.*

## Elements of the Passover Table



**Matzah:** Unleavened bread which represents how quickly the Israelites had to flee from the Egyptians. The bread did not have time to rise.



**Maror:** Bitter herbs represent the bitter years spent in bondage. For our meal, we feature horseradish.



**Haroseth and Egg:** The egg represents the promise of new life for the faithful. It is prepared, but not eaten during the meal. The Haroseth is made of crushed apples, cinnamon, nuts, and grape juice (wine). It is meant to look like the brick mortar used by the Israelites during their slavery in Egypt.



**Karpas and Salt Water:** The Karpas is parsley, which represents the hyssop leaves which were used to paint the blood of the lamb above each doorpost. The salt water represents the tears shed by the Israelites during their time of slavery.



**Wine:** The grape juice represents the blood of the lamb wiped over each doorstep. Traditionally, four cups of wine would be served to symbolize the four blessings from God found in Exodus 6:6-7.

# REMEMBERING YOUR BAPTISM

Read the Watchword for the Week from the *Moravian Daily Texts*.

## GREETING THE DAY

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### Morning Litany in Honor of Baptism

Start the morning with a prayer for the person whose baptism you are honoring.

**Leader:** We give thanks for (Name) your beloved, precious child.

**Family Response:** God has such love for us that we should be called children of God, and so we are.

**Leader:** We give thanks for (Name) in whom you have poured your gifts  
\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

*(Name the gifts that are evident in the life of your baptized family member you are honoring this week.)*

**Family Response:** God has such love for us that we should be called children of God, and so we are.

**Leader:** We thank you Good Shepherd for leading (Name) all the days of his or her life.

**Family Response:** God has such love for us that we should be called children of God, and so we are.

**Leader:** We thank you for promising to stay close by (Name) forever.

**Family Response:** God has such love for us that we should be called children of God, and so we are. Amen.

## MEALTIME

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### You Are God's Beloved...

Celebrate your baptism. On the anniversary of each family member's baptism make this meal a wonderful occasion to celebrate his or her life. Use different activities to share as the family gives thanks for this person's baptism. Plan to serve the honored person his or her favorite meal. Other family members can decorate the table in special ways to celebrate this person. During the celebration meal's blessing, everyone can use the words that God said to Jesus, "You are my beloved son, I am well-pleased with you," but using the person's name, "(Name) you are God's beloved son/daughter, God is well-pleased with you.

Many Christians do not know when they were baptized; others can tell you much about that special day. Discuss the meaning of your baptism. You may be able to find out your baptism date from your church. You may also schedule these celebrations for your family members' baptisms on a date you choose.

## **GATHERING**

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### **Family Charades**

Have everyone tell about events, experiences, or things we know our baptism celebrant likes or has shared with us, but will do this using motions and actions, not words. Allow everyone a few minutes to think of something they can show about the honoree without using words — an activity they enjoy; their favorite food, color, movie, book, toy, music, etc. An adult can start and by holding up the number of fingers that there are words they are going to show. Allow the baptismal honoree to guess first and then others can help if the special thing isn't guessed right away. When everyone has had a chance to present their charade for the honoree, thank them for sharing. Ask the honoree if they would like to share anything about his or her day?

## **SERVING**

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### **Honoree's Day**

Today everyone in the family should think of one small thing they can do for the baptism honoree on this day of celebration. Use your creative ideas to come up with something unique that will be special for that person. If you know of a chore they don't like but that needs doing, do it for him or her. Hide a note or handmade card somewhere for them to find. Make this day special!

## **ON THE ROAD**

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### **Drive By**

If at all possible, do a drive-by of some of the special locations related to the person whose baptism is being celebrated — the hospital where they were born, the house they first came home to, the church where they were baptized, their pre-school, elementary school, and other places of special meaning. Ask the honoree what their earliest memories are of going to church, Sunday School, or other activities at their church. What did they enjoy most? Who do they remember best? What do they look forward to when they go there next?

## **CLOSING THE DAY**

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### **Celebrate**

Gather pictures, videos, baptismal certificates, or any other remembrances of that day for the honoree. Show the pictures taken at the person's baptism, tell who were the sponsors (or godparents) if there were sponsors, and share other memories of that day with your family. If the person being honored is young, listen to the song "Little Children Welcome" (*Moravian Book of Worship*, hymn #679) on the *Loving Hearts United* CD. For older children or youth, read the words of "Come, Holy Spirit, Come in Visitation" from the Baptism Liturgy (*Moravian Book of Worship*, page #167) and discuss the honoree's baptism. Close with a family benediction.



# Apostle's Creed Tetris

I	believe	in	God,	the
Father	Almighty,	Creator	of	Heaven
and	earth;	I	believe	in
Jesus	Christ,	His	only	Son,
our	Lord.	He	was	conceived
by	the	power	of	the
Holy	Spirit	and	born	of
the	Virgin	Mary.	He	suffered
under	Pontius	Pilate,	was	crucified,
died,	and	was	buried.	He
descended	to	the	dead.	On
the	third	day	he	rose
again.	He	ascended	into	heaven,
and	is	seated	at	the
right	hand	of	the	Father.

He	will	come	again	to
judge	the	living	and	the
dead.	I	believe	in	the
Holy	Spirit,	the	holy	Christian
church,	the	communion	of	saints,
the	forgiveness	of	sins,	the
resurrection	of	the	body,	and
the	life	everlasting.	Amen.	

## Act Out the Apostles' Creed

Using these versions of the Apostles' Creed, be creative and develop a skit or set of interactive motions to help you understand and remember this central shared statement of Christianity that is meant to help us describe God.

### ***Traditional***

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit  
and born of the virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried;  
he descended to hell.

The third day he rose again from the dead.  
He ascended to heaven and is seated at the right hand  
of God the Father almighty.  
From there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic\* church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting.

Amen.

### ***Contemporary***

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.  
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit  
and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.  
He descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again.  
He ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church\*,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting.

Amen.

\*that is, the true Christian church of all times and all places or the  
Universal Church

## Wesleyan Quadrilateral

### What is the Wesleyan Quadrilateral?

A way of developing and testing our Christian understandings, taught by John Wesley, that expressed its reliance on an understanding that, “the living core of the Christian faith was revealed in Scripture, illumined by tradition, vivified in personal experience, and confirmed by reason,” has been used widely in the Protestant tradition.

### How do we apply this approach?

Each of these 4 perspectives (Scripture, tradition, experience, and reason) when brought to bear on any subject, clarifies or challenges whatever idea or concept someone is seeking to understand about God or the Christian life.

- \* **Scripture** - any particular passage of the Bible
- \* **Tradition** - the teaching of the Christian community - local or global
- \* **Experience** - sense of what is right within the Christian's inner spirit or outer experience
- \* **Reason** - rational thought, based on logic or evidence

Note that Scripture forms the foundation of this method of discernment (the overall square), while tradition, experience, and reason are layers or lenses through which we engage with Scripture. This understanding takes seriously the ways that one passage of Scripture can be clarified or challenged by other passages of Scripture. It also honors the ways that tradition, experience, and reason cannot be completely untangled from Scripture.

