

Confirmation

Day Camp
at Camp Tanako

MAY 1, 2021



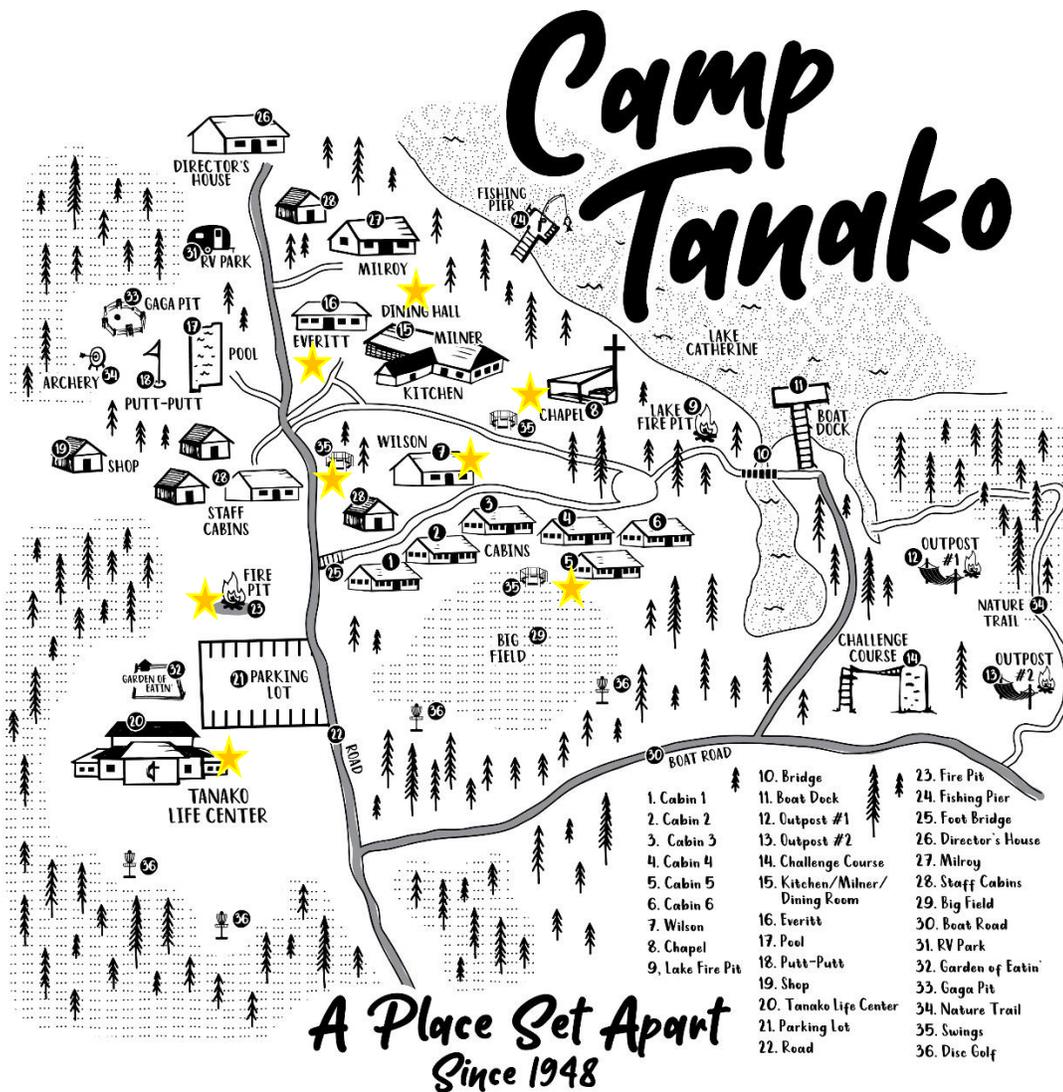
SMALL GROUP LEADER'S GUIDE

Confirmation Day Camp

Saturday May 1, 2021

Schedule of Events

Time	Activity	Location
9:00 AM	Check in and Welcome	Tanako Life Center (TLC)
9:30 AM	What is Confirmation? -Rod Hocott	Chapel
10:15 AM	Small Group Rotation	*see map
11:00 AM	Camp Games	Big Field
11:45 AM	Lunch	Dining Hall
12:30 PM	Small Group Rotation	*see map
1:15 PM	Small Group Rotation	*see map
2:00 PM	Camp Games	Big Field
2:45 PM	Canteen	TLC
3:00 PM	Small Group Rotation	*see map
3:45 PM	Closing Worship	Chapel



Small Group Classes and Leaders

The Trinity

Jonathon Bevil
Steve Frieze

Heritage & History
Mama Peaches Smith
Walt Garrett

Sacraments
Eva Englert-Jessen
Rachel Ringland

Our Vows
Justin Ledbetter
Roy Smith

★ Small Group Rotation Locations



CONFIRMATION CAMP LESSON ONE:

WHAT IS CONFIRMATION?

TOPIC: Orientation to the journey young people are about to embark on is called Confirmation.

CORE TEACHING: Students will understand the meaning of confirmation and the components that go into making up their confirmation time together NOW and for the FUTURE.

MATERIALS: Bible, clip boards with confirmation worksheet, 7 bricks, smooth river stones, sharpies, prizes, and Camper workbook and pens.

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 7: 24-27

45 Minute Secession

OPENING PRAYER

OPENING ACTIVITY: *MAKING THE MOST OUT OF CONFIRMATION*

Each small group will be given a piece of paper with the word CONFIRMATION written across the top. Working as a group they will have *three minutes* to make as many words as they can using the letters in the word confirmation, i.e. firm, mat, moon, fir, etc. Group with the most words is the “Confirmation Word Champ Group”.

DISCUSSION:

ASK: *Who thought this game was hard? Easy?*

SAY: *Today we are going to look at the meaning of Confirmation and the importance of this event in your life; AND the components that go into making this a very meaningful time for you.*

ASK: *How many of you have ever seen a stone wall or brick structure? (Many of you probably live-in brick or stone houses)*

What is it that holds the wall or structure together? (Cement, concrete, etc.)

What does the cement do exactly? (Hardens to hold things together; makes the structure firm, etc.)

SAY: *Just as the cement has a purpose, Confirmation has components that have a purpose to help us get to where we are going.*

Let's take a look at some components that will make up our confirmation experience together.

ASK: *What does the word “Confirmation” mean?
(allow for answers and acknowledge correct answers)*

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READ SCRIPTURE: Matthew 7: 24 – 27

24 “Everybody who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise builder who built a house on bedrock. 25 The rain fell, the floods came, and the wind blew and beat against that house. It didn’t fall because it was firmly set on bedrock. 26 But everybody who hears these words of mine and doesn’t put them into practice will be like a fool who built a house on sand. 27 The rain fell, the floods came, and the wind blew and beat against that house. It fell and was completely destroyed.”

SAY: *The word “confirmation” literally means “with firm - ness” (con = “with” as in Chili con carne; “firm-ation = firm-ness). Confirmation means to make firm or solid that which has gone before or what was done earlier. Thanks Mom! Thanks Dad*

Let’s look at the components that will create our strong wall of confirmation that will help you make your decision about becoming a United Methodist Christian.

ACTIVITY

GIVE EACH SMALL GROUP ONE OF THE SEVEN BRICKS, KEEP ONE TO BEGIN.

The Building Blocks of Confirmation

<p style="text-align: center;">Relationships with other Classmates</p> <p>This year one of the most important things we will be doing is building relationships – with God, with each other. The great commandment that Jesus gave us is to love - to love God and to love each other. In all we do this year we will be trying to fulfill this commandment. That means we will be getting to know each other better, building trust, building relationships, building community - this will be a part of everything we do.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Retreats</p> <p>We’ll begin the year with a retreat. At the retreat we will have a lot of fun, get to know each other better, and explore aspects of our faith in ways that we cannot do on Sunday morning</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Regular Worship Attendance</p> <p>Some of us already attend worship with our families. If we don’t, plan to start a new lifetime habit this year. We can go with our family or go with our friends, but regular worship attendance is very important. We encourage you and your family to attend worship on a regular basis. This will help us to learn more about worship - which is one of the things we are learning about this year.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Missions</p> <p>Christians don’t just believe certain things. We do certain things. We are called to make a difference in the world and in the lives of others around us. There will be opportunities throughout the year for church, local and state missions.</p>

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Participation in Youth* and Other Church Related Service Areas

*(depending on age groupings of youth group, set forth by Youth Minister or those in charge of youth ministry)

This year, in addition to our confirmation activities, you will have opportunities to participate in Youth activities of our church. In particular you will be able to be in our youth choir and handbells, acolyte, and mission opportunities throughout the year. (if these opportunities are available in your local church) Other areas you may be able to serve: Scripture reader, Greeter, Usher, Praise band member, media assistant, etc. Find out who in your church you need to talk to in order to participate in one of these ministry areas.

Baptism

Many of you have already been baptized, however, some of you have not. Baptism is God's gift to us. Baptism reminds us that God accepts us and loves us even before we can respond. Our parents pledged to raise us in the faith with the church's help. The United Methodist Church believes that baptism is a sign or symbol of God's love for us. If you have not been baptized, you will have the opportunity to receive that during the Confirmation service.

Confirmation Worship Service

The service of Confirmation will be held on _____ where you, not your parents, will accept the Christian faith as your own and make a vow to become a Christian disciple. If you choose to be confirmed, you will become a professing member of the United Methodist Church and our congregation. Confirmation is done with the laying on of hands and a prayer that the Holy Spirit will work in your life.

Have each group read their brick aloud. Do this with all nine statements, alternating between small groups to respond to the following questions:

- ASK: 1) *Why is this piece important?*
- 2) *Will it be fun?*
- 3) *Will it help us learn?*
- 4) *What will this help us learn?*

AS EACH STATEMENT IS READ ON THE BRICKS, HAVE GROUPS BRING THEIR BRICKS TO THE FRONT TO BUILD ONE LARGE WALL. NOTE: IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THEY UNDERSTAND THAT IT MUST BE STURDY ENOUGH TO WITHSTAND OBSTACLES, JUST AS LIFE IS FULL OF OBSTACLES THAT ONLY ONE'S FAITH CAN HELP THEM STAND AGAINST.

DISCUSSION:

Have group members briefly discuss how they feel about the confirmation structure as a whole.

ENDING ACTIVITY:

Hand out smooth river stones. Give group members Sharpies and have them draw a symbol of our faith on the stone - a cross, a fish sign, whatever means something to them. Also, they may write each component of confirmation on the rock.

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ASK: Please keep the stone in a safe place this year to remember how you will answer the question "What do these stones mean to you?"

LARGE GROUP OVERVIEW:

1. What is the "house" that Jesus is inviting us to build?
 - a. Hint: It's not a physical one!
2. What is the "rock" that we are invited to build our faith on?
3. What are some other possibilities for building your life and your faith on?
4. What does the word "confirmation" mean?
 - a. To make something formally valid, to establish more firmly
5. Why do we do it?
 - a. To make a decision for ourselves, to become members of the church
6. How does it relate to baptism?
 - a. Baptism is a promise by our parents and the church to raise us in the Christian tradition, confirmation is our decision to take responsibility for our faith
7. How does it relate to church membership?
 - a. It's our decision to become members of the church.

BENEDICTION:

Lead the group in the UMYF Benediction

Numbers 6:24-26

*May the Lord bless you
and keep you;
May the Lord make his face to shine upon you
and be gracious unto you;
May the Lord lift up his countenance upon you
and give you peace.*

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CONFIRMATION CAMP LESSON TWO:

THE TRINITY

TOPIC: The meaning of the Trinity (God, Jesus, Holy Spirit).

CORE TEACHING: Students will understand the concept of the Trinity by learning about each of the three components.

MATERIALS: Bible, pens, index cards with verses, box, aluminum foil, 3 candles, and Camper workbook

SCRIPTURE: John 19:17-19, John 20:26-29, Matthew 16:13-20, John 1:1-7, 10-14, John 11:25, John 14:6, Matthew 1:21, Luke 2:11, Matthew 26:49, John 8:12, Matthew 3:17, Hebrews 12:2, Matthew 1:23, John 1:41, John 1:29, Mark 1:24

45 Minute Secession

OPENING PRAYER

OPENING ACTIVITY

-GOD-

Ask: *What does God look like to you? Is he young or old? Brown or grey hair?*

Ask: *How many names for God can you think of?*

Say: *Take a buddy and work together looking up the scripture verses and unscrambling the different names of God.*

After some time, go over the scripture verses and the names.

Ask: *Have we forgotten any?*

ACTIVITY:

Say: *We are now going to look at who God is...who is he to you?*

HAVE CAMPERS OPEN THEIR WORKBOOK TO ~ God is...

Have a child read a section and take time to discuss the information.

Ask: *Was there a section that you did know or didn't know?*

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-JESUS-

Ask: *Who is this Man? What does this man mean to you?*

Give Each Small Group Member an index card that has two different scriptures verses on it. (John 11:25, John 14:6, Matthew 1:21, Luke 2:11, Matthew 26:49, John 8:12, Matthew 3:17, Hebrews 12:2, Matthew 1:23, John 1:41, John 1:29, Mark 1:24)

Say: *You need to read the scripture and prepare a report to be given to the others in your small group. Your report should answer these questions.*

- *What is happening in this scripture?*
- *What does this tell us about Jesus?*
- *What does it tell us about God?*

Take time for each group to read the scripture and answer the questions.

Say: *I am going to read two more scriptures. First I will read John 19: 17-19.*

¹⁷Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). ¹⁸Here they crucified him, and with him two others — one on each side and Jesus in the middle. ¹⁹Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. “

And John 20:26-29 says,

²⁶A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them, and said, “Peace be with you!” ²⁷ Then he said to Thomas “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.” ²⁸Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!” ²⁹ Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

Now, what do these scriptures tell us about Jesus and God?

Say: *Now open to Matthew 16:13-20 and read this to yourself. As you read it I want you to answer the following questions.*

What was Jesus really asking?

Why did He want to know this?

What was the answer he got?

Why did He want to know what Peter thought?

How is asking Peter different from asking what other people thought?

Say: *A big and crucial part of your decision to be confirmed is how you answer this question.*

Who do YOU say that Jesus is? Is he just a historical figure to you, a prophet and teacher, even Son of God who lived on the earth 2000 years ago? Or is Jesus someone you want to have a continuous growing relationship with?

Say: *Now will someone read John 1:1-7, 10-14. This passage describes Jesus as the Word of God, the Word made flesh. You may also have heard the phrase “the Word of God”.*

ASK: *What does the “Word of God” mean to you?*

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-Holy Spirit-

Ask: *What do you think when you hear the words Holy Spirit? What symbol do we use to represent the Holy Spirit?*

Reference the page in the Camper handbook- "About the Holy Spirit." Take the time to go through each section and discuss.

DISCUSSION:

To explain the Trinity, I'd like to do a God box. It is a box that is wrapped in aluminum foil on the inside. I then put one candle in there and continue to add one more and then a last one. The reflection of the candles on the wall shows just one as to having the three candles in the box. 3 in 1.

BENEDICTION:

Lead the group in the UMYF Benediction

Numbers 6:24-26

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and keep you;
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CONFIRMATION CAMP LESSON THREE:

HERITAGE AND HISTORY OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

TOPIC: A look at the history of the United Methodist Church through the years.

CORE TEACHING: Students will understand the history of the Early Church and the United Methodist Church.

Materials: Bible, pens, Camper workbook, board for brainstorming.

SCRIPTURE: Acts 2: 42-47

45 Minute Secession

OPENING PRAYER

OPENING ACTIVITY DEFINING CHURCH

SAY: John Wesley said something like this about church only he used formal "old" English. "We hear a lot about church. But a lot of the time, we have no idea what people are saying when they talk about church. Most of us don't even know what church means because church is one of the hardest words in the English language to define and understand."

ASK: What are some words or phrases that describe or define church?

List words or phrases on the board. When the list begins to fill up, have the youth work together to write their definition of church.

SAY: Now work as a group to write your own definition for church. Use the words from the brainstorming list to help you get started.

Give youth time to write a definition. Write it on the marker board so that they can refer back to it.

*SAY: Here's what The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church says:
The church is a community of all true believers under the Lordship of Christ. It is the redeemed and redeeming fellowship in which the Word of God is preached by persons divinely called, and the sacraments are duly administered according to Christ's own appointment. Under the discipline of the Holy Spirit the church seeks to provide for the maintenance of worship, the edification of believers, and the redemption of the world.*

ASK: How does your definition compare to that of the United Methodist Church?

THE EARLY CHURCH

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SAY: Acts 2: 42-47 tells us about the Early Church soon after Jesus ascended into heaven. ⁴²They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. ⁴⁴All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. ⁴⁶Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

ASK: How does this compare to the definition you came up with and the one in the Book of Discipline?

GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

SAY: At the beginning of Acts, the people who made up the church could fit in a single room.

SAY: Everyone turn to Acts 1. Find a reference to the size of the church in Acts 1.

Acts 1:15 "about one hundred twenty persons"

SAY: Now turn to Acts 2 and find a reference to the size of the church.

Acts 2:41 "About three thousand persons were added"

SAY: This time look in Acts 4.

Acts 4:4 "But many of those who heard the word believed; and they numbered about five thousand."

SAY: Shortly after Jesus' ascension to heaven, the church had about 120 members. At Pentecost, they added three thousand more; and a little while later, they added another five thousand. So, in a very short time, the church grew from 120 people to several thousand. Within a few decades, the good news of Christ had reached Rome, which was the center of the civilized world. In the fourth century Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire. Today there are more than two billion Christians in the world, and the church has a major presence on every continent.

ASK: What are the names of various Christian traditions and denominations?

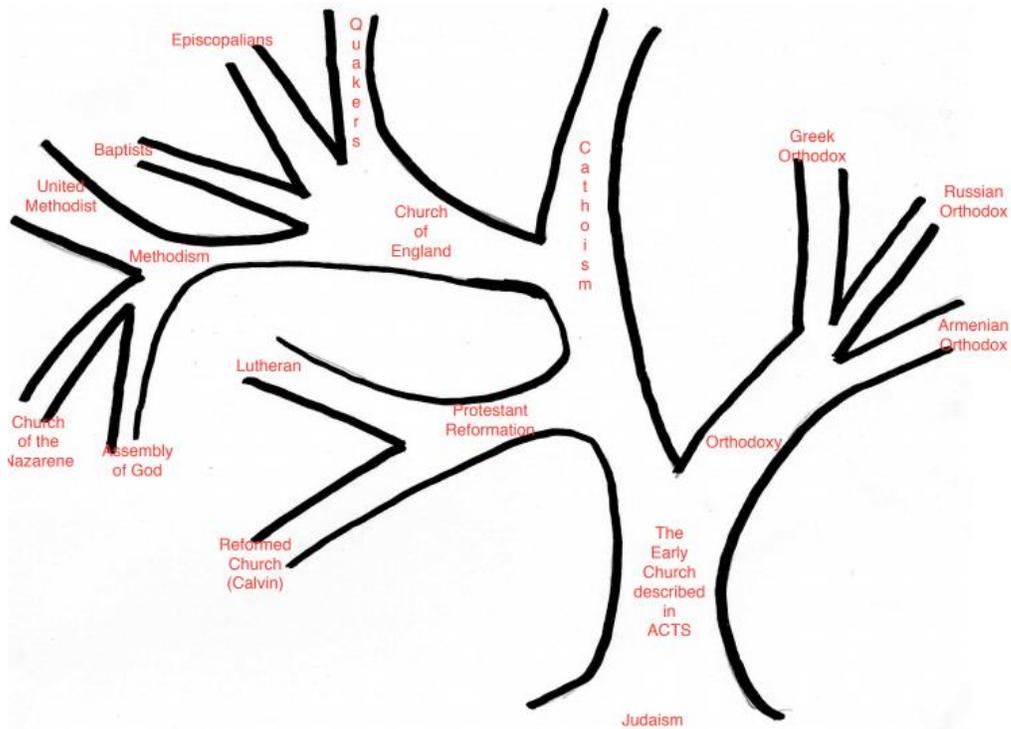
ACTIVITY

List these on the board.

Refer to the "Christianity's Family Tree" in the Camper workbook.

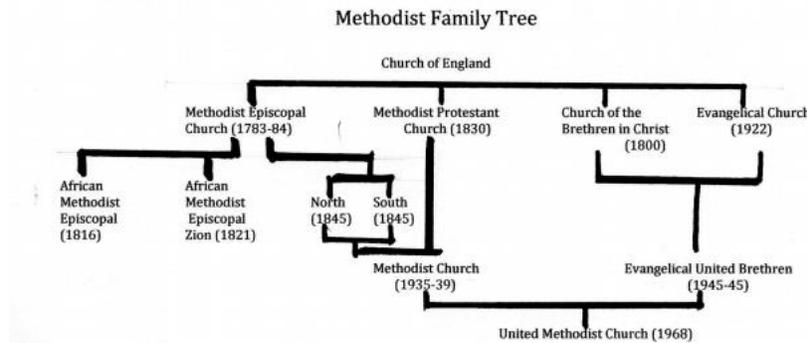
Help the youth put the denominations on the tree.

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SAY: As the branches of Christianity's tree grow outward, they become more and more intertwined.

SAY: At the bottom of your handout is a flow chart of some of the branches of the Methodist Family tree. Methodism was founded in about 1783 from teachings of John Wesley, who we will study in another session, and came to be the church we know today as the United Methodist Church in 1968.



ASK: Who is John Wesley?

Give youth time to answer.

SAY: John Wesley was a man who lived in England in the 1700s. John Wesley felt he was called by God to tell others about Jesus and help people in need. He started a religious movement called Methodism. The United Methodist Church is founded on John Wesley's ideas.

John and his brother, Charles attended school at Oxford University in England. While Charles was at Oxford, he began the Holy Club. Each member of the Holy Club did these things: got up early; read the Bible; prayed; didn't waste time. Some people nicknamed the club members "Methodists" because the member had a method to

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everything they did. The name Methodist became the name for people who followed the new religious movement started by John Wesley.

The members of the Holy Club spent time helping others. They visited prisons to read Scripture and pray with the prisoners. The members of the Holy Club also used their own money to buy food, clothing, and medicines for people who were in need.

John Wesley became a clergyman in the Church of England. But John began to question his faith. He felt like he had fallen short of what God wanted him to do.

One night he went to a Bible study at a meeting on Aldersgate Street in London. John Wesley wrote in his journal, "In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change, which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.

John began preaching outside of the churches. Many people came to hear him preach, especially the people who were poor. John started riding his horse from place to place.

He preached two or three times every day, seven days a week. He carried a satchel with books and food. He preached in fields, in mines, and near factories. John Wesley felt that the world was his parish.

ASK: *Have you ever heard of a place in Arkansas that is called Aldersgate?*

SAY: *Aldersgate is a special place in Little Rock sponsored by the United Methodist Women. One of the awesome things done at Aldersgate is camps for children and youth who are ill or handicapped.*

SAY: *John and his brother Charles took the good news about Jesus to people who were not welcome inside the churches. They went to hospitals, workhouses, and prisons.*

John was the first person to open a place where poor people could come to get free medicines. He hired a doctor and an apothecary to help people who could not pay for medicines or doctor visits.

John also organized Methodist Societies. These were class meetings or small groups that met to share their faith and help each live as Christians. The Societies usually met in people's homes.

*John Wesley taught;
Do all the good you can,
By all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can.*

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SAY: *The Methodist movement crossed the sea to the American colonies. Circuit riders traveled on horseback from town to town, telling others the good news about Jesus. Thomas Coke was sent to America after the War of Independence. He became the first American bishop. Thomas Coke ordained another man, Francis Asbury. Francis Asbury traveled 275,00 miles, mostly on horseback to tell people the good news about Jesus.*

Francis Asbury set up the early American church into circuits. Each circuit was made up of several towns. A preacher traveled the circuit from town to town. It was often more than a month before the preacher returned to the same town. He traveled on his horse carrying everything he owned in his saddlebags. He often slept on the ground, even in rain and snow.

SAY: *And that is how Methodist came to America. You live in Arkansas and Arkansas is a Conference. Every Methodist church in Arkansas is part of a District, these Districts make up the Conference and the Conference is part of an international body of Christians...Pretty Cool!*

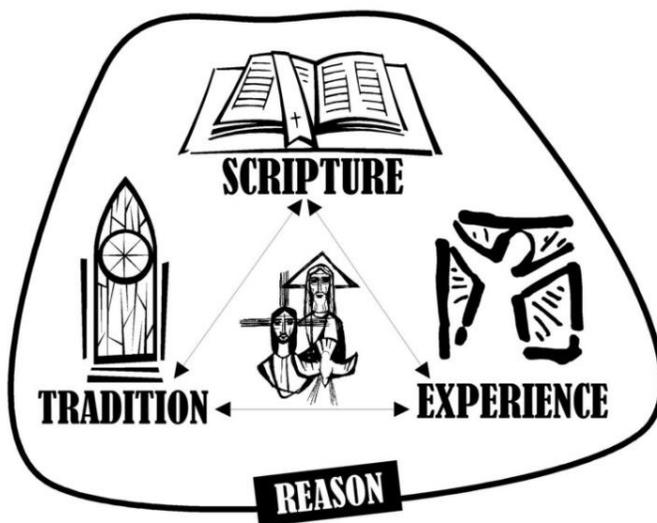
BENEDICTION:

Lead the group in the UMYF Benediction
Numbers 6:24-26

*May the Lord bless you
and keep you;
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May the Lord lift up his countenance upon you
and give you peace.*

*OPTIONAL CONVERSATIONS:

Wesleyan Quadrilateral



Wesleyan Grace

Be present at our table, Lord.
Be here and ev'rywhere adored.
Thy people bless, and grant that we
may feast in fellowship with thee.
Amen.

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CONFIRMATION CAMP LESSON FOUR:

SACRAMENTS: GIFTS FROM GOD

TOPIC: In this lesson, students will learn the meaning of a sacrament and why sacraments are an important part of our spiritual growth.

CORE TEACHING: Students will learn that the two sacraments acknowledged by the United Methodist Church are: Baptism and Holy Communion

MATERIALS: poster board and easel to make Graffiti Wall, markers; Pitcher and Basin (with water), towel, shells; Communion elements: bread, juice, plate, cup; Copies of Article XVI of the UMC Articles of Religion "Of The Sacraments"; wrapped gifts for each person (two/three pieces of candy – wrapped beautifully)

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 3: 11 – 17; Matthew 26: 18-20, 26-28.

45 Minute Seession

OPENING PRAYER

OPENING ACTIVITY

Set the poster board on an easel, at a level that can be reached by all – not too short or too tall. As students arrive give each one a marker.

SAY: *This is a Graffiti Wall. Write down your thoughts AND questions regarding Baptism and Communion. You can write as much as you like about the subject matter.*

Give kids time to write AND to look at what others have written on the Graffiti Wall.

Discussion:

ASK: *Did you notice any similarities between what you wrote and what your classmates wrote on the Graffiti Wall?*

ASK: *What is a Sacrament?*

A Sacrament is a "means of grace" by which God's grace, love, forgiveness, and acceptance flows to us from God.

ASK: *What is Baptism?*

Baptism is the "rite of initiation" into the Christian faith. It is the door through which we enter into the community called the Church. In the United Methodist Church we hold that baptism is a symbol for something God does - not something we do. As a "sacrament" (a means or vehicle for God's grace in our lives) it is "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace."

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DEMONSTRATE:

Pour the water from the pitcher into the basin. Cup hands and scoop up a handful of water and let it trickle out back into the basin.

SAY: *We bathe with water to be clean on the outside and baptism water makes us clean on the inside.*

ASK: *Why do we do it?*

SAY: *Baptism is a symbol for the forgiveness of sins and rebirth. Water was symbol for cleaning, for making pure. Baptism is “for the forgiveness of sins”. Baptism marks the transition from the old life (of sin) and into the new life (of faith - in the community of God).*

ASK: *What does Baptism have to do with Confirmation?*

SAY: *The practice of confirmation is tied to infant baptism. The churches that practice infant baptism also have confirmation. The churches that do not practice infant baptism do not practice confirmation. Confirmation is related to infant baptism. When we baptize a small child who cannot fully understand what is being done, it is important to provide an opportunity (later) for the child to respond in a personal way. This opportunity is called confirmation (**literally “professing member”**, as distinguished from a **“baptized member”**). Some people use the image of a relay race. Someone carries the baton before you (your parents, previous generations), “to make firm that which was done before” - baptism). At confirmation we become a “but there comes a time when the baton is passed to you, and it becomes your turn to run the race”. This is confirmation. The baton of responsibility is passed from your parents to you.*

ASK: *Do we do Baptism differently from other denominations?*

SAY: *In the UMC, once Baptized always Baptized. If baptism is a symbol of our faith, then we might need to repeat the act when we fall short of what God wants of us. But since baptism is a symbol of God’s gift to us, to re-baptize is to call into question the gift. What God does through baptism does not need to be repeated. What we do may be repeated through acts of rededication. Confirmation is one of these acts.*

ASK: *When can you be Baptized?*

SAY: *As United Methodists, we practice both infant and adult baptism, and we accept all three historical forms of baptism: sprinkling, pouring, and immersion. We also accept baptisms performed in other Christian churches. **We do not re-baptize, as this calls into question the validity of God’s original gift at baptism. We do re-commit ourselves to the covenant in special services such as confirmation and communion.** Unlike baptism, confirmation is a “repeatable rite” and may be done more than once.*

ASK: *What is Communion?*

SAY: *Communion is the basic form of worship for Christians. In fact, communion is the only “Christian” thing we do in worship. It is a time of remembrance and renewal of*

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our love for what Jesus did Communion for us on the cross. "Do this in Remembrance of Me"

The Lord's Supper is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another, but rather is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death; insomuch that, to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ.

DEMONSTRATE: Take the loaf, hold it up, break it.

SAY: *The body of our Lord, broken for you.*

Take the cup, hold it heavenward.

SAY: *The blood of our Lord, poured out for you for the forgiveness of your sins.*

ASK: *In the UMC, who can take Communion?*

SAY: *Anyone is welcome to take communion in the UMC, regardless of age, denomination, spiritual belief or no belief at all. We believe the communion table belongs to the Lord and not to the church. Therefore ALL are welcome at the Lord's table.*

ASK: *Is Communion different in the UMC than other denominations?*

SAY: *Because we believe the Lord's table is open to all, all are welcome. Some other Christian denominations believe that communion may be taken only by those who are members of that denomination and if you visit on a communion Sunday, you could not participate in this very important sacrament.*

CLOSING

SAY: *Sacraments are gifts from God. Baptism is a gift that is accepted for us by our parents when we are babies OR you can accept that gift on your own when you are older.*

Communion is offered to us regularly (usually monthly in most United Methodist churches) for us to renew and remember why it is that we are Christians.

SAY: *I have a gift for you. Do not open it until you are instructed to do so. As I put it in front of you, I want you to think about whether you want to accept the gift or not since you do not know exactly what may be inside.*

HAVE STUDENTS OPEN GIFTS AND GET RESPONSES.

BENEDICTION:

Lead the group in the UMYF Benediction

*May the Lord bless you
and keep you;*

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*May the Lord make his face to shine upon you
and be gracious unto you;
May the Lord lift up his countenance upon you
and give you peace.*

Numbers 6:24-26

Article XVI — Of the Sacraments (From The Articles of Religion of The United Methodist Church – Book of Discipline 2012)

Sacraments ordained of Christ are not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but rather they are certain signs of grace, and God's good will toward us, by which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm, our faith in him.

There are two Sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord in the Gospel; that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.

Those five commonly called sacraments, that is to say, confirmation, penance, orders, matrimony, and extreme unction, are not to be counted for Sacraments of the Gospel; being such as have partly grown out of the corrupt following of the apostles, and partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures, but yet have not the like nature of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, because they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God.

The Sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about; but that we should duly use them. And in such only as worthily receive the same, they have a wholesome effect or operation; but they that receive them unworthily, purchase to themselves condemnation, as St. Paul saith.

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CONFIRMATION CAMP LESSON FIVE:

THE VOWS YOU WILL TAKE

TOPIC: To give class members an understanding of the vows they will take during the Confirmation service and a chance to create their own personal statements of faith.

CORE TEACHING: To be able to take the vows of discipleship, class members must be able to understand them. They also need to be able to articulate their own personal statement of faith, however simple it may be.

MATERIALS: Flip charts and markers. Write dictionary definitions of “vow” on flipcharts. Camper workbook.

SCRIPTURE: Mark 9: 23 – 24

45 Minute Seession

OPENING PRAYER

SAY: *Today we will be exploring what it means to make a “vow” and the vows we will be taking during our confirmation service.*

ASK: *Has anyone here been to a wedding? Did you know they take vows at a wedding? Can anyone recite the wedding vows? (I, (Bride/Groom), take you (Bride/Groom), to be my (wife/husband), to have and to hold from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish; from this day forward until death do us part.)*

ASK: *Are there other vows you are aware of (for example membership in a club)?*

Show the dictionary definitions of the word “vow” on your flip chart and give the group a few moments to read the definitions.

ASK: *1) What gets your attention when you read these definitions?*

2) What surprises you in these definitions?

3) What vows have you taken in your life so far? (Have group members share their experiences of this)

4) Are vows important? Why?

5) What does this have to do with our class and the confirmation service?

SAY: *Today we will be looking at the actual vows that we will take on confirmation Sunday and that our goal today is to make sure that we understand them.*

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Take the group through the following four vows one at a time. Use the following steps with each vow:

SAY: *Have a group member read the vow out loud and then ask the group:*

- 1) *What do you think this vow means?*
- 2) *Why do you think this vow might be important?*

Have a camper read from the camper workbook the four vow commentaries and have a group member read each out loud.

ASK: 1) *What does this add to our understanding of this vow?*
2) *What questions about this vow are still unanswered?*

End by having the group take the four vows as a whole.

ASK: *When you put all four vows together, what are we being asked to do?*

(be active, professing members of the body of Jesus Christ – the Church)

DEFINITIONS SHOULD BE WRITTEN ON THE BOARD BEFORE CLASS.

From: *The Heritage Dictionary American*

Vow (vou) n.

An earnest promise to perform a specified act or behave in a certain manner, especially a solemn promise to live and act in accordance with the rules of a religious group.

1. A declaration or an assertion. To promise solemnly: pledge. To make a vow; promise.
2. A declaration that one will or won't do something.

Synonyms: *promise* *agreement* *surety*
commitment *contract* *pledge*
covenant *guarantee* *oath*

From: *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*

Vow (vou) v. tr.

1. To declare or assert: "Well, I vow it is as fine a boy as ever was seen!" Henry Fielding [short for avow]
2. A solemn promise especially in the form of an oath to God.
3. The promises by which a monk or nun is bound to obedience.
4. A promise of fidelity (i.e. marriage vows)
5. The promises given at baptism by the baptized person or by sponsors.

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COMMENTARIES ON “THE VOWS WE WILL TAKE”

The Vow Of Volition (Desire)

Do you DESIRE to be baptized and/or confirmed in the faith?

This is the first question we must answer when we come to be baptized as an adult or confirmed. Do WE desire this? Not ‘do our *parents* desire it or ‘do our *friends* desire it.’ The vow of volition is about you: what do YOU want? *Do you understand what it means to be Christian and what it means to profess faith in Christ? Do you want this?* When we stand at the altar to make our vows, we stand before God and before the community. We are surrounded by those who love us – our families, our friends, and our congregation. But the question is deeply personal: “do you – PERSONALLY – desire this?”

The Vow Of Repentance (Turning)

Do you RENOUNCE the spiritual forces of wickedness,

REJECT the evil powers of this world, and REPENT of your sin?

The second vow is one of direction. *Do we really want to be the person God has called us to be? Do we want to live our lives the way God calls us to?* If so, then we must *give up* doing things our own way and *turn away* from the things that are the opposite of God. We reject whatever is opposed to God – whether that opposition is from the powers of this world or spiritual powers. Then, we turn to God as the center of our lives. Remember, sin is about relationship. God wants to be in relationship with us. Sin is when we try to go it alone without God or try to make something else into God. Before we can turn to God, we must turn away from that which is opposed to God. In the second vow we “*repent*” (literally, “*turn around*”) from doing things our own way or the way others would have us do things to doing things God’s way and pledge to be God’s person.

The Vow Of Confession (Believe, Accept, Promise)

Do you accept the freedom and power God gives you to resist evil, injustice and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves?

Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Savior, put your who trust in His grace, and promise to serve him as your Lord, in union with the church which Christ has opened to people of all ages, nations and races?

We are reminded in the third vow that we do not just turn *from* something; we turn *to* something. The Christian faith is not just a matter of avoiding the negative. It’s also doing the positive. God calls us to “faith” – to trust, to believe, to commit. We *accept* the *freedom* that God has given us to choose and the *power* God gives us to be people of faith. In this vow we affirm our relationship with God – we “*confess*” (acknowledge) in Jesus as the one who shows us who God really is (our Savior) and we *put our whole trust* in his grace (love), and finally we promise to serve him as Lord (to live the life of discipleship He has called us to live).

NOTE: In the service this vow is divided into two parts

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The Vow Of 'Professing' Membership

Will you be loyal to the United Methodist Church and to this congregation and uphold it by your prayers, your presence, your gifts, your service and your witness?

We become members of the church through our baptism, whether as babies or in the confirmation service. But when we are confirmed, we become '*professing members*'. We now pledge our loyalty not only to God but also to the Church that God has created and into which we have been baptized, but also to the denomination and local congregation we choose to be a part of. John Wesley reminds us: "*The New Testament knows no solitary religion.*" To be a Christian means to belong to and be active in the community of faith (the church, the body of Christ). We live this faith out in community. Our last vows ask us whether we are willing to live our faith in the world-wide Church of Jesus Christ, into which we were baptized, as well as *this denomination* (The United Methodist Church) and in this congregation: (church name). Later we may change congregations or denominations. But today we commit to this denomination and local church. We do this in five ways: through our PRAYERS, through our PRESENCE (regular attendance), through our GIFTS (money abilities, talents), through our SERVICE and through our WITNESS.

BENEDICTION:

Lead the group in the UMYF Benediction

*May the Lord bless you
and keep you;
May the Lord make his face to shine upon you
and be gracious unto you;
May the Lord lift up his countenance upon you
and give you peace.*

Numbers 6:24-26

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