

CONNECTING FAITH AND JUSTICE

YOUTH CURRICULUM

Lectionary Year **A**
2025-2026



CHURCH & SOCIETY

The United Methodist Church

Living **FAITH** Seeking **JUSTICE** Pursuing **PEACE**

WHY THE LECTIONARY?

The Connecting Faith & Justice Youth Curriculum is based on the lectionary to align the rhythm of the Christian calendar and deepen the connection between Sunday worship and youth faith formation. The curriculum is also connected to the Social Principles and reflects the 2020/2024 Social Principles.

Designed through a Wesleyan lens, the curriculum helps young people explore the intersection of faith and justice, encouraging them to live out their faith in meaningful, transformative ways.

WHAT'S THE FORMAT?

Each one-hour lesson highlights one or more lectionary readings. Every session begins with a centering moment, followed by a scripture study, a group activity, and a closing reflection. To accommodate varying youth group sizes, the group activities are designed to work well in both pairs and larger groups. All the lessons are standalone lessons and are not dependent on previous lessons.

Here are a few additional resources that might be helpful to prepare for the lessons:

- 2020/2024 Social Principles
- Faith & Fact Cards

WHO WROTE THE CURRICULUM?

The lessons were written by a diverse group of clergy, laity, emerging leaders, professors, and practitioners from across the United Methodist connection, all passionate about youth and nurturing their faith development. Learn more about the contributors on the Contributor Biographies page!

LECTIONARY CALENDAR YEAR

ADVENT

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Isaiah 2:1-5

Rori Blackeney

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Isaiah 11:1-10

Aimee Hong

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Luke 1:46b-55

Laura Ross

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Isaiah 7:10-16, Matthew 1:18-25

Madelyn Johnson

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

Matthew 2:13-23

Elizabeth Murray

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS

Ephesians 1:3-14

Rachel Headden

EPIPHANY

FIRST SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY/ BAPTISM OF THE LORD

Matthew 3:13-17

Hope Cody Peppers

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

Isaiah 49:1-7

Aimee Hong

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

Matthew 4:12-23 (references to Isaiah 9:1-4, Psalm 27: 1, 4-9, and 1 Corinthians 1:10-18)

Caroline Camp

FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

Matthew 5:1-12

Steven Jerbi

FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

Matthew 5:13-20, Isaiah 58:1-9a (9b-12), Psalm 112, 1 Corinthians 2:1-12

Charlotte Upenyu Chitambo

TRANSFIGURATION SUNDAY/ LAST SUNDAY BEFORE LENT

Matthew 17:1-9

Chad Johnson

CONTRIBUTOR BIOGRAPHIES

REV. DR. SUZANNE ALLEN currently serves as the Superintendent for the Great Miami River District in the West Ohio Conference. She has a passion for faith formation, involving younger generations in the life of the church, and creating a world of justice, love, and peace. She is married and has two college-age children. (West Ohio Conference)

AGNES JOYCE BAILEN (TBA)

RORI FRANCIS BLAKENEY describes his life as a jazz improvisation—unpredictable yet purpose-driven. A Washington, DC native, he served with Discipleship Ministries, Young People's Division for the Southeastern Jurisdiction. (North Georgia Conference)

PASTOR SHANELLE CALVIN ALLI is a womanist theologian committed to creating spaces of healing, justice, and belonging. Her work equips faith communities to explore how their relationship with God compels them to live with intention. Through resources that center rest, reflection, and real-life application, she helps others move from constant striving to being. (North Georgia Conference)

REV. CAROLINE CAMP is a queer pastor passionate about helping young people explore their faith with honesty, creativity, and joy. She loves making scripture come alive through storytelling, art, and connection to everyday life. Caroline is committed to creating spaces where all youth feel seen, valued, and loved as God's children. (Western North Carolina Conference)

KATE CAMPBELL brings creativity and experience to her role working with children and youth. Holding a Master of Divinity and working towards a Master of Arts, she creates fun, meaningful programs that help young people grow in their faith while building connections with others. Kate's primary call is to spread an accessible gospel for all people to all people. (Mountain Sky Conference)

CHARLOTTE UPENYU CHITAMBO is striving to honor God by embracing her potential, using her skills to serve others, and living with purpose. No matter where she is in the world, she remains present, intentional, and committed to making a meaningful impact. (Zimbabwe East Conference)

REV. KURT COOPER is a Deacon who serves as the United Methodist Campus Minister at Emporia State University, Emporia, KS, and as one of the Regional Youth Ministry Coordinators in the Great Plains Annual Conference. He is married to Bethany and has a two-year-old daughter, Isobel. He is an avid collector of comic books and loves Star Wars. (Great Plains Conference)

DR. RACHEL DODD is a spiritual director, writer, and Managing Editor of the Fuller Youth Institute. She received her MDiv and DMin from Fuller Theological Seminary. Having served teens and their families in ministry for over 20 years, Rachel loves empowering others in their ministry calling. She and her husband

live in the beautiful Pacific Northwest. (Pacific Northwest Conference)

PASTOR CHRIS DUBLE serves at First United Methodist Church in Bristol, Tennessee, and is a third-year seminary student at Candler School of Theology. With a heart for justice, recovery, and belonging, his ministry focuses on helping young people know they are God's beloved and empowered to live as disciples of Jesus. (Holston Conference)

REV. DREW ENSZ is the ministry director at Arise Campus Minister, an ecumenical campus ministry in Northern Virginia serving both George Mason University and Northern Virginia Community College. Drew is a graduate from Virginia Tech and Eastern Mennonite Seminary and husband to Catie and their five children. (Virginia Conference)

BROOKE M. FOSTER supports outstanding young adult Christian leaders through her work with the Polaris Young Adult Leadership Network at Princeton Seminary. A certified candidate for ordination as a Deacon, Brooke strives to cultivate welcoming, safe, and encouraging spaces of community for folks of all ages and backgrounds. In her free time, you can find her curled up on her porch with a good book, a hot cup of coffee, and her corgi, Friday. (Greater New Jersey Conference)

ROB GIANNAMORE is a modern-day contemplative who makes space for dangerous questions. His work

CONTRIBUTOR BIOGRAPHIES

is to help people move into a space of owned faith. He is a father of 4, married 25 years to a woman who stole him from the monastery with leftover tacos. Endurance runner and cyclist, adventurer. (Western Pennsylvania Conference)

REV. MONTANA HAMBY serves as a Deacon in full connection in the North Georgia Annual Conference. He currently lives in Athens, Georgia, and is a proud alumnus of the University of Georgia and Candler School of Theology. Rev. Hamby has served alongside young people from middle school to college for over ten years as both a history teacher and youth minister, working to help them become future leaders, bridging the church and world with justice and compassion. (North Georgia Conference)

REV. RACHEL HEADDEN is a provisional Elder in the South Carolina Annual Conference and is serving as the associate pastor at Bethany UMC on James Island. Rev. Headden believes deeply in the inherent worth of all creation, striving to always create space for the Holy Spirit to intervene, rooted in love and grace. (South Carolina Conference)

ODYSSEY HEREDIA is from Del Valle United Methodist Church in Mesquite, New Mexico. In 2020, Odyssey graduated from El Paso High School and went on to attend Southwestern College, a Methodist-affiliated college in Winfield, Kansas, where she earned a B.A. in Philosophy and Religion. Currently (Fall 2025), Odys-

sey is entering her third year at Yale Divinity School, pursuing a Master of Divinity (M.Div.), and has recently begun the ordination process as a deacon in the United Methodist Church.

REV. MELISSA HINNEN is an ordained Elder and has served as pastor of Park Slope United Methodist Church in Brooklyn, NY, since 2019. She coordinates the UMCs of Downtown Brooklyn Cooperative Parish. You can find her 100 Word Sermons: greatermessage.substack.com (New York Conference)

AMANDA HINTHORN has been working in local United Methodist Churches for over 17 years. She has served in staff roles including Director of Equipping Ministries and Director of Christian Education. She is currently the Director of Technology and Online Communication at Sun Prairie UMC, working closely with Outreach and Reconciling teams. (Wisconsin Conference)

AIMEE HONG serves as the Assistant General Secretary of Programs at the General Board of Church and Society. Previously, Aimee served as the Director of the United Methodist Seminar Program at Church and Society. She has her MDiv and MTS from Candler School of Theology. She resides in Northern Virginia with her spouse, an elder in the VA Annual Conference, and two kids. (Virginia Conference)

HEATHER JACKSON is a graduate of Saint Paul School of Theology (MDiv) and is the Director of Family Min-

istries at Asbury United Methodist Church in Prairie Village, KS. Over her twenty-plus years in college, children, and youth ministry, she has developed a passion for helping young people connect their faith to their everyday lives. (Great Plains Conference)

BR. STEVE JERBI connects faith and justice through the Organizing for Mission Network. As an Ecumenical Franciscan, organizer, and pastor, he's passionate about youth ministry and supporting leaders. He lives in Seattle with his partner, teenage kids, and a rascally Jack Russell dog. (Organizing for Mission Network)

REV. CHAD JOHNSON has always loved the mantra of "Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors." He believes this is who we are called to be by Jesus Christ and who we have been for so long as the people called Methodists. He hopes that we continue to find the courage and faith to live into this identity. (Horizon Texas Conference)

REV. MADELYN JOHNSON is an ordained Deacon who serves on the Justice and Mercy team of the Great Plains Conference, creating faith-based justice resources for local churches. She received her MDiv from Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary and has just begun her DMin at Garrett focused on sexuality education and ethics. (Great Plains Conference)

KERRY MCSHEA is a member of Fords Chapel UMC in Harvest, Alabama, where she works with the youth group and serves as a liturgist. She is currently pursu-

CONTRIBUTOR BIOGRAPHIES

ing her MDiv at Candler School of Theology and hopes to be ordained as a Deacon. She has three youth aged children of her own at home. (North Alabama Conference)

REV. SHARON MILTON is a graduate of Wesley Theological Seminary. Previously, she served as a youth pastor, outreach minister, and as the Associate pastor at Emory Fellowship. She is currently serving as the Senior Pastor at Bowie-Wilson Memorial. (Baltimore Washington Conference)

JORDAN MORROW is currently an MDiv student at Methodist Theological School in Ohio and a certified candidate in the Horizon Texas Annual Conference. He has a heart for ministries that are specifically focused on marginalized people in our communities. His call to ministry reflects that as he pursues to be an Army chaplain. (Horizon Texas Conference)

RACHEL MOSHER is a full-time youth director and seminary student passionate about helping young people explore faith with honesty, creativity, and depth. With a background in writing engaging curriculum and a heart for building inclusive, thoughtful spaces, they draw on real-life ministry experience to create meaningful and accessible resources for today's church. (Desert Southwest Conference)

NICK MUNDWILLER is an organizer, educator, and advocate with over 15 years of experience in community education and facilitation around social justice issues. Trained in education, ethics, theology, and street ac-

tivism. Nick has experience working with schools, universities, religious communities, political organizations, and non-profit organizations on a variety of diversity and justice issues. Nick is the managing editor of Reconciling Ministries Network JUST Like Me VBS curriculum and host of the Faith for the Apocalypse YouTube channel. (California-Nevada Conference)

REV. ELIZABETH MURRAY serves as the Associate Pastor of Youth, Young Adults, and Missions at the American Church in Paris, France. She is a Deacon in full connection in the South Carolina Annual Conference. Elizabeth is a graduate of the University of South Carolina and Duke University's Divinity School. (South Carolina Conference)

JULIE O'NEAL is a fifth-generation United Methodist and her family has lived in Arizona for over four generations. Julie is a Korean American adoptee and she enjoys spending time with her family, friends, and dogs. (Desert Southwest Conference)

REV. HOPE CODY PEPPERS is a provisional Deacon in the Tennessee Western Kentucky Annual Conference. Passionate about ministry with youth and social justice, she works in faith-based child welfare in Atlanta. She and her husband, Alex, enjoy coffee, crafts, and spending time outside. (Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference)

MACKENZIE RICE is a certified candidate in the Texas Annual Conference and an undergraduate student at Vanderbilt University with hopes to become a chap-

lain because she has loved working as a hospital lay minister since high school. She is passionate about equipping communities to embody an active, justice-seeking love. Mackenzie works for a student-led nonprofit advocating for anti-racist education reform, and she believes that, like the classroom, our religious communities have incredible potential for fostering and empowering compassionate changemakers. (Texas Conference)

LAURA ROSS holds an MDiv from Wesley Theological Seminary and has worked in children and youth ministry for 7 years. Her drive and passion are to see children and youth lifted as leaders in the church. (Florida Conference)

SUTTON SMITH is a graduate of Birmingham-Southern College and Yale Divinity School. She is pursuing ordination as a deacon in the Alabama-West Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church. She serves on the board of Reconciling Ministries Network. (Alabama-West Florida Conference)

TINASHE TEMBO is a Home Missioner in Zimbabwe who is passionate about youth and children. He believes in the creation of an environment where youth and children are able to thrive. (Zimbabwe West Conference)

REV. MARY "BETH" TIPTON is an ordained Deacon who has served as a Wesley Foundation director and campus minister for over 20 years. She believes education is a vital means of transformation and has

CONTRIBUTOR BIOGRAPHIES

received the prestigious Francis Asbury Award. She lives in Virginia with her family and is a member of the Holston Annual Conference. (Holston Conference)

ANDY UNGER is the youth director at Cornerstone UMC in Newman, Georgia. He is a certified candidate in the North Georgia Annual Conference attending Candler School of Theology. He lives with his wife Katie and daughter Nora in West Georgia. (North Georgia Conference)

PASTOR IAN CARLOS URRIOLA is a Licensed Local Pastor in the Upper New York Annual Conference, serving alongside the people of Burnt Hills UMC as an Associate Pastor. Ian previously served GBCS as a part of a writing team for the new Global Social Principles that were adopted at General Conference in 2024. (Upper New York Conference)

CAYCE UTLEY is an organizer for racial and social justice. She resides in the Virginia suburbs of DC with her husband and four kids. (Virginia Conference)

DR. PHILIP WINGEIER-RAYO is the Executive Director for Education of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry of The United Methodist Church. Previously, he taught religion and theology at various institutions, most recently on the faculty at Wesley Theological Seminary, where he was Academic Dean. (Baltimore-Washington Conference)

REV. ASHLEY WYNN is an ordained Deacon serving as the Outreach and Youth Pastor at Sylvania First United Methodist Church. She felt the call of God on her life at the tender age of 12, so she understands how pivotal the youth group years are in a person's faith journey. (West Ohio Conference)



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