ROOTED IN FAITH

A LEADERS’ GUIDE FOR
WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY
Dear Church Leader,

United Methodists join Christians of different traditions to celebrate World Communion Sunday on the first Sunday in October. World Communion Sunday began in 1936 as a way to recognize our ecumenical oneness in Christ and to bring Christians together in a spirit of unity and peace.

In The United Methodist Church, congregations throughout the denomination will also join together to receive a Special Sunday offering that helps scholars from around the world reach their full potential through scholarships, training and mentoring. The World Communion Sunday offering is one of six special offerings received throughout the year.

Use this guide to plan a comprehensive approach to World Communion Sunday. As you lead your congregation, children’s ministry and small-group discussions, please use and adapt the resources found in this guide to fit your context.

By incorporating as many individuals in leading different aspects of celebration, you can deepen the involvement and excitement of the congregation’s participation.

As we prepare for World Communion Sunday this year, invite the Holy Spirit to open your congregation’s heart to the global nature of the church. Please be in prayer with the scholars who receive the education made possible through this special offering. We pray that your congregation will celebrate wholeheartedly in this day of unity.
WORSHIP RESOURCE: LITURGICAL PRAYERS

This liturgy is designed to connect with the Scripture message while reinforcing the message of Christian unity through the celebration of World Communion, You can print the prayers in the bulletin or project them on screens, depending on your church’s culture.
Worship Resource: Sermon Starter

Who are the mentors who guide us on our faith journey? How can we be mentors to others? Examining the roots of our family tree as children of God, this message reminds the congregation that Holy Communion extends the table into worship spaces throughout the world.

Joining with our sisters and brothers through the sacrament of Holy Communion, we remember that we are rooted in our connections as the body of Christ.
WORSHIP RESOURCE: OFFERING TALK

The offering talk shares an example of a pastor who received World Communion Sunday funds for his education. He now serves and mentors others. The talk connects with the Scripture reading and builds on the sermon.
Small-Group Resources: Discussion Questions

Build on the study of 2 Timothy 1:1-14 in your small group. Using conversation prompts and video, learn more about World Communion Sunday while guiding participants through the “roots of our faith.”

Pray

Help God to use our study of Timothy’s letter to build on the roots we have in common. Pray that our study will allow us to share the hope we have in Jesus and the hope we have in each other.

Watch Video

Learn about how the World Communion Sunday special offering is making a difference in the lives of children and their families.

Read the Scripture: 2 Timothy 1:1-14

Ask participants to write any prayers, words or ideas that have an impression on them. Invite them to pray special prayers to remember relationships.

Look at the Context

Timothy is one of Paul’s students. Paul encourages Timothy to stay strong in his faith and to continue to grow in Christ. Paul has heard about the persecution of Christians. Paul writes that the word of faith is a valuable treasure. It is through the ministry of faith that we can see the mystery of faith that God has for us.

“The power of God, who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to God’s own purpose and grace,” writes Paul.
CHILDREN’S RESOURCE: CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

With a variety of bread that represents different parts of the world, children can taste and see how Christians around the world are united through Holy Communion.

ITEMS NEEDED
- Globe, world map or map application on your phone or tablet
- Different kinds of bread (or photos of different kinds of bread)
- A chair or cup
- World Communion Sunday offering envelope

SAY:
You can see that I have here different types of bread. In different parts of the world, people eat different kinds of bread. In India, people eat nan bread. In the Middle East (point to naan), people eat pita bread. Can you guess where Irish soda bread comes from?

All of these breads taste a little different. They might feel a little different in your mouth. They look different from one another. And even though they might be more common in another country, we can enjoy them here, too.

Jesus enjoyed bread. He used it to show how much he loved us.

(Break the bread and share with the students.
Have a gluten-free option available for those with allergies.)

On the night when Jesus knew he was to die, he thanked God for the bread and broke the loaf in half to share with his friends. He told them that whenever they gather and share bread, they should remember how much Jesus loves them.
CHILDREN’S RESOURCE: CHILDREN’S BULLETIN

Give children their own bulletin that highlights the World Communion Sunday theme. Prayer, Scripture, a coloring page and games help children engage with the Scripture reading and special offering.
CHILDREN’S RESOURCE: ACTIVITY

Using a children’s atlas or online resources, discuss the languages, climate, food, type of schools and other areas of cultural significance found in different countries or regions including your own. Compare and contrast the diversity of Jesus’ family.

Explain that we are all part of Jesus’ family.

Ask students to share ideas about what all Christians have in common. Answers include:

• We are followers of Jesus.
• We are called to love God and love our neighbors.
• God created all of us.
• God loves all of us.
• We all need God’s mercy.
• We heard in our Gospel reading that we are all called to make disciples of all nations, teaching people to obey everything that Jesus has commanded.

Explain that on World Communion Sunday, when we receive the sacrament, we remember that each of us is part of Jesus’ family. Part of being a family is helping one another.

Say, “Sometimes, people need help to go to college. And United Methodists all over the world share our gifts to help provide what is needed for students to go to college.”

Ask, “Isn’t it beautiful that we can appreciate each other’s differences? Isn’t it wonderful to celebrate what we all have in common on a day when we receive the gift of Holy Communion together?”

Activity:

• Give students one of the flags printed from this website: http://www.supercoloring.com/coloring-pages/cultures/flags-of-the-world
• Spend time coloring the flags and then hang them around the room.

Pray (ask students to repeat each line):

Dear God,
Thank you for loving us.
Thank you for making us a family across the world.
We pray for you to care for people in (name countries/regions that you discussed including your own).
Help us to be more like Jesus and to love our sisters and brothers.
Amen.
YOUTH RESOURCE GUIDE – PLANTING SEEDS: MATTHEW 13:31-32

Build a World Communion Sunday youth experience to fit your context. This guide includes promotional teaser videos, fundraiser ideas, music suggestions, a warm-up activity, a message, small-group discussion prompts, a mission moment video and a prayer.
Promotional Ideas

This e-book includes 10 strategies for preparing your congregation to celebrate World Communion Sunday. We pray these ideas will help connect people creatively with the global church and spark a generous spirit in support of scholars.
What channels do you use to prepare and inform your congregation about upcoming events? We’ve developed three short messages for you to publish on the pastor’s blog or your church’s mission page to promote World Communion Sunday. It’s also helpful to share the message with the congregation in the bulletin, as part of a newsletter and through email.

**Getting ready for World Communion Sunday: October 6, 2019**

Ofelia Didualao, from the Philippines, considers herself a scholar of the church and society, thanks to funds received through the United Methodist World Communion Sunday special offering to help her complete graduate school.

World Communion Sunday began in 1986 as a way to recognize our ecumenical oneness in Christ and to bring Christians together in a spirit of unity and peace. In The United Methodist Church, congregations throughout the denomination will also receive a Special Sunday offering that helps students from around the world reach their full potential through scholarships and mentoring.

For example, the scholarship helped Annie Solis Escalante, who is from Peru, complete a master’s degree in social management. After graduation, she put her education to use by developing projects with the Health and Healing Program of the World Council of Churches in Geneva.

As we prepare for World Communion Sunday this year, I pray we will allow the Holy Spirit to open our hearts to the global nature of the church. Please be in prayer with the scholars who are recipients of the education made possible through this special offering. Thank you for your generosity.
SOCIAL MEDIA RESOURCES

Prepare your community for World Communion Sunday by posting information on social media.

Post these graphics on Facebook, send them to your email list with a message or share on your church’s website. Use them alone or post with a hashtag to personalize for your community. For maximum impact, schedule two to three images a week, beginning in late August.

Printing the images and displaying them around your church can educate your congregation about how each gift makes the difference in the life of a scholar, who then pays it forward.
VIDEOS

Through videos, people can learn firsthand about World Communion Sunday. Share the videos in small groups, watch them in worship or post them on social media.
Podcasts

Encourage your congregation to listen to these devotions as part of their daily meditation. How is God preparing hearts to participate generously in the World Communion Sunday offering?

You can also listen to these devotionals on the following media channels:

Anchor FM on iTunes Podcasts
Spotify Podcasts
VIDEO PLAYLIST

As you prepare for World Communion Sunday, watch these music videos that reflect the global diversity of The United Methodist Church, our unity with other Christians and our connections as the Body of Christ.
Reading List

Expand your understanding about the practice of Holy Communion and our ecumenical global relationships. In preparation for World Communion Sunday, check out these books to read on your own or as part of a small group. All of these resources are available through Cokesbury.
MOBILE WALLPAPERS

In today’s world, people spend a lot of time looking at their phones. Share these wallpaper designs so that whenever your parishioners look at their phones, they will see an inspiring message that reminds them of World Communion Sunday.