

SPECIAL
SUNDAY



WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY

Youth Resources



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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 will also join together to receive a Special Sunday offering that helps students 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. This resource offers ideas and tools for celebrating World Communion Sunday with the youth in your church. It can be adapted for your context.



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Event Ideas for Youth to Celebrate World Communion Sunday



Host a watch party that explores stories of young people from around the world.

Invite each youth to develop a conversation starter or question for discussion after the film.

Some suggested titles:

He Named Me Malala
Slumdog Millionaire
The Idol
Queen of Katwe
Wadjda
Dangal

Organize support for the World Communion Sunday offering.

Encourage the youth to engage with the World Communion Sunday theme while raising money to support student leaders:

- Set up an online fundraising campaign utilizing social media and using resources found at <https://www.resourceumc.org/en/churchwide/umcgiving/special-sundays/world-communion-sunday-pastor-and-leader-kit>
- Host a “world fair” and charge admission with tables set up that share information about different countries where The United Methodist Church has a presence. Highlight specific ministries that your church partners with.
- Plan a bake sale with bread or pastries prepared with recipes from around the world.
- Compile family recipes that represent the heritage of the students and sell them as a booklet.
- Organize items to auction off. Solicit school supplies, religious items, global or travel themes from local business and package them into baskets.

Set up an interview.

Who are people in your congregation or among your students who are from a different country? Invite them to speak with the youth about some of the faith practices, customs and traditions of their country of origin.



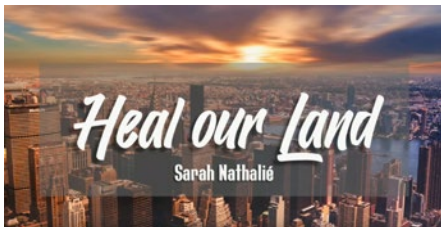
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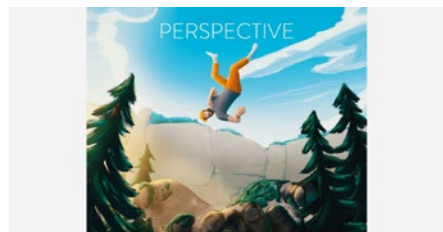
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Worship Playlist



▶ Sarah Nathalie — “Heal our land”
<https://youtu.be/-00PtaxQnBY>



▶ Sajan Nauriyal — “Heaven”
<https://youtu.be/9Ebluajk3ak>



▶ Fuego Ft Seth Condrey —
“Search My Heart—Examine”
<https://youtu.be/45d6EDPq7jU>



▶ Beloved (feat. Romy) — “Palm of your Hand”
<https://youtu.be/a7gEqAD4Qlw>



▶ Wande — Woo
<https://youtu.be/uw1eNMu05Qs>



▶ The Many — “All Belong Here”
<https://youtu.be/sJBEwqBfw3I>



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Bible Study & Activities

Note: **Free resources from Church of the Resurrection**

The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection offers practical tools and ideas to strengthen churches through its Share Church ministry: <https://sharechurch.com/>

The following outline is adapted from the Share Church "Come to the Table" curriculum.

GROUP OPENING AND ICEBREAKER

Welcome the youth as usual. In your welcome, include an introduction to World Communion Sunday:

One of the wonderful aspects of The United Methodist Church is that we can do so much more together through our connection than we ever can do on our own.

On the first Sunday in October, our church will recognize World Communion Sunday and receive a special offering. We will join with other churches to help support the dreams of young leaders who are building up God's kingdom.

Jesus' love is shared with and through people all over the world. He invites all people to his table. Our church family includes people from around the globe. For example in Brazil Cleber Lizardo de Assis works

with children and teenagers to help them have a better life. In this photo (<https://umcmission.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/2-1.jpg>), he is playing music for children and sharing his new children's book. When he wanted to go to school to learn about ways to help the children in the community, he was concerned that he didn't have enough money. But because of a World Communion Sunday scholarship, he was able to receive the education that will help him be a stronger leader. (full story here: <https://umcmission.org/reconciliation/world-communion-scholar-puts-the-social-in-social-science/>)

When is a time when you felt unwelcome in a situation? Let's take a moment for you to write down or draw what happened. If you feel trusting, you are invited to share that experience with the group and how it made you feel (allow time for sharing).

Today is World Communion Sunday. All are welcome to God's table of grace. I want you to consider why it is that Jesus welcomes you to God's table. Write down



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some words about what that kind of welcome feels like. God invites us to focus on becoming a community of people who are not defined by our past. Instead, God has invited all people, to find a new identity at the table of Jesus Christ. If you feel trusting, you are invited to share some of the words you chose.

SCRIPTURE: MATTHEW 26:17-30 (CEB)

17 On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and said, “Where do you want us to prepare for you to eat the Passover meal?”

¹⁸ He replied, “Go into the city, to a certain man, and say, ‘The teacher says, “My time is near. I’m going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.”’” ¹⁹ The disciples did just as Jesus instructed them. They prepared the Passover.

²⁰ That evening he took his place at the table with the twelve disciples. ²¹ As they were eating he said, “I assure you that one of you will betray me.”

²² Deeply saddened, each one said to him, “I’m not the one, am I, Lord?”

²³ He replied, “The one who will betray me is the one who dips his hand with me into this bowl. ²⁴ The Human One goes to his death just as it is written about him. But how terrible it is for that person who betrays the Human One! It would have been better for him if he had never been born.”

²⁵ Now Judas, who would betray him, replied, “It’s not me, is it, Rabbi?”

Jesus answered, “You said it.”

²⁶ While they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, “Take and eat. This is my body.” ²⁷ He took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink from this, all of you. ²⁸ This is my blood of the covenant,

which is poured out for many so that their sins may be forgiven. ²⁹ I tell you, I won’t drink wine again until that day when I drink it in a new way with you in my Father’s kingdom.” ³⁰ Then, after singing songs of praise, they went to the Mount of Olives.



MESSAGE

It was part of the Jewish custom to gather for the Passover meal. Jesus gathered his disciples who were expecting to celebrate familiar traditions. But then Jesus begins going off script. He starts saying words they were not familiar with.

In this passage, Jesus tells the disciples, “This is my blood of the covenant.” A covenant is a promise that indicates a deep ongoing relationship between two people. It is like a sacred contract.

Jesus shares this meal in community. He offers this promise to everyone who is sitting there. He offers it



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to Judas who will betray him and Peter who will deny him. He welcomes them all to the table.

We are assured that Jesus is with us at his table. We share in intentional community with one another as we partake in this feast.

And the table is not just the table here, but the Communion table is set at churches around the globe. On World Communion Sunday we remember that all are invited to this meal. We are all connected in God's love for us through Jesus.

In our connection, we are strengthened to be leaders who bring Jesus' love into the world. In our connection, we strengthen others in their leadership. For example, students like Garrett Ozmer (<https://www.umc.org/en/content/ethnic-scholar-appreciates-world-communion-sunday>).

When Garret was in fifth grade, he had a seizure at school. He was diagnosed with epilepsy

with seizures that caused him to stutter. In high school he began to embrace his challenges recognizing that they were not insurmountable. Because of the care he received, he began dreaming of becoming a pediatric neurologist.



Garrett Ozmer

As he pursues his dream, Garrett was grateful to receive the Ethnic Scholarship, made possible by generous gifts on World Communion Sunday. "Being a doctor is not about the money for me; it's about healing children who are just as scared and confused as I once was. My faith has always challenged me to give back in service," he says.

Garrett felt welcomed just as he is. Through God's welcoming grace we experience transformation. When we follow the way of Christ, the Holy Spirit ignites in us, moving us to fulfill our part of the covenant that God through Jesus has made with us.

And of course, you are not perfect and there will be some seasons you may be less responsive to God's grace and mercy in your life. We are not perfect but our Wesleyan understanding of grace is that God will keep working with us to help us reach perfect love through Christ.

As Christians, we are determined to keep the hope of Christ alive by sharing his love with others. Through Holy Communion, you fill your bodies with nourishment seeking to build God's family here on earth.

It can be challenging to stay focused on what God wants for you, to resist the comfortable response of looking away, living your life doing your thing. But remember that God has chosen each one of you for



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this community. You are invited to live into God sized dreams and your community of faith is committed to walk alongside you as you pursue them.

And we can choose if we want to respond to God's call on our life or not. But perhaps you will discover that it is when you are in the flow of surrendering to God's call on our life that we feel most alive.

Maybe you feel alone and lonely in your place in the world. Remember that your place is holy and sacred. None of you is alone. Together we are called and welcome at the table of grace and love. Together in community we are God's people. You are welcome here.

I invite you to turn to the people next to you and say to them, "You are welcome here."

If appropriate, continue with Holy Communion. Prepare a loaf of bread and pitcher of juice. Give each student a small cup. Following the Great Thanksgiving ask students share the bread and cup with the person next to them.

Each student should say, "NAME, this is the body of Christ given for you." The receiving student tears off a piece of bread and sets aside. The student offering then says, "This is the blood of Christ given for you." Student pours small amount of the juice into the cup. The student receiving the bread and juice then

responds with, "Thank you Jesus, for inviting me to your table."

Then that student takes the elements and offers communion to the next student and the loaf and pitcher go around until all have received the bread and juice.



Leader then says to all: "Each of you is so valuable to God sent Jesus to invite you to the table of grace. So if you would like to receive Jesus's offer of life and love, I invite you now to eat the bread together." (EAT BREAD TOGETHER) If you would like to receive the gift of Jesus' welcome, just as you are, I invite you now to drink the cup. (DRINK JUICE)

GROUP CONVERSATION

(break into small groups if necessary)

Ask someone (or several people) to read excerpts from "This Holy Mystery" <https://s3.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/gbod-assets/generic/THM-BYGC.PDF>

No one will be turned away from the Table because of age or "mental, physical, developmental, and/or psychological" capacity (BOD, ¶ 162.G) or because of any other condition that might limit his



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or her understanding or hinder his or her reception of the sacrament.



The grace given through Holy Communion is offered to the entire church, including those who are unable to respond for themselves. Children are members of the covenant community and participants in the Lord's Supper.

The Lord's Supper in a United Methodist congregation is open to members of other United Methodist congregations and to Christians from other traditions.

"A member of any local United Methodist church is a member of the denomination and the catholic (universal) church" (BOD; ¶ 215). The United Methodist Church recognizes that it is only one of the bodies that constitute the community of Christians. Despite our differences, all Christians are welcome at the Table of the Lord.

Any person who answers in faith the invitation "Christ our Lord invites to his table all who love him, who earnestly repent of their sin and seek to live in peace with one another" (UMH; page 7) is worthy through Christ to partake of Holy Communion. Christians come to the Lord's Table in gratitude for Christ's

mercy toward sinners. We do not share in Communion because of our worthiness; no one is truly worthy. We come to the Eucharist out of our hunger to receive God's gracious love, to receive forgiveness and healing.

Some deeply committed United Methodist people who hesitate or even refuse to partake of Holy Communion do so because of their sense that they are unworthy. This problem is largely based upon misinterpretation and false fears. Within the United Methodist tradition, people who participate in the sacrament are assured of the forgiveness of their sins and of pardon through their participation in the Invitation and the Confession and Pardon.

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- *What does the sacrament of Holy Communion mean to you?*
- *Does it reassure you that Jesus welcomed all to the table including those who would betray and deny him? Why or why not?*
- *When you receive Communion, what is the covenant you are making in your life?*
- *As a child of God, what do you bring to the table?*
- *How does it feel to share in communion with others? Do you sense the connection with those who are not physically in the same space?*



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Offering



Show video:

<https://youtu.be/AMfCkCs-uOY>

As we consider what it means to be connected through God's welcoming grace, today we have an opportunity to strengthen young leaders throughout the world.

When you give generously on World Communion Sunday, you partner with other gifted, qualified students from around the globe who are becoming the world changers God created them to be. We especially experience and celebrate the connection of the Body of Christ when our offering joins with United Methodists' around the globe.

OFFERING PRAYER

Receiving the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, we offer ourselves as a holy and living sacrifice. We present our gifts knowing that you have entrusted us to care for one another.

Bless this World Communion Sunday offering as it is multiplied in partnership with other United Methodist congregations.

Transform these gifts into blessings of your children's hopes and dreams as they commit themselves to welcoming others embodying your love. Amen.

CLOSING PRAYER

As we close in a circle, facing one another, be aware of the larger circle of connection with those around the world who are all part of God's welcoming table.

Dear Jesus, thank you for inviting us all to your table that is as wide and long as your love for us. We thank you for your unending love.

As we prepare to go into your world, we ask that you help each of us to truly understand this gift of life and love that you offer.

And Jesus, as we go from your table, continue to show us how to love one another. Thank you Jesus for welcoming each one of us. Amen.



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