

SPECIAL
SUNDAY

UNITED METHODIST
STUDENT DAY

YOUTH RESOURCE GUIDE



Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.
The people of The United Methodist Church®



UNITED METHODIST STUDENT DAY

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One of six church-wide Special Sundays with offerings, United Methodist Student Day funds a channel of hope for young scholars. The burden of taking on prohibitive amounts of debt can feel overwhelming. It may limit bright, qualified students from bringing their full selves into the professions to which they feel called. This resource offers ideas and tools for celebrating United Methodist Student Day with the youth in your church. It can be adapted for your context.



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Event ideas for youth to celebrate United Methodist Student Day



Host a watch party with a focus on students and education:

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

Some suggested titles:

Dead Poets Society
The Great Debaters
Lean on Me
The Man Who Knew Infinity
Good Will Hunting
Mona Lisa Smile
Moxie
All Together Now
Freshman Year

Organize support for the United Methodist Student Day offering.

Encourage the youth to engage with the Special Sunday theme while raising money to support United Methodist students:

- Set up an online fundraising campaign utilizing social media and using resources found at <https://www.resourceumc.org/en/content/united-methodist-student-day-sunday-pastor-and-leader-kit>.
- Host a spoken-word event with students creatively sharing their experiences, hopes and testimonies.
- Invite youth to lead your church's United Methodist Student Day worship service, including the invitation with the offering.
- United Methodist Student Day falls near the US Thanksgiving holiday. Organize a Turkey Trot fun run and donate the registration fee to the special offering.
- Solicit school supplies, books, gift cards, etc., from local businesses and package them into baskets for an auction.

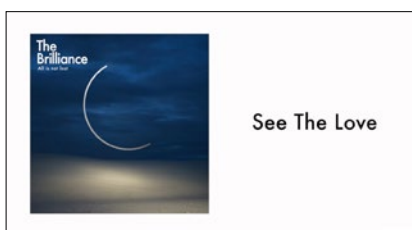
Set up an interview.

Invite former youth who are now in college to speak with students about their college experience, faith journey and how the church has shaped and nurtured them.



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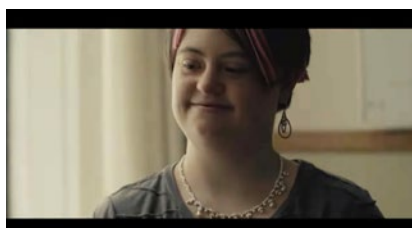
Worship Playlist



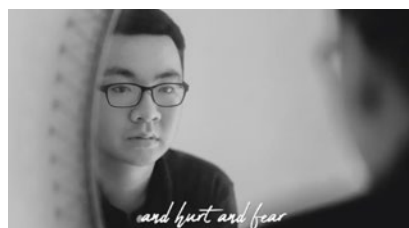
▶ **The Brilliance—“See the Love”**
<https://youtu.be/KJV01ue4H-E>



▶ **Sandra McCracken—“Justice Will Roll Down”**
<https://youtu.be/H1YnY-gSrsg>



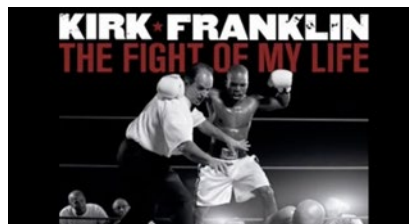
▶ **Josh Garrels—“Christ Has No Body Now but Yours”**
<https://youtu.be/w7ymxW3rndk>



▶ **The Many—“Those Who Dream”**
<https://youtu.be/ZHIDSdYfBmM>



▶ **Paul Zach and Madison Cunningham—“Your Labor Is Not in Vain”**
<https://youtu.be/bPj3Kf7Dorw>



▶ **Kirk Franklin—“Little Boy”**
<https://youtu.be/xONMtTVJOVI>



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Bible Study & Activities

ICEBREAKER

Ask some of the students to find a cartoon that shows something the youth would consider awkward. With a reminder to be kind, invite the rest of the group to caption the cartoon with something funny (for example, <https://www.mememonkey.com/topic/awkward>).

Our Bible lesson today is about Mary and Martha, two sisters who invited Jesus to their home. Martha worked very hard to make sure that Jesus felt welcomed while Mary stopped what she was doing and listened to everything Jesus was teaching.

Mary sat at Jesus' feet, taking the posture of a student even though at that time students were traditionally male. Jesus often steps outside of societal expectations and does things that make people around him uncomfortable. If the male disciples had been there, they might have thought this moment was awkward.

GROUP OPENING

In church, we can bring our whole selves—whether you are more like Mary, studying and listening, or like Martha, who wants everyone to be comfortable and has a heart for service. We also want to find a balance

while helping you grow into your strengths, even though sometimes that growth feels awkward.

One of the wonderful aspects of The United Methodist Church is that we are together in community and support one another in our journeys. We can do so much more together through our connection than we ever can do on our own.

On the fourth Sunday in November, our church celebrates United Methodist students and receives a special offering to fund college scholarships. We join with other churches to help support the dreams of young leaders who are building up God's kingdom.

Hannah Loper is a college student now and recalls that when she was a child, her mother was very sick. Her family felt comforted when people in the church prayed for her mother, brought food and sent cards and letters.

Later, when her mother recovered, they started a ministry in the church to take care of people the way they had been taken care of. When Hannah got older, The United Methodist Church, including churches like ours, collected money so that Hannah and other students can go to college and follow their dreams.



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Hannah Loper with classmates. (2nd row, far right)

Hannah says that kind of support gives her hope and encourages her to do a good job in school.

When is a time when you felt people supporting you with words and actions as you went through your journey at school or at church? You can draw a picture, write a poem or use other words to explain the situation. If you feel trusting, you are invited to share that experience with the group and how it made you feel (allow time for sharing).

SCRIPTURE: LUKE 10:38-42 (CEB)

While Jesus and his disciples were traveling, Jesus entered a village where a woman named Martha welcomed him as a guest. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his message. By contrast, Martha was preoccupied with getting everything ready for their meal. So Martha came to him and said, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to prepare the table all by myself? Tell her to help me."

The Lord answered, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things. One thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the better part. It won't be taken away from her."

Message:

It's rare that we hear about women as central figures in the Bible, especially by name, and in this account we hear the names of two women—Martha and Mary.

We read that Martha "welcomed" him into her home.

Her sister, Mary, sat at Jesus' feet. This is the posture of a student even though at that time students were traditionally male.

Mary is taking it all in. *Can you imagine what it was like for a woman who was limited in so many ways at that time to be fully included and treated as an intellectual and theological equal? Can you imagine having the opportunity to soak in firsthand the love and the wisdom of Jesus' teachings?*

And then there is Martha, who we heard is "distracted" by her tasks. The word task is translated from the Greek word diakonia, which is the root word for implying that she is not just doing busy work but she is engaged in ministerial tasks.



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I wonder who here feels more like Mary (raise hand) and who feels more like Martha (raise hand)?

Martha expresses frustration that Mary is not helping her.

Have you ever felt that the work was unfairly distributed? If you have siblings I'm sure you have sometimes felt that you were being asked to do more than your sister or brother.

But Jesus, as he often does, turns it upside down. "Martha, Martha," he says. He wants to liberate her from feeling that there is always so much to do. Sometimes it is enough to just be. Take a break. Breathe deeply. Recognize that Jesus is with you.

Do our tasks in school, sports or other activities become idols that distract us from focusing on Jesus' teachings?

As disciples of Jesus Christ, how can we connect with him when we are so busy that we can't even find time to just rest?

Jesus invited Mary and Martha into a space of love and grace that was unconditional. It cannot be taken away. That invitation is such a blessing.

Mary took the time to sit and listen while Martha was constantly at work, distracted and worried.

It is not her ministry that was the issue, it was that it had become a distraction, keeping her from full relationship with God. To be fair, perhaps it is too much outside of her comfort zone to follow Jesus in what might have been considered a man's role. But Jesus wants her to understand that God's grace is available to her. She doesn't need to feel awkward about it.



Jesus wants you to understand that God's grace is available to you. He crosses every societal boundary to invite every child of God into relationship with him.

From Mary's posture, humbly at the feet of Jesus and in connection with God, we find a starting place for building relationships with our neighbors.

Today's offering supports United Methodist students like you. It is a reflection of God's grace and a reflection of our encouragement. The United Methodist Student Day offering is an investment used to help young adults succeed in their studies without distractions that might otherwise get in their way.



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(If there are junior or senior high school students in the group, make sure they are aware of how to apply for scholarships and loans through The United Methodist Church: <https://www.gbhem.org/>.)

GROUP CONVERSATION

(break into small groups if necessary)

Questions for Discussion

- *What do you imagine it was like for Mary, who, as a woman was limited in so many ways at that time, to be offered a religious education from Jesus?*
- *How much time do you set aside and what resources help you “sit at the feet” of Jesus each day or week?*
- *Have you ever felt that work in your household is unfairly distributed and that you are carrying the burden for others?*
- *Are there activities in your life that are idols or that distract you from Jesus or from your schoolwork?*
- *Jesus says that “Mary has chosen the better part. It won’t be taken away from her.” An education is also something that can never be taken away from you. What are ways that the church can support and encourage you in your studies?*

Offering and Prayer



Show video:

<https://youtu.be/SiXuqTza-OU>

Today we have an opportunity to join together with other United Methodists to support students like Zach. And students like you. Our gifts are a source of encouragement and practical support for young people who are working hard to follow their dreams.

Prayer over the offering:

Thank you, God, for students of all ages.
Thank you for reminders of how much we are loved.
Bless these gifts and the students who receive them.
May the funds be a source of encouragement
and strength.
Amen.



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