All Scripture quotations are taken from the New Revised Standard Version, unless otherwise noted.

© Copyright 2009 by Virginia Theological Seminary
Center for the Ministry of Teaching
3737 Seminary Road
Alexandria, VA 22304

Amelia G. Dyer, Ph.D., Editor-in-Chief
Dorothy S. Linthicum, Managing Editor
George J. Kroupa III, Associate Editor

Consultants for Relationships
   The Rev. Brian Prior
   The Rev. John Palarine
   Happy Pullman
   The Rev. Scott Slater

Youth Consultants
   Kenneth Gleason
   Natasha Samuel

# Table of Contents

**Background for Leadership Teams**

- Introduction ........................................................................................................ 1
- How to Use These Materials ........................................................................ 3
- For Members of the Leadership Team .......................................................... 9

**Diversity: Session Titles**

- Looking Ahead .................................................................................................... 14
- Racism .................................................................................................................. 18
- Rich & Poor .......................................................................................................... 22
- Ethnicity & Culture ............................................................................................. 26
- In the Church ........................................................................................................ 30
- Differently Abled ................................................................................................ 34
- Stereotypes ........................................................................................................... 38
- Men & Women ..................................................................................................... 42
- Making a Difference ............................................................................................. 46
Diversity

The world is made up of very different people who live in different cultural and ethnic communities. The people of God are called to serve the poor and to share the Gospel with the entire world. If we are to fulfill this call and to have peace in our communities and the world, we must learn to understand those who are different from us.

The purpose of this study of diversity is to begin the process of understanding others. In response to the promises made in the Baptismal Covenant, we must, with God’s help, “strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being” (The Book of Common Prayer, p. 305).

Introduction

Diversity is one of a series of modules developed for Older Youth who are in senior high school. The curriculum is based on the promises made in the Baptismal Covenant found in The Book of Common Prayer.

The vision for the curriculum also includes the development of leadership skills for Christian young people. Youth need to be leaders of their own lives by following Christ’s example and making choices that are best for them.

The leadership of the group will come from a team that includes youth and adults. It is recommended that leadership teams of youth and adults meet in advance, perhaps on retreat, to choose and plan for the various areas of study.

This Guide

This guide contains nine sessions, seven of which provide maximum opportunity for choice. Two copies of the guide will be helpful in sharing responsibility for leadership.

The first session, “Looking Ahead,” is designed for planning. It begins with a “Point of Contact”—the Baptismal Covenant—related to God’s call to love one another. The planning session begins, as do all other sessions, with prayer and the study of scripture to focus the experience on the presence of God in our lives.

The activities in Session 1 are designed to develop the leadership skills of communication, trust, and relationship. Specific help such as Steps for Planning and the Planning Reference Guide is included to facilitate the planning effort for all members of the leadership team. Because pre-planning is not always possible, the first session can also serve as a tool for involving all participants in the choices to be made.
At this time the group will choose youth leaders and develop plans for study of the other eight sessions. In this process, adults will serve as facilitators for youth-directed planning.

**Sessions 2 - 8** examine the issues of *Diversity* through these individual topics:

- **Racism**
- **Rich & Poor**
- **Ethnicity & Culture**
- **In the Church**
- **Differently Abled**
- **Stereotypes**
- **Men & Women**

Each session begins with prayer, scripture, and a Personal Story. The Personal Stories, written from the perspective of a young person, focus on the heart of the topic for that session. The group may choose—from a variety of themes and activities developed from those themes—the ways in which they want to interact with the materials.

A study of issues and Scripture often leads to more than just awareness of an issue. **Session 9** is designed to help youth bring together what they have learned and make decisions about the actions they will take in response. This may be done as individuals or as a group. The final activities include plans for liturgical celebrations, social action, and just plain fun.

**Other Modules in the Episcopal Curriculum for Older Youth**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diversity</th>
<th>Relationships</th>
<th>Spirituality</th>
<th>Violence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peace &amp; Justice</td>
<td>Success &amp; Failure</td>
<td>Difficult Decisions</td>
<td>Treasuring Our Gifts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How to Use These Materials

1. DECISIONS ARE MADE BY LEADERSHIP TEAM

   This curriculum is based on a model that requires a team of people to lead the sessions and the planning process. The assumption is that this team will consist of several teenagers who will take the key leadership roles and adults who will provide resources and support.

   Each issue-based session develops three themes using a specific passage from the Bible as a focus for study. Suggestions for activities, discussion topics, and questions are provided for the three themes. Teams can decide to focus on one or two of the themes or take a broader look using all three.

   The members of this team may change during the year as new issues are introduced or the needs of the group change. Leadership skills introduced throughout the module are for the whole group of youth and adults.

2. BUILDING A YOUTH-LED TEAM

   The best way to function well as a team is to spend eight to ten hours together before the year begins. The team may decide to meet several times or go on retreat for this purpose. Here is a way to set up an effective team.

   • Identify four to six teens who are leaders in school, church, and other settings. Choose two to four adults who are leaders but who also know how to follow.
   • Spend time together getting to know each other and building community with one another. This can best be done in a retreat setting by sharing prayer time and meal times as well as planning times.
   • Share faith stories in whatever way seems appropriate and comfortable.
   • Review all of the materials in the chosen module and begin to make some plans about how best to use this resource. If time permits, it may also be a good time to make plans for future modules. Be aware that new leadership may emerge during the coming year.
   • Decide on a plan and delegate responsibilities for planning, leading sessions, and communicating.
   • Meet with the entire group, share your plans, and get their input.
   • Finalize the plan and begin.
   • Be prepared to revise your plan if circumstances change.
3. CORE COMPONENTS

Each session includes the same basic information. Optional activities and sections change as needed in response to the issue and themes. These components are:

- **Session design.** Three elements are essential for every session. 1) A beginning prayer, chosen from *The Book of Common Prayer*, is offered as a way to center the group’s time together. 2) The heart of the session is the three themes and activities that help the participants to gain deeper understandings of the issue. 3) The dismissal brings everyone together as the time ends and sends them out to do God’s work in the world.

- **Objective.** A learning objective is found at the top of page one of every session. The objective guides the team in determining what is to occur as a result of the time spent with this material.

- **Scripture.** With a note to “Begin here,” youth are asked to look at passages from the Bible that relate to the issue. Three different pieces of Scripture provide three different views of the issue. Most sessions include both Old and New Testament references.

- **Commentary.** Each passage from the Bible is briefly explained in a paragraph following the biblical quotation. Leaders who wish to know more may explore larger works such as *The Interpreter’s Bible*, a Bible commentary, or a Bible dictionary.

- **Personal Stories.** Except for the initial planning session, all of the sessions include a Personal Story. Typically it is a story of an experience that youth encounter as a part of their daily lives. In telling these stories to each other the youth will be able to examine their own experiences and be more aware of the feelings of others.

- **Questions.** Suggestions for questions to be used as discussion starters are offered throughout the sessions. An icon easily identifies the questions.

- **Skill Building.** Because a specific goal of these materials is to help youth recognize their strengths and improve their leadership skills, certain skills are emphasized in each session. These will be developed through the optional activities.
 Optional Activities. A goal of the *Episcopal Curriculum for Youth* is to offer a wide range of options that allow flexibility within groups and meet the needs of different types of groups. Leadership teams are invited to use their own creativity in choosing other games or activities they enjoy. The following options will be available throughout various sessions:

1. **Creative activities** to stimulate the artistic talents of teens.

2. **Games** to build trust and skills as well as explore issues.

3. **Movies, TV Shows, and Print Media** that illustrate the theme presented in today’s time.

4. **Literature**, books, and short stories, that develop the theme as well as those created by the individual members of a group.

5. **Music** from *The Hymnal 1982* and from contemporary and Christian resources relevant to the topic.

6. **Field trips** to places that provide an enhancement of the theme.

7. **Service projects** that arise from the themes to carry the mission of the church beyond the walls of the classroom or the church.

8. **Posters.** A set of six posters representative of the themes within each issue are provided separately. The posters are designed to stimulate thoughts, discussion, and reflection on the various concepts.

**4. SAMPLE SESSION**

After the leadership team has met and the planned study of the module, the group begins to meet. A model for a session might look something like this:

1. **Planning for a session.** The leadership team has selected Theme 2 as the way they wish to approach Session 2. One or two members of the group are assigned to be leaders. They prepare for the group to participate in several of the discussions and activities for Theme 2. Any necessary speakers or other outside arrangements are made in advance.
2. **Begin with Prayer.** Starting together with prayer is a way to help the group focus their attention. A prayer from *The Book of Common Prayer* is printed above Theme 1. Leaders may use this prayer, choose another, or compose one of their own. The prayer can be said by one person, or everyone can pray together. This may also be a time for sharing of any concerns of those present or for those absent.

3. **Scripture.** These materials are unique because they look at issues through specific passages in the Bible. The leaders read the designated Scripture and use the questions to talk about the relationship of the Scripture to the theme.

4. **Activities.** The group participates in one or more of the activities furnished in the guide. The choice will depend on the interests of the group and the time frame of the gathering.

5. **Preparing for Next Time.** A few minutes before the end of the time, announce any coming events and give leaders for the next session an opportunity to give a preview.

6. **Dismissal.** Just as the start of time together needs prayer for focus, so does the closing. The participants share any concerns to be held in prayer during the coming days and close with the “Dismissal,” also printed above the beginning of Theme 1.

5. **SOME GUIDELINES FOR DISCUSSION**

   A key to the effectiveness of these materials is to help the group learn how to talk with one another about the issues that affect their lives and faith.

   **Sharing of individual stories.** People are given the opportunity to share the things that are important in their own lives. This will become easier as the group members grow in trust for each other. Sometimes this may be difficult or impossible for an individual. This person needs to be allowed to pass if they wish.

   **Issues, themes, stories.** There are many interesting topics and stories that serve as a “launching pad” for rich and deep discussion. Choose those that will engage those who participate.

   **Active learning.** There are many opportunities for trips, visits, and other activities to bring great energy into your study. Your team can decide what works best for your group and plan times for these events.
Speakers and guests. There are many people in your community with fascinating stories. The team can find the right people who will have an influence on your group.

Statement to the church. Teens have valuable things to say about and to their church. This can be incorporated into the program around any issue that the members of your group feel moved to respond to.

Here are some simple guidelines that can be used to facilitate sharing and community building. It is a good idea to discuss these guidelines with your team and add or delete suggestions from your group.

GUIDELINES FOR DISCUSSION

1. Make and commitment to all sessions (continuity).
2. Include everyone, even yourself, in the conversation.
3. Be real—be honest.
4. Send “I” messages—share feelings.
5. Talk about your own experiences.
7. Listen, understand, but do not fix.
8. Be specific.
9. Respect confidentiality.
10. Allow the Spirit, within and beyond, to work in this group.
6. THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The setting where your session takes place is crucial to the success of your program. In short, the less it is like a classroom the more you will be able to facilitate learning, sharing, and growth. Pay attention to the environment you are providing, as this will have a great impact on the learning process. Consider three possibilities to create the desired environment.

- **The youth room.** One good alternative is a room at the church designated for young people and arranged with comfortable chairs, couches, etc. This provides a comfortable and inviting atmosphere.

- **Meeting in a home.** Holding meetings at someone's home near the church can be a great asset. This provides a casual, comfortable setting that usually enhances the process. This may cause some problems but it is well worth investigating. Also, people may be more open to making their homes available if it is done on a rotating basis. Don't rule out this possibility without carefully considering it.

- **Gathering in a restaurant.** A restaurant can provide a wonderful opportunity for a meal, fellowship, and learning. Often young people who wouldn't come to the church will feel comfortable in this setting. Of course, this will raise some financial considerations, but these are not impossible. You could also consider meeting at a restaurant on an occasional basis as a way of promoting outreach and for celebration.
For Members of the Leadership Team

A General Philosophy of a Teaching Ministry

God made all people with great intelligence, skills, talents, feelings, opinions, and ideas regardless of their age. All people are growing in their faith journey. Two key words in working with others are value and respect. Never assume that you know more than they do or that your or their experience in life gives either one more value. Instead, enter into a learning adventure, side by side. You will discover as much as you impart. You will be impacted as much as you impact others. Keep an open mind and heart to all that is said, felt, and shared; and experience God doing greater things than you could pray or ask for.

Who are Older Youth?

Volumes have been written on the lives of teens and adolescent development. The purpose here is to give the leadership team some keys about what young people are like. Youth who are on the leadership team may agree or disagree. A lively conversation about these issues will enhance the ability of the team to work together.

Characteristics of Older Youth:

• THEY LIKE TO HAVE FUN
  Fun is not the opposite of learning and should not be something to avoid. On the contrary, people learn best when they are having a good time. When they are having a good time, there is often chaos. Don't be afraid of a little commotion if most of the group is on task. Encourage each other to have fun in class and see how much you can learn.

• THEY HAVE SKILLS, TALENTS, AND ENERGY
  Teens are not empty vessels waiting to be filled up. They are people blessed with skills, talents, and intelligence. Draw upon the rich resources of the members of your group and know that there is much to offer, to share, and to teach to others. The energy of the group can deeply enhance the learning experience.
• THEY ARE PEOPLE IN TRANSITION
Youth are in a transition stage of life. The essential element is change as a person moves from dependence to independence. The closer a person gets to graduation from high school, the more this reality will set in. Youth need freedom to make choices with adult support. Never underestimate the abilities of each other or the need for adult cooperation and support.

• THEY ARE SELF-RELIANT AND ACCOUNTABLE
Most youth want to be self-reliant. By this point they have had enough experiences to form their own opinions and be able to make their own decisions. Of course, like everyone else, they will both succeed and fail. Encourage the group to take responsibility for the choices they select and hold them accountable to the agreements they make. Remember that everyone deserves input on decisions that affect his or her life.

• THEY LIKE MAKING CHOICES
Youth can and do make good decisions. Our gift to others is to help them to develop their abilities to make good decisions and to treat them as capable human beings.

• THEY NEED TO BE HEARD
One of the best tools you can provide for members of the group are opportunities to speak out and be heard, and to listen to others with respect. It is important to set the example not by what you say but by what you do. Your ability to listen to others and respond to their ideas and comments will be a model for developing good listening skills. Being heard for even a moment can be a powerful experience. This is true for people of any age.

• THEY WANT TO BE VALUED AND SIGNIFICANT
How you treat the people in your group is much more important than what is taught. If all members feel important and significant, they are more likely to learn something. It is also crucial to pay attention to how the members of the group treat each other. The atmosphere of the classroom can inspire or destroy the whole experience. Encouraging all members of the group to treat themselves and others with extraordinary respect is one of the most important lessons to teach.

• THEY ARE LOOKING FOR A FAITH OF THEIR OWN
Teenagers are seeking their own opinions, values, and faith. Identity comes from becoming your own person. Youth often reject much of their parents’ faith. This is an important sign that new values and a
stronger faith are being formed. Embrace the searching process and affirm the importance of the ability to question, doubt, and think. Your response to doubts will encourage or discourage others’ journeys to spiritual knowledge. You can’t teach faith but you can grow together in your knowledge and love of the Lord.

• RELATIONAL MINISTRY
  This curriculum is based on building relationships in three ways. Be constantly aware of the importance of these three dynamics of relationships.
  1. The first, and most important, is the relationship between each person and God. This should be an ongoing focus in whatever is taught, discussed, or explored.
  2. This second is the relationship between young people and adults. The adult's role is not that of teacher but rather one of “mature friend.” One-to-one relationships take on special significance in this model.
  3. The third is the peer relationship. How the members of the group treat each other enables or destroys the building of a caring community.

• OWNERSHIP
  If youth are going to be truly involved in a program of learning, they must have a sense of ownership. The wise teen will learn how to share the program and build a sense of ownership together with the adults. This process can be improved and simplified by the formation of a team in the beginning with youth taking responsibility for leadership roles.

Who Are The Adults?

Adults who work with youth are more than teachers. To foster effective teaching and learning among youth, the Church needs adult leaders who are grounded in their own faith and identity as Christians. Effective leaders are excited about growing and learning and enjoy working with youth in a team relationship. They have high energy, genuine enthusiasm, and a passionate interest in youth.

Youth can have input into which adults are selected for the leadership team. Seek out people who care about youth, have a strong faith, and are committed to the program. Adults who want to be kids or who don’t keep commitments are not effective over time. The following points should be carefully considered as leadership teams are formed.
Characteristics of Effective Adult Leaders:

- **THEY ARE ROOTED IN THEIR FAITH AND COMMITTED TO JESUS CHRIST**
  Who adults are speaks loudly to teens. They don't have to be biblical scholars or perfect Christians. It also doesn't mean that they no longer have any doubts or are at the end of their own spiritual journey. Good leaders have a strong relationship with God and are comfortable with their faith.

- **THEY ARE WILLING TO BE A PART OF A TEAM**
  For some adults working with teenagers as they grow in the knowledge and love of the Lord is an overwhelming task. It is essential for teens to understand the sense of responsibility that comes with this task. Wise teens know that they are only part of a teaching team and that adults are accountable to other people in the church who may or may not care about the activities of young people. Adults need to be able to let go of their need to be in charge and still have the ability to use their gifts as part of the team.

- **THEY ARE FUN AND ENJOY BEING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE**
  Adults should be able to relax and enjoy their time with youth. Effective adults know how to have fun and to share joy with young people without giving up expectations of them. Adults must find their own balance of fun and seriousness. Affirming joy and excitement with group, however, is essential for the adults' full participation.

- **THEY ARE MORE CONCERNED ABOUT PEOPLE THAN FACTS**
  The *Episcopal Curriculum for Youth* provides an excellent base of information to learn more about God, Scripture, and the Church. The sessions incorporate this learning with the issues that affect young people's lives. Effective adults are aware of issues that are unique to their groups and look for ways to include these ideas in the work of the group. Adults should give priority to what youth are thinking and feeling.

- **THEY HAVE A LONG-TERM COMMITMENT TO THE GROUP**
  Adults are committed and consistent. Steadfastness of faith and commitment to the class will make a real difference in the long run. Leaders should focus on the overall success of the program and not on any one moment, hour, or week.
A Final Word

Remember that this is a process of growing in the knowledge and love of the Lord. There will be ups and downs, successes and failures, joys and frustrations. Often you will never know the impact you have made on another person’s life. So much happens intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually in individuals’ lives that they themselves are not aware of the people who have had an impact on them. Trust in each other, trust in yourself and, most of all, trust in God.

For More Ideas


Looking Ahead

Objective
Youth will be able to plan, within leadership teams or the entire group, a study of diversity issues. During their planning, they will explore the use of language and how it affects their perceptions.

The Baptismal Covenant
Celebrant Do you believe in God the Father?
People I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

Celebrant Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?
People I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again.
He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

Celebrant Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?
People I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

Celebrant Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?
People I will, with God's help.

Celebrant Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?
People I will, with God's help.

Celebrant Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?
People I will, with God's help.

Celebrant Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?
People I will, with God's help.

Celebrant Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?
People I will, with God's help.

Scripture
Galatians 3:26-28
Micah 6:8

Skill Focus
Communication
Responsibility
Trust
Prayer
O God, who created all peoples in your image, we thank you for the wonderful diversity of races and cultures in this world. Enrich our lives by ever-widening circles of fellowship, and show us your presence in those who differ most from us, until our knowledge of your love is made perfect in our love for all your children; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For the Diversity of Races and Cultures
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 840

Dismissal
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Questions
- How are youth treated less equally than others?
- What are some negative stereotypes of young people that you feel are wrong?
- Have you ever laughed at jokes that put down other cultures and races? The opposite sex? Those who are differently abled? Those who look different from you?
- What's something about yourself that you wouldn't want someone to make fun of?

Point of Contact

Baptismal Covenant
Read the Baptismal Covenant (BCP, p. 304, and on the previous page) and the suggested scripture passages. Use the questions after the scripture passages to help you think about diversity.
- What does diversity mean to you?
- What does the Baptismal Covenant say about accepting and including others in our lives?

Activities

Trusting
Play a trust game. Ask everyone to stand in a circle, facing the same direction, toward the back of the person in front of him or her. Ask two volunteers to step out of the circle and stand one in front of the other. Ask them to try to sit with knees bent without falling over. Let them rejoin the group, and ask everyone to stand as close as possible to the person in front of him or her. At your signal, ask the group to sit with knees bent, resting on the person in back of them. If everyone cooperates, the task becomes easy.

Getting to Know You
Before you meet, draw up a list of characteristics to help participants discover the diversity within the group, such as “relatives came from Europe,” “birthday in same month,” and so on. Put these characteristics on a paper divided into squares, with one item per square. Leave enough room for each person to write a name in the square. Give each participant a copy of the paper, and ask them to write the names of someone in the group in each square. When everyone has finished or time is up, share your answers.
Steps for Planning

1. Make a copy of the Reference Sheet on the following page for each participant. Divide Sessions 2 through 8 among the group as evenly as possible. Ask each person or subgroup to spend five minutes looking over the scripture, themes, and activities for the assigned session(s). Then spend a few minutes answering the questions on the Reference Sheet.

2. Select a discussion facilitator to record responses from each person or sub-group. On newsprint, write down the sessions each person or group recommends, the chosen Scripture and themes, and the ideas and activities that the group found interesting.

3. Examine all six posters and determine when and where to use them.
   - Poster 1: Reflections
   - Poster 2: Tension
   - Poster 3: The Anglican Communion
   - Poster 4: Selecting the World
   - Poster 5:
   - Poster 6:

4. Delegate responsibility for the planning, implementation, and leadership of each session. Distribute copies of the sessions to participants who have agreed to take responsibility for specific themes and activities. The facilitator should add their names to the newsprint. This may be a good time to stop the process and ask the following questions:
   - How does everyone feel about the decisions so far?
   - Can everyone live with them? If not, how can we change them?

5. Allow time for the entire group to comment on the results. On another piece of newsprint, develop a time frame (number of weeks) showing where and in what order the sessions fit. The group should discuss and schedule field trips, events, surveys, speakers, or special projects at this time as well.

6. Discuss accountability for the group and the selected leaders.
   - What happens if someone fails to follow through on his or her area of responsibility?
   - What if a session leader gets sick? Are there certain deadlines that need to be met?
   - If changes need to be made after this meeting, who has the authority to make those changes?

7. If there is time, answer the following questions to determine the success of the planning session:
   - Did everyone feel they were part of the planning?
   - Did the group listen to each person?
   - Does everyone feel comfortable about the decisions they made?

8. At the end of the group's study of diversity, the participants can use Session 9 to explore ways of using what they have learned. The session includes suggestions for individual and group response, as well as ideas for celebrating the end of the Diversity unit.
**Questions:**
- What surprises you in this session?
- What ideas do you like in this session?
- Which of the three scriptures and themes would you want to focus on?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Scripture</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Racism</td>
<td><em>Jonah 3:10-4:5</em></td>
<td>Intolerance of Others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Matthew 15:21-28</em></td>
<td>Including Others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>James 2:8-10</em></td>
<td>Loving Our Neighbors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich &amp; Poor</td>
<td><em>Leviticus 19:9-10</em></td>
<td>Sharing Material Blessings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Mark 10:17-23</em></td>
<td>Blinded by Wealth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Mark 12:41-44</em></td>
<td>Giving Until It Hurts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity &amp; Culture</td>
<td><em>Acts 2:1-13</em></td>
<td>Appreciating Cultural Differences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Galatians 5:22-26</em></td>
<td>One in the Spirit</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Psalm 139:1-16, 23-24</em></td>
<td>Known by God</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the Church</td>
<td><em>I Corinthians 1:4-10</em></td>
<td>Be Unified</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Acts 15:36-40</em></td>
<td>Agreeing to Disagree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Acts 15:12-18</em></td>
<td>Gospel for All People</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differently Abled</td>
<td><em>Exodus 4:10-12</em></td>
<td>Recognizing Strengths &amp; Weaknesses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Matthew 5:1-12</em></td>
<td>Rearranging Priorities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>I Corinthians 12:14-26</em></td>
<td>Everyone Has Gifts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stereotypes</td>
<td><em>Jeremiah 1:4-10</em></td>
<td>God Calls People of All Ages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Mark 8:27-30</em></td>
<td>Expectations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Exodus 20:1-17</em></td>
<td>God's Expectations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men &amp; Women</td>
<td><em>Genesis 1:26-28</em></td>
<td>Created in the Image of God</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Judges 4:4-10</em></td>
<td>Need Each Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>II Samuel 11:2-5, 14-15, 26-27</em></td>
<td>Our Bodies, Our Selves</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Objective

Participants will be able to define racism and investigate their feelings and beliefs about racism. They will explore how feelings and behaviors affect others.

Personal Story

I've been going to my church for sixteen years, basically since I was born. It's a big church and most of its parishioners are white, but I never really felt singled out. I never had any kid or person, for that matter, insult me because I was biracial. There was, however, one time when someone tried to convince me I was adopted. But I always felt comfortable, even though I was in the minority.

I remember going to a play at the church that was produced by people who had been homeless about their experiences on the street. After the play, a reception was held in the lobby. As I was walking through the small crowd to get to the cookies, someone walked by, patted me on the head, and said, “Good job up there,” or something to that effect. I looked at her as she passed and recognized her as a member of the church.

I couldn't believe she had mistaken me for the only girl that had been on stage in the play. Granted, we had similar hair styles, but that was where the similarities stopped. Everything else about us was different—different skin color, different body type, different everything. It's a big church, but not that big. If she had really been paying attention for half a second, she could have realized this. I felt doubly insulted when I realized that in all my years of going to this church she couldn't tell the difference between me and the darker, taller, thinner girl on stage.

As I left, I wondered what she had been doing that last hour if she couldn't remember that actor's face a minute after the play had ended. I wasn't upset as much as I was saddened that the woman had played into the old cliché about people of one race all looking alike.

The woman probably doesn't even remember that night. But I haven't even come close to forgetting, even though it's been at least five years since it happened. Her actions were not earth shattering events, but they made me think about my real position in the church.
Prayer
Look with pity, O heavenly Father, upon the people in this [and every] land who live with injustice, terror, disease, and death as their constant companions. Have mercy upon us. Help us to eliminate our cruelty to these our neighbors. Strengthen those who spend their lives establishing equal protection of the law and equal opportunities for all. And grant that every one of us may enjoy a fair portion of the riches of this land; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For the Oppressed
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 826

Dismissal
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

1 Intolerance of Others

Begin Here: Study Scripture

When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it. But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. He prayed to the Lord and said, “O Lord! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and ready to relent from punishing. And now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.” And the Lord said, “Is it right for you to be angry?” Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city, and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, waiting to see what would become of the city.

Jonah 3:10-4:5

Commentary: While some scholars believe the Book of Jonah was written as an allegory of the exile of Israel, others argue that it is a parable to teach the truth of God's universal love. The story takes place about forty years before the Assyrians destroy the Northern Kingdom of Israel. The command from God to go to Nineveh, capital of the enemy Assyrians, stunned the prophet who tried to run away from God. Even after he is spewed onto land by the great fish, Jonah does not change his disposition towards Ninevah. He still feels that God should not pity the people of Ninevah because they are the enemy of the chosen people. God, however, rebukes Jonah because his religious zeal has taken away his compassion. While the people of Ninevah obviously had sinned, Jonah is guilty of selfishness, blindness, and unrighteousness.

Questions
- Why did Jonah want revenge so badly?
- How was Jonah intolerant of others?
- Do you find it difficult to change your mind about something you have always believed?
- Are you intolerant of an individual or group? Are members of your family?

Option: Read and discuss the personal story.
- How are we blinded by intolerance?

Activities

Descriptions
- Bring in an assortment of magazines or newspapers with pictures of people of different races engaged in some activity. Ask the group to read aloud the captions to the pictures.
  - Do the captions contain any labels that are unnecessary?
  - Are you aware of words you use to label people that are not really necessary?
  - What are the characteristics that divide us from one another besides race?

  Brainstorm words, terms, and expressions that might be considered racist.
  - Have you ever used these words without realizing they might be offensive?
  - What do you do when a friend says these words? A teacher? Your parent? A member of this church?
  - How does this behavior diminish our tolerance of others?

  Read the catechism in The Book of Common Prayer, p. 848, under the question: What is our duty to our neighbors? What does the church say about our treatment of others?

Fear
- Relate the following scenario: Late one night you are coming home from a school function. It is very dark, and no one is around. You hear footsteps behind you, coming closer. Let each person describe the person who he or she thinks is approaching.
  - How can prejudice create and reinforce our fears?
  - How much intolerance comes from our fears or lack of interaction with other people?

Movie
- Show the movie Places in the Heart about a community's inability to tolerate people who are different.
  - Where do you see intolerance in this film?
  - Is intolerance ever justified?
  - Where do you find truth in this film?
  - How is God's truth revealed in the final scene?
Begin Here: Study Scripture

Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting. “Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon.” But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, “Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us.” He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” But she came and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, help me.” He answered, “It is not fair to take the children’s food and throw it to the dogs.” She said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” Then Jesus answered her, “Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.” And her daughter was healed instantly.

Matthew 15:21-28

Commentary: Throughout the Gospel of Matthew New Testament events are compared with Old Testament scripture. Matthew emphasized the importance of Jesus’ coming to fulfill the law and not to destroy it. In Matthew 15:21-28 Jesus leaves his own people to go to Gentile territory. There he is confronted by a woman from Canaan. Jesus usually addressed only the Israelites, but allowed exceptions as seen here. This was not the first time Jesus spoke of ministering only to the Israelites. Earlier in Matthew 10:5-6 he told the disciples not to go among the Gentiles, but rather to the “lost sheep of Israel.” The foreign woman in this passage, unlike many of the chosen people, recognized Jesus for who he was. Faith became the means for outsiders to enter the kingdom of God.

Questions

- When has someone else’s perspective on an issue helped change your opinion?
- Were you surprised at Jesus's initial response to the woman from Canaan in the scripture passage? Why?
- How would you feel if your request for help was turned down because of where you’re from or the color of your skin?
- What made Jesus change his mind about helping the woman from Canaan?

Activities

Census Form

As a group, devise a new section for a census form to indicate “race.” Before you begin, think about all the different ways a person could describe their race or nationality. Remember that census forms are used by social researchers, governments, and others to set policy and determine political districts.

- How many categories will be included?
- What will the titles be?
- Do the titles use words that are equal in their associations (White/Black vs. European-American/African-American)?
- What about Africans who aren’t American in origin?
- How will you accommodate biracial individuals?
- How will you distinguish a Native American from New Mexico as opposed to a Native American from Alaska?

Use the form you develop to create a census of your church.

Personal Story

Read the personal story or ask someone to tell the story in his or her own words. Discuss the story.

- Did this story make you think of something that has happened to you?
- How does your family feel about including others? How do their feelings influence you?
- How do your feelings affect people around you?

Speaker

Invite a person who was active in the civil rights demonstrations or legal battles to talk to the group about firsthand experiences that led to the inclusion of people who had been left out of the political and legal systems of this country. Before the person is scheduled to come, visit the library and find out if your community was affected by the racial upheavals in the sixties. Prepare questions to ask.

- In which areas was racism present in your community?
- If racism was not a significant issue, where do you think it might have been present?
- Are there areas of your community that are associated primarily with people of a certain race?
- How could you include people from other communities in some of your activities?
3 Loving Our Neighbors

Begin Here: Study Scripture

You do well if you really fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” But if you show partiality, you commit sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become accountable for all of it.

James 2:8-10

Commentary: Many scholars believe that The Letter of James was written toward the end of the first century. Some early traditions claimed that it was composed by James, the brother of Jesus, but its excellent style suggests an anonymous Greek-speaking author. The theme of the letter is faith that results in a lifestyle that reflects the teachings and presence of Christ. The letter is a series of short, concise views about a variety of topics.

In the passage for this session, James calls people to be responsive to Jesus's command to love one another, and to do so with bias. Showing inappropriate favoritism is as much a violation of God's purposes as disobeying God's law. James encourages new Christians by showing them the new attitudes and relationships produced by faith in Jesus. He knew that faith had the power to change their lives in every way.

Questions

- How do we demonstrate our love for our neighbor as individuals?
- How do we show this love as a culture? A church? A youth group?
- Why do you think James referred to the statement “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” as the “royal law”?

Option: Read and discuss the personal story.

- Would the characters in the personal story behave differently if they had followed the “royal law” of loving their neighbors as themselves?
- Is there anything the person telling the story could have done to change the outcome?
- What might have happened if the writer had confronted the church member?

Activities

Skin Tones

Compare skin tones of the members in the group by asking the participants to putting their hands on the table, side by side. Invent names for the different colors of skin. Bring in watercolor paints and ask the group to create a spectrum of the skin colors of God's people in the world. Include those not found in your group.

- What did this exercise make you aware of?
- How important is skin color to God?

Shared Characteristics

Make a list of all the characteristics people have in common, both good and bad. Include the following traits:

- Physical characteristics
- Emotions
- Spirituality
- Vulnerabilities

Discuss your findings.

- Have you ever thought about how much you have in common with your neighbor?
- Since it is easier to like people who are like us, and since we have so much in common, shouldn't we love our neighbor?

Think of ways you can show love for your neighbor as an individual and as a group.

The Color Purple

Watch the movie or read the book The Color Purple by Alice Walker. Because the movie includes scenes of violence, the leadership team may want to preview the film before showing it to the entire group. Discuss the themes raised by Walker.

- Has racism changed since this story took place?
- What does the title refer to?
- How do you see God?
Objective
Participants will name ways wealth or poverty affects their own lives. They will explore the challenges faced by people who struggle financially every day.

Personal Story
I met Peggy when I was 15, on my first day as a volunteer at a social services center. I sat at the front desk and greeted people. Most of the families who came in were referred by the court system. Some of the children were in foster care, some were at risk of abuse or neglect. While the children were in preschool programs, the parents took parenting classes. Most of the moms weren’t much older than I was, and some already had two children. It was hard not to compare their lives to mine. I felt awkward, too clean, and uncertain when Peggy walked in.

Peggy was a large woman with an ugly scar that ran down one side of her face, and short hair that looked like it hadn’t been washed in a long time. Scowling angrily, she said in a loud voice, “I want to work here.” Peggy wanted to be a volunteer in the program—like me.

Peggy was one of twelve children whose family lived in a very small house with no running water, no electricity, and no telephone, at the end of a muddy road in rural Virginia. Her parents worked in the crab house in the summer and the oyster house in the winter. They barely made enough money to keep the family fed and housed. One day in fifth grade Peggy stopped going to school, and no one seemed to notice.

Peggy was 13 when her first child was born, after a terrible car accident, which is how her face got scarred. She thinks the accident is the reason why her boy was born slow. She loved his father, but he left and she never knew where he went. She had her second child, Tina, when she was 15, the result of a rape one night by an uncle. Peggy loved Tina with all her heart.

Peggy and I became good friends during the three summers I worked at the center. I learned a lot from her about loving people because of who they are and not where they come from. Peggy also taught me not to be afraid of people just because they are different from me. Because I have more money or education than someone else doesn’t necessarily mean my way is the only or best way. I was flabbergasted when Peggy told me she was going to be a doctor. The first time she took the GED test she failed it, but she kept on studying.

By my last summer at the center, Peggy had been hired as a teacher’s aide and was getting ready to take her GED again. She is determined, but sometimes just being determined isn’t enough. It is not that Peggy isn’t smart—she has rare and wonderful “people smarts.” But it almost seems the poverty that Peggy was raised in was too harsh, and Peggy was too old at 28 to overcome her background.

She gave me so many wonderful gifts. I know that going to college is not due entirely to my intelligence or hard work, but also to the luck of being born into a family that had advantages like food, a car to drive me to school if I missed the bus, a phone to call someone for homework assignments, paper and pencils, and all the other things we take for granted. Peggy showed me that some of us are fortunate enough to be born on third base, while others are born on first.

SESSION 3

Scripture
Leviticus 19:9-10
Mark 10:17-23
Mark 12:41-44

Skill Focus
Ethics
Fairness
Choices
Prayer
Grant, O God, that your holy and life-giving Spirit may so move every human heart and especially the hearts of the people of this land, that barriers which divide us may crumble, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; that our divisions being healed, we may live in justice and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For Social Justice
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 823

Dismissal
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

1 Sharing Material Blessings

☐ Begin Here: Study Scripture

When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You shall not strip your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the alien: I am the Lord your God.

Leviticus 19:9-10

Commentary: The passage in Leviticus 19 is part of the “Holiness Code” found in chapters 17-26, so-called because it demands that Israel be a holy nation in worship and everyday life, and the section's beginning command is that “you shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy.” The people are called to approach God with appropriate respect and reverence, and special laws help the community gain access to God. Other commands direct Israel in leading a holy life in daily activities.

One of the earliest laws in the Holiness Code deals with the practice of gleaning at harvest time. This command requires landowners to leave behind a portion of the fruits and grains they harvest so they can be collected by widows, orphans, strangers in the land, and those who live in poverty.

☐ Questions

- What responsibility do you have to share your gifts?
- What do you do with your wealth?
- Since you probably do not have harvests to leave in the fields, what could you “leave behind” that might help others?

Option: Read and discuss the personal story.

- How did the “gleanings” left by Peggy help the author of the story?
- Do we sometimes miss “gleanings” left by others because we do not see or hear?

☐ Activities

Gleaning in Our Lives

Give the group paper and pencils and ask them to list everything they own. For example, they might list clothing, shoes, telephone, computer, stereo equipment, and compact discs. Ask them to estimate the worth or value of each entry. After about fifteen minutes, gather together to share lists and discuss the responsibility of taking care of what they own.

- What could you live without?
- How many hours would you have to work to earn enough money to buy the things on your list if you made the minimum wage? What activities would you have to give up to have time to earn this money?
- Ask each person to identify at least one thing on his or her list that could be given up.
- According to the scripture passage what do you do with the things you have in abundance?
- Can you think of a creative way to leave the “gleanings of your harvest”?

Discuss ways each person or the group can live out God's command in Leviticus. Someone could give a “gleaning” to an organization or sell it and give the proceeds to an organization for the poor. The group might sponsor a church-wide rummage sale and give the proceeds to a homeless shelter or other organization.

$100,000 Question

Describe the following scenario: Your group has been given $100,000; in ten minutes you must decide how to spend it. The money can be spent in any way, but all of it must be used. After the time has elapsed, tell the group that you just received additional instructions from the benefactor about how the money is to be spent. Give them an envelope with the following instructions inside: Before you spend the money, read Matthew 6:21 which says “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” The money must be spent for the benefit of the community. Ask the group to begin a new list of ways to spend the $100,000.

- How do the two lists of spending priorities compare?
- How many items on the first list are also on the second list? Which list was more difficult to make?
- How important to you are the people or organizations on the second list? How could you help some of the recipients on the second list? List ways.

Field Trip

Many communities have started gleaning programs throughout the United States. Groups are invited to come into fields that have recently been harvested to gather the leftover potatoes, fruit, or grain. Find out if a gleaning program is available in your area by calling the diocese or an agriculture office, such as an extension service. If a program is available, contact local homeless shelters or food kitchens to see if they would like to have the fruits of your harvest.

Episcopal Curriculum for Youth—Diversity: Session 3
Copyright © 2009 Virginia Theological Seminary
2 Blinded by Wealth

Begin Here: Study Scripture

As [Jesus] was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: ‘You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honor your father and mother.’” He said to him, “Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth.” Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, “You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.” When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions. Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, “How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!”

Mark 10:17-23

Commentary: In Mark 10 Jesus is teaching, preaching, and healing from Galilee to Jerusalem. On this journey Jesus meets a young man whose wealth and faithful observance of the law of Moses still leave him wondering how to gain eternal life. Many rabbis at the time taught that great possessions were signs of God's favor. Wealthy people, they said, could spend more time doing good works. But Jesus turns this notion upside down and points to a harder side of Christian faith: eternal life for the wealthy young man means giving up all his earthly treasures and following Jesus. The good news for wealthy and poor alike is that God's grace does not depend on how much is in a person's bank account.

Questions

- When did you become aware that some people were poorer and others richer than you? How did you feel?
- Who did you identify with in the story in Mark? Did you sympathize with the young man?
- Does God care about material wealth?
- Option: Read and discuss the Personal Story.
- How did Peggy help the author see that she had been blinded by her wealth?

Activities

Winning and Losing

Bring enough Monopoly games and tokens so that everyone in the group can play. Make sure everyone knows the rules, then begin to play a game of Monopoly after making one change: distribute the money unequally among the players. After twenty minutes, stop the game and discuss what happened.

- How did the money inequities affect the game?
- What difference did the command to “Go to Jail” make if the player was poor or rich?
- What kind of player benefitted most from the Community Chest?
- Which player was more likely to want to draw a card from the Chance pile? In real life, who spends more money on lottery tickets?
- How were the “poorer” players affected when they landed on another player's property?
- What was it like for the “wealthy” players to be able to buy anything they needed?

Budget

Get copies for the group of your church's budget for the current year. Give everyone time to look over the categories and ask questions. You may invite a resource person to answer questions, or let the group figure out the answers for themselves. Look for the following information:

- What is the average pledge at your church? What does God call for us to give? (See Malachi 3:10) What is a tithe? Have you ever thought about giving God 10 percent of your wealth?
- How much money does the church spend on outreach? What proportion of the total budget is spent on outreach?
- Does your church have an endowment fund? Where do the earnings from this source go?
- How much money is brought in from various fund-raisers? How is this money spent? Is it used in the general budget, or does it fund outreach projects?
- How much money does the church need for maintenance and utilities?

Draw up your own church budget. Be sure to include a rationale for any changes you make. Only two restrictions apply: pay cuts are not an option, and the budget must be balanced. Send your budget to the vestry and find out how youth can be involved in the budget process.

Samaritan Census

Visit a neighborhood where people in poverty live. Take a “census” of the living conditions by finding out the following information for a specific area, such as one square block:

- The number of windows that are boarded up.
- Public transportation routes to several key areas, such as a courthouse, library, or central shopping area. Include the cost of the transportation, the number of transfers needed, and the total time for one round trip.
- The proximity of laundromats and the cost of washing and drying one load of clothes.
- The kinds of stores available within walking distance.
- The difference between prices of milk, bread, lunch meat, and toilet paper from a store in the area and a suburban supermarket.

Discuss your findings as a group.
3 Giving Until It Hurts

Begin Here: Study Scripture

[Jesus] sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.”

Mark 12:41-44

Commentary: Jesus's use of a widow in the story in Mark had connotations for the Hebrew community that no longer exist today. The status of a widow in Israelite society was precarious. Women had no inheritance rights and therefore were often lacking the bare necessities of life. These women were often exposed to harsh treatment and exploitation. Widowhood was seen by some as a disgrace. Throughout the Bible, God expressed concern for widows. Jesus showed sensitivity toward widows by restoring to life the only son of the widow at Nain (Luke 7:11-17) and in the passage above. The Church continues to pray for widows and orphans, among others in need.

Questions

- Do you consider yourself a generous person?
- Do you really think it is better to give than to receive? Why?
- The widow in Mark 12 gave all that she had. Could you?
- Is it easier for a wealthy person or a poor person to be generous?

Option: Read and discuss the Personal Story.

- What did Peggy have to give up to take care of her child?
- Have you known anyone who gave up something precious for someone else?

Activities

Precious Possessions

On a sheet of paper list three of your most precious possessions. While you are making your list, think about these two questions: What makes these possessions so special? What do your most precious possessions say about you? After five minutes, share your responses in small groups.

- Were the reasons people gave for why their possessions are special similar or different?
- Could you have identified a person by knowing his or her three most precious possessions?
- Is there something in your family that has been passed down for generations?
- Under what circumstances would you give this item away?
- Under what circumstances would you give one of your most precious possessions away?

Gift from the Heart

Bring copies of the short story “The Gift of the Magi” by O. Henry for the group to read, or ask someone who is a willing storyteller to tell the story. Consider the meaning of the story.

- What motivated the two people in the story to give up their prized possessions?
- How did their sacrifice compare to that of the widow in the scripture passage?

Ask each group to rewrite the story or make a screenplay with a modern setting. Think about who the characters would be and what kind of gifts they would exchange. Meet together and share each group's story ideas. Select the story that you feel would be the best to dramatize. Produce a play about the story that the group can stage for another group in the church. The play can be elaborate or simple.

Food Scavenger Hunt

Decide what you think a family of limited means would like to have in a bag of groceries, and make a list. Be sure to include things you buy at a grocery store other than food, such as toilet paper and cleaning supplies. Meet at the church on a Friday evening. Divide into groups and give each group the list and a grocery bag. Each group should fill the bags by asking people in a neighborhood near their parish to contribute one of the items on the list. If people do not have a particular item, they can give money to buy the item at the grocery store. Set a time to return to the church. Deliver the bags of groceries to families in need or to organizations that provide food for those in need.
DIVERSITY

Ethnicity & Culture

Objective
Youth will be able to describe cultural differences among people. They will list ways that these differences add to the richness of life and challenge their ability to understand others.

Personal Story
In my church, which is an Anglo-Vietnamese parish, we have an Anglo priest and a Vietnamese priest. The congregation is made up of both Anglo and Vietnamese people, and services are in both languages. One hymn might be from the hymnbook from the pew rack and the next might be a Vietnamese song. The liturgy, the newsletter, and the Sunday school classes are all in two languages. It seems like it would be so much easier sometimes to be one culture or the other, or have a 9 a.m. service in one language and an 11 a.m. service in the other. However, the congregation is committed to being an Anglo-Vietnamese parish.

The first Advent the church was officially an Anglo-Vietnamese parish, everyone gathered in the parish hall for the greening of the church—a time to make wreaths and hang greens through out the church buildings. This year they also made Christmas Stars, a Vietnamese tradition. A Christmas Star has a bamboo frame and is made like a box kite but in the shape of a star. Tissue paper or colored cellophane is wrapped around the Christmas star, and sometimes other decorations are added. Christmas stars can be as large as three feet wide.

In preparation for the first Saturday in Advent, parishioners brought greens and freshly cut bamboo and laid them on the tables in the parish hall. The Anglos taught the Vietnamese how to make wreaths, and the Vietnamese taught the Anglos how to make Christmas stars. As one old Vietnamese woman was working with the children on a star, tears kept flowing down her face. The priest asked her what was wrong.

She answered, “I am only so happy. I have been in the United States for twenty-five years and I never thought I would help make Christmas stars again.”

That Christmas, the church was especially beautiful with a combination of green wreaths and Christmas stars hung all around the sanctuary.

SESSION 4

Scripture
Acts 2:1-13
Galatians 5:22-26
Psalm 139:1-16, 22-24

Skill Focus
Respect
Influences
Prayer
Almighty Father, whose blessed Son before his passion prayed for his disciples that they might be one, even as you and he are one: Grant that your Church, being bound together in love and obedience to you, may be united in one body by the one Spirit, that the world may believe in him whom you did send, your son Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the same Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

For the Unity of the Church
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 255

Dismissal
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

1 Appreciating Cultural Differences

☐ Begin Here: Study Scripture

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability. Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. Amazed and astonished, they asked, “Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language? Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God’s deeds of power.” All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, “What does this mean?” But others sneered and said, “They are filled with new wine.”

Acts 2:1-13

Commentary: The passage in Acts 2 is a description of the first Pentecost after the death and resurrection of Jesus. The disciples and others who had gathered in Jerusalem at Pentecost, an ancient pilgrimage festival that celebrated the harvests of barley and wheat. After a mighty wind passed through the gathering, the apostles began to speak in tongues, or languages from many nations. Peter believed the event was a fulfillment of a prophecy of the last days (Joel 2:28-32), and called for people to repent. About 3,000 people professed their faith in Christ.

The event described in Acts 2 also was a fulfillment of Jesus's promise at his ascension (Acts 1:8). On that day that Holy Spirit descended upon those present without regard for age, sex, or class, and empowered them to be witnesses for Christ. The Church celebrates Pentecost on the seventh Sunday after Easter.

☐ Questions

- What is a gift that a person from another culture has shared with you? Gifts include talents, outlooks on life, and perspectives.
- In Acts at the feast of Pentecost, the disciples found that they could communicate the gospel message to people of different cultures and languages. How does God call us to do the same thing?

☐ Activities

Different Tongues
The story of the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11:1-9 is the biblical version of how differences in language and culture came to be. Other cultures offer different versions of how this came to be. Divide into small groups or work together to develop your own story that explains the different languages and cultures in the world. Prepare a presentation of your story as a skit, a song, or a series of illustrations. If possible, share the stories with another group in the church.

Holidays
Choose a feast day such as Christmas or Easter. Examine how we celebrate the holiday. Find out how the celebrations of this holiday vary throughout the world. For example, do Christians in other parts of the world use different symbols? Many books about holidays are readily available to enrich this discussion. Also look at music used by different people.  
- Do ethnic groups in your community have unique customs for this holiday?
- How has this day been enriched by contributions from other cultures?
- How did the Vietnamese customs described in the personal story enrich the church's holiday?

Mall Search
Visit a mall and look at a variety of stores and merchandise. How many cultures are represented by the stores and restaurants? Go to a music or video store and list different cultures and ethnic groups found among the artists.
- Where are the artists from?
- Are you surprised at the number of countries represented by the artists?
- How have these people added to the diversity of our lives?
2 One in the Spirit

☐ Begin Here: Study Scripture

By contrast, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, competing against one another, envying one another.

Galatians 5:22-26

Commentary: The Letter of Paul to the Galatians is one of the most important historical and theological documents from the early Church. The letter was addressed to a group of churches that were considering a shift of allegiance from Paul to his opponents who believed that circumcision and keeping the law of Moses were necessary for salvation. Paul reemphasized in Galatians that salvation comes only by grace and through faith in Jesus Christ. Paul called on the people in the churches of Galatia to put aside their differences and be “guided by the Spirit.”

☐ Questions

- If anthropologists were digging in our town 2,000 years from now, what would they say about our culture? What would seem to be most important to us?
- What do you think Paul meant when he told the church in Galatia to be guided by the Spirit? Do you think your church is guided by the Spirit?
- Are there times when we should celebrate our differences? How can we be one in the Spirit and still be different?

☐ Activities

Movie

Watch the movie The Gods Must be Crazy, or at least the opening scene when a bottle falls from the sky and hits a person on the head. Because these people have never seen a bottle, they believe they have received a message from God. We tend to think everyone has the same experiences as we do. In fact, other cultures see the things we do as humorously as we often see the customs of others. What parts of our culture seem crazy when we step back and look at them? Think about what we wear, what we eat, our dating habits, or how we spend our free time.

- Name as many cultures or ethnic groups you can think of, including your own. While we may not know specific characteristics or stereotypes of each group, what are the aspects we can share to enrich our relationships?
  - How do you feel when others stereotype your culture?
  - Have you been guilty of labeling other groups of people?

In Christ There Is No East or West

Suggestion: Before the group meets write down on a poster board the words of “In Christ there is no East or West” (The Hymnal 1982, 529). Pass out hymnals if they are available.

- Ask the group to read the words of the hymn and discuss the understandings they have from this hymn. Compare the hymn with “We Are One in the Spirit” and other contemporary music, such as “We Are the World.”
  - How is music a unifying force in the world?
  - How important is music in your life?

Dinner Around the World

Divide into small groups, if possible, and give each group or individual a list of cultures or countries. Ask them to think of how many different foods we eat that come from different places.

- Compare lists, and plan a dinner menu with an appetizer, entree, bread, salad, and dessert from the different countries or cultures that were on the list. Make sure each course comes from a different ethnic group. Prepare the meal and serve it to another group in the church or at a facility for senior citizens. The group could also find songs and stories from different cultures to share while the meal is served.
3 Known by God

☐ Begin Here: Study Scripture

O Lord, you have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away. You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, O Lord, you know it completely. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it. Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there. If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast. If I say, “Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light around me become night,” even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you. . . . Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24

Commentary: Most of the psalms were probably written as part of worship in the temple in Jerusalem. Psalm 139 is a lament, a form of prayer in which an individual seeks deliverance from illness or false accusation. Many psalms are attributed to David. However, they are a product of many writers over centuries. The psalmist in Psalm 139 begins the lament with an appeal to God on the basis of God's universal power and omniscience. Everything the psalmist has ever done or thought is known to God. The psalmist later names his personal enemies and asks God for deliverance.

☐ Questions

- Have you ever traveled to a country where no one spoke your language?
- How many different cultural or ethnic groups are represented at your school? Your church?

☐ Activities

The World

Place a large map of the world on the wall. (A map of the Anglican Communion provided in the Poster Pack could be used for this activity.) Make small blue, red, and green flag pins or purchase them at a craft store. Put a blue flag on the map of every country someone in the group has visited. Put a red flag on the map of the country they, their parents, or grandparents were born. Put a green flag on the map of every country someone knows someone.

- Which countries do not have a flag pin in them?
- Were you surprised at the number of connections the group has throughout the world?

The Episcopal Church is part of the Anglican Communion. It is likely that in every place you put a pin, you could visit an Anglican church. While you may not know the language, the worship service would be very similar. Find out more about the Anglican community by writing: The Episcopal Church Center, 815 2nd Avenue, New York, NY.

Different Faces

God knows each of us, but we know God mostly through the filter or bias of our own culture. Gather as many pictures of Jesus as possible from your library or your church. Compare the pictures.

- What do the pictures of Jesus tell us about the cultures and periods they came from?
- Examine the clothing worn in the pictures. What are the similarities and differences?
- How many historically accurate pictures—those showing Jesus as a man from the Middle East in the first century—can you find?
- How do you picture Jesus? Create your own image of Jesus. Display your creation in the church.

Museum Visit

Visit a museum and look for religious figures in art. Find cultural representations that illustrate how the artists expressed their views of the world. By seeing images from a range of artists, we can expand our view of the world. Be aware that we are all known to God regardless of skin color, sex, or cultural differences.
DIVERSITY

In the Church

Objective
Youth will be able to identify qualities and attitudes that can create an atmosphere for religious acceptance within the Church. They will discuss situations in which this acceptance might be in jeopardy and explore ways to seek understanding.

Personal Story
I go to St. Matthew’s Church and there are two senior high kids, Jamie and Susan, who attend that church too. Jamie and Susan go to the same school, are in the same grade, and both have always gone to an Episcopal church. You would think they probably believed the same things. Nothing is further from the truth. Although they tolerate each other and most folks think they even sort of like each other, any time any faith issue is discussed, it is guaranteed Susan and Jamie will be arguing.

Susan believes in capital punishment, Jamie thinks it is wrong. Jamie is pro-choice, Susan thinks abortion is wrong. Susan believes that a person should try to only listen to Christian rock; Jamie thinks any and all music is a gift from God. Susan believes prayer is important at all times; Jamie thinks God shouldn’t be bothered by the small stuff. The day Susan prayed for a parking place, Jamie’s face turned bright red.

Over the summer Susan went off to a youth conference and came back with stories about speaking in tongues, healing through prayer, and being slain by the spirit. Jamie came back from working in a homeless shelter. Jamie told Susan she should talk less about her faith and do more for other people.

Susan thinks Jamie is just missing the point on everything about Christ. Jamie thinks Susan is always trying to make him feel like he doesn’t have a real relationship with Christ. Susan likes Jamie a lot and argues with him for hours because she doesn’t think he is saved. Jamie likes Susan a lot and argues with her for hours because he is afraid she has been brainwashed. Jamie thinks Susan is always judging him. Susan thinks Jamie is always judging her.

At the last church lock-in they argued all night long and finally got to the point where they simply couldn’t speak to each other. But the next morning when we celebrated the Eucharist and the passing of the peace came, Jamie hugged Susan and Susan hugged Jamie and they said, “The peace of the Lord always be with you.”

SESSION 5

Scripture
I Corinthians 1:4-10
Acts 15:36-40
Acts 15:12-18

Skill Focus
Forgiveness
Conflict
Prayer
Lord, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is discord, union; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. Grant that we may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

A Prayer attributed to St. Francis
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 833

Dismissal
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

1 Be Unified

☐ Start Here: Study Scripture

I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind—just as the testimony of Christ has been strengthened among you—so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose.

1 Corinthians 1:4-10

Commentary: The church at Corinth, established by Paul himself, was situated in one of the most important cities in Greece. Though the relationship between Paul and the Church was sometimes plagued with mutual distrust and doubts, Paul recognized that the community was made of a diverse and gifted people.

In the opening verses of the passage, Paul touches on the themes that he develops later in the letter, including the community's advanced understanding of the gospel, their eloquence, and the variety of their gifts. There is evidence that the Corinthians attached great importance to the display of religious knowledge and equated spirituality with what they saw as the more spectacular spiritual gifts. Paul reemphasized the importance of people working together to further the mission of the Church.

☐ Questions

- Do you think it is possible for everyone in a group to think alike? What did Paul say to the Corinthians about working together?
- If new people came to your church, what would they find most distinctive?

Option: Read and discuss the Personal Story.

- Do you think arguing with someone about his or her beliefs changes what this person believes?
- How do you react to people who disagree with your basic beliefs?

☐ Activities

Nicene Creed
Find the Nicene Creed in The Book of Common Prayer (p. 358). Announce that Constantine, emperor of the Roman Empire, has called together the best minds in the church to determine Church doctrine about Jesus. The Bishops of Antioch believed that Christ was fully human, a man who suffered, died, and was raised by God. The Bishops of Alexandria claim that Jesus could not have been human since he was without sin and sits on the right hand of God in heaven. If possible, bring a concordance so both sides can support their claims with biblical references.

The group will now reenact that debate. Divide the group into those who support the human doctrine and those who support the divine. Give each group time to find support for their arguments and then stage a debate. Decide if there will be a moderator and establish rules for participation. Reread the Creed at the end of the debate to see if the decisions actually made in Nicea still stand.

Who Are We?
Describe this scenario: One day three of you from this group are eating lunch with a fourth friend who has never gone to church. She asks you to describe your church. What do you tell her? What do you include and what do you leave out? Act out the scenario in a role play and discuss the responses.
- What makes your church different from others?
- What information did you include in your description?
- Have you ever invited a friend to come to church with you? What did you tell them about the church?

Field Trip
Within the Episcopal Church there are many different styles of worship. Some have very formal liturgy; others are informal and may use folk music. Visit an Episcopal church whose style of worship is different from yours. Find all the ways that the two churches are alike.
2 Agreeing to Disagree

Begin Here: Study Scripture

After some days Paul said to Barnabas, “Come, let us return and visit the believers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord and see how they are doing.” Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark. But Paul decided not to take with them one who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not accompanied them in the work. The disagreement became so sharp that they parted company; Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus. But Paul chose Silas and set out, the believers commending him to the grace of the Lord. He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

Acts 15:36-40

Commentary: The passage in Act 15:36-40 takes place as Paul and Barnabas, a Jew originally from Cyprus, prepare to embark on their second missionary journey. The writer of Acts describes Barnabas as a “good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith” (Acts:11:24). He was the person who introduced Paul to the apostles in Jerusalem.

Paul and Barnabas had a disagreement about taking a man named John Mark on their missionary travels. John Mark had begun the first journey, but left them in Pamphylia to return home. Paul wanted nothing more to do with John Mark, but Barnabas felt strongly that he should be included. Some scholars believe the disagreement between Paul and Barnabas also concerned their differences about Jews and Gentiles eating together. In the end, Paul and Barnabas could not resolve their differences and agreed to part company. However, both continued to spread the gospel throughout the land in their own ways.

Questions

- Does having a disagreement mean you can't be friends?
- Have you ever had a fight with a friend when there was no right answer? Did you remain friends? How did Paul and Barnabas handle their disagreement?
- How did Jesus answer people who disagreed with him?
- Some people believe you should not take the Eucharist if you are angry with someone. What do you think?

Option: Read and discuss the Personal Story.

Activities

Prayer

Different types of people often prefer to pray in different ways. Some people like to keep prayer journals, some like to meditate with music, some like to pray while they are running, some use different stances, such as kneeling, standing, or sitting. Look for different ways to pray or ask the group to describe different prayer methods they use. Decide which methods appeal to the group and try them out. You may find that you like many forms of prayer depending on how you feel at the moment or the purpose of the prayer. Someone who is comfortable with one of the forms you discuss could lead the group in prayer using the new format.

- How can prayer help us in situations like the one Paul and Barnabas found themselves in?
- Try praying for someone with whom you have a major disagreement. Does prayer calm your anger?

Bridge Building

Divide into teams and give each group a large number of popsicle sticks, tape, and quick-drying glue. In the center of the room place a large cardboard box. Give each team a smaller box and ask them to place it on the floor four to five feet away from the large box. Each team will build a bridge from the small box to the big box using tape, sticks, and glue. When all the teams have reached the larger box the game is over.

- How did each team build its bridge? How many different ways were used in building the bridges?
- Did everyone reach the goal?
- How many ways can we build bridges with people we disagree with? Do we always reach our goal?
- Our final goal is to know God and be faithful. How many ways can we do this?

Conflict Resolution

Invite a person from the church or community who is involved in a conflict resolution program. Ask the person to describe how people can resolve their differences in constructive ways. Help the group identify individual conflict styles, and use this information in staging role plays about confrontation. If the group finds the session to be helpful, ask the speaker to address a larger group in the church of young people and/or adults.
3 Gospel for All People

Begin Here: Study Scripture

The whole assembly kept silence, and listened to Barnabas and Paul as they told of all the signs and wonders that God had done through them among the Gentiles. After they finished speaking, James replied, “My brothers, listen to me. Simeon has related how God first looked favorably on the Gentiles, to take from among them a people for his name. This agrees with the words of the prophets, as it is written, ‘After this I will return, and I will rebuild the dwelling of David, which has fallen; from its ruins I will rebuild it, and I will set it up, so that all other peoples may seek the Lord—even all the Gentiles over whom my name has been called. Thus says the Lord, who has been making these things known from long ago.’”

Acts 15:12-18

Commentary: The passage in Acts 15:12-18 takes place at the Council of Jerusalem. One of the major themes of the Book of Acts is expressed in this passage: the relationship of Christianity to Judaism. Paul and Barnabas had been working together as a missionary team to spread the gospel. The two missionaries were not well-received by the Jewish community and felt compelled to take the gospel to the Gentiles whose response was enthusiastic. Through their efforts, large numbers of Gentiles had become Christians. James responds favorably to their reports by quoting scripture from Amos, Jeremiah, and Isaiah (Acts 15:16-18). He makes it clear that God’s message is for all people, even the Gentiles.

Questions

- How do we welcome people in our church? How did the Jews in Jerusalem share their faith with Gentiles?
- How are people within our own group different? For example, some have been to church camp, some are acolytes, some may sing in the choir. What do we all share?
- When should you maintain your beliefs when other people believe differently?

Option: Read and discuss the Personal Story.

- Despite their differences, what parts of their faith did the two people in the story share?
- When did they set their differences aside?

Activities

Anglican Community

The Lambeth Council happens every ten years, for example one was held in 1988, and there are others scheduled for 1998, and 2008. At Lambeth every bishop from the Anglican Communion is invited by the Archbishop of Canterbury to meet in England. The bishops discuss their similarities and differences.

Find out which issues were discussed at the last Lambeth Council and how they were resolved. Look at a map of the world or use the map of the Anglican Community from the Poster Pack. Based on the group's knowledge of history, geography, and current events, list issues you think the Council should discuss. Stage a “mini-Lambeth” using the issues on your list. Ask people in the group to represent the stances they think bishops from different parts of the world would take concerning these issues. Invite another group from the church to be the audience for your discussion.

State of the Gospel

Write a “state of the gospel” report by the group for your church. Discuss the way the gospel is shared with all members of the congregation. Look at those who are participants or leaders in church, in Sunday School, at adult forum, in youth group, outreach groups, and others. Write a report based on your findings. List people who do not have the opportunity to hear and spread the gospel. Suggest ways to include a broader range of people. Present your findings to the vestry.

Field Trip

Make plans to attend the next diocesan convention or council as a group. You may need to raise money for room and board. Find out if you can attend as participants or observers.

- What are the issues that will be debated at the convention or council?
- How do the delegates resolve their differences?
DIVERSITY

Differently Abled

Objective
Youth will be able to state feelings they experience when they encounter someone who is physically and/or mentally handicapped. Youth will be able to list ways people who are differently abled can enrich the lives of those around them.

Personal Story
George arrived at camp one morning just like every other young camper. As he worked his way through the registration line, he acted as most did, anxious, yet showing a cool exterior. When he reached the registration table, the staff person asked the standard questions, including, “Do you have any special needs?”

George responded, “Girls!”

“Typical teenage male,” said the staff person. “Proceed to the nurse.”

The nurse took one look at George and immediately asked him to be seated. She quickly walked to the director's office and demanded, “Why was I not told we have a handicapped camper?”

Bewildered by her outburst, the director responded, “I don’t know what you are talking about.”

“We certainly do,” the nurse said, “and you know all the special arrangements that need to be made when we have a camper in his condition.”

“What exactly is ‘his condition’?” asked the director.

“I have no idea, but his legs are turned slightly in and he drags his left foot. There is no information at all on his medical form.”

The director asked the nurse to bring the form so she could call George's parents to get more information. Upon reaching his parents, the director introduced herself and assured them that George was fine. Then she added, “I don't know the best way to say this but your son seems to be disabled. While we accept campers with handicaps, we like to know in advance so we can be prepared.”

“Was he doing what the other campers were doing?” asked George's mother.

“Yes,” replied the director.

A short pause followed the director's response. “When George was diagnosed with cerebral palsy, our family made a conscious decision to treat him as we would any other child. We have raised him in an environment in which we expect the same things from him as his brothers and sisters. We are all good at some things, and we can't do other things. This is also true for George. He is a great golfer, but has to really work at math. We intentionally did not put cerebral palsy on his medical form, because we expect him to be treated like any other camper.”

George was told to take his gear and find his cabin. That week he was treated like any other teenager. He needed help on the hike, but showed his prowess at the swimming pool. By the end of the week most of the campers and staff didn't even think of George as handicapped.

SESSION 6

Scripture
Exodus 4:10-12
Matthew 5:1-12
1 Corinthians 12:14-26

Skill Focus
Compassion
Relationships
Prayer
O heavenly Father, who has filled the world with beauty:
Open our eyes to behold your gracious hand in all your
works; that, rejoicing in your whole creation, we may learn
to serve you with gladness; for the sake of him through
whom all things were made, your Son Jesus Christ our
Lord. Amen.

For Joy in God's Creation
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 814

Dismissal
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

1 Recognizing Strengths and Weaknesses

Begin Here: Study Scripture

But Moses said to the Lord, “O my Lord, I have never been
eloquent, neither in the past nor even now that you have
spoken to your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of
tongue.” Then the Lord said to him, “Who gives speech to
mortals? Who makes them mute or deaf, seeing or blind? Is it
not I, the Lord? Now go, and I will be with your mouth and
teach you what you are to speak.”

Exodus 4:10-12

Commentary: The scripture passage in Exodus 4 focuses
on a dialogue between Moses and God before Moses journeys
to Egypt to free the Israelites. At that time Moses was keeping
sheep for his father-in-law Jethro at Horeb, a mountain that
was considered holy. There Moses saw a bush blazing with
fire and yet not consumed. From the bush came God's voice,
calling him to lead the Israelites from Egypt to the promised
land.

Moses was a reluctant servant who gave a series of excuses
for not following God's command. After questioning the
identity of God, Moses asks, “But suppose they do not believe
me or listen to me, but say, `The Lord did not appear to you'”
(Exodus 4:1). God told Moses to throw his staff on the ground,
and it turned into a snake. Then Moses was instructed to pick
the snake up by the tail, and it became a staff again. God made
Moses's hand leprous, then healed it as another sign to
convince God's people of his mission. A third sign involved
God's turning water from the Nile River into blood. Moses
still doubted his ability to lead the people to freedom, citing
his lack of eloquence. God's answer is first a rebuke, but God
relents and promises help from Aaron, who is more eloquent
than Moses. Moses's initial reluctance is typical of a number
of prophets, including Jeremiah and Jonah, and a portrait is
drawn of a man both humble and stubborn.

Questions
- Are you ever like Moses, finding more reasons not to do
  something than finding ways to do something?
- Do you ever limit other people by not giving them a chance
to do something you've already decided they can't do?
- Have other people ever done that to you?
- What gifts do you admire in a person regardless of their
  abilities?
- What is one thing you physically have trouble doing?

Activities

Facility Assessment
Make an assessment of your church facilities to find out
how accessible the buildings are.
- Can people in wheelchairs or on crutches come to the
  altar?
- Can physically disabled people get from the worship space
to the parish hall?
- Can all people participate in events scheduled in different
  parts of your church?
- Are all classrooms accessible?
- Are bathroom doors wide enough for wheelchairs?
- Is water accessible to everyone?

Research simple and inexpensive ways to make your
church more accessible. For example, everyone can drink
water if a cup dispenser is placed low on the wall near a water
fountain. Present the report to the vestry. Plan a fund-raising
project and complete some of the improvements as individual
or group projects.

Handicap Kit
Put together a “handicap kit” to help the group experience
a disability. Include in the kit:
- Shoestrings (restrict range of motion in arms by tying one
  end to a belt loop and the other to an arm and in legs by
tying ankles together)
- Cotton balls or earplugs (limit hearing)
- Blindfolds (to block vision)

Let each participant select an item in the kit to use. When
they are ready, ask them to perform a simple task, such as
washing their hands. Visit the worship area to see how
accessible it is. What could be changed to make the area more
accessible?

Video/Literature
In the movie or book The Secret Garden, the young boy
has convinced himself and those around him that he is an
invalid. Although she finds him tiresome at first, the young
girl believes he can do whatever he wants to. Her belief in him
changes both their lives. Using passages from the book or film
clips, discuss the perceptions of the supporting characters and
how those perceptions influence the children.
2 Rearranging Priorities

Begin Here: Study Scripture

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those... [Matthew 5:1-12]

Commentary: The passage in Matthew comes from the Sermon on the Mount, the first of five discourses of Jesus in this gospel. Jesus claims authority as the Son of God in this discourse, with authority exceeding the scribes, or even Moses. The sermon took place on an unnamed mountain in Galilee, and the audience is the disciples and a crowd of people.

The Beatitudes, found in Matthew 5:3-12, describe conditions that will be reversed at the end-time, when the kingdom of God becomes reality. However, God's kingdom is already present, though hidden, in the reality of Jesus Christ. Therefore, the Beatitudes are not so much a prophecy of things to come as realities that are in the process of coming. The teachings were revolutionary and seemed to go against traditional Jewish thought. However, Jesus carefully acknowledges that the law of Moses is valid, but that he expects greater righteousness from his followers.

Questions

- How do the Beatitudes help you determine the more important characteristics in a person?
- What did Jesus first see in the people he confronted?
- What do you notice first about a person? Do you look for people's gifts before you see their weaknesses?
- What characteristics do you look for in a friend?

Activities

Rewriting the Beatitudes

After reading the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12) together, rewrite this part of Jesus's Sermon on the Mount using present-day situations. For example, “Blessed are the homeless, for they shall receive shelter.” The group can work together as a whole, divide into pairs, or work as individuals.

The youth may also decide to divide the Beatitudes, with different groups focusing on different verses. It may be helpful to begin by listing the qualities the youth see in Jesus and people they admire. The group could also brainstorm those who are “poor in spirit,” “those who mourn.”

At the conclusion of this exercise, the group may decide to share their Beatitudes with another group or the church as a whole. The text could also be displayed as a poster or in a church newsletter.

Priorities

Give each person pencil and paper to list at least ten things he or she likes to do. Now ask them to look carefully at their lists and number them in priority order beginning with number one. Explain that you will each die in twenty-four hours because of a natural disaster. Ask the group to look over their priorities to see if they would change the order.

- Did your list change?
- Is there anything you would add to the list?

Read together Luke 14:12-14 about Jesus's instructions for whom to invite to a dinner. Think about changes you might make in your life if you knew that Christ was coming tomorrow.

- How would you rearrange priorities based on your faith in God?
- How would you change the way the church includes the “poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind”?

Find a way you could show God's love to people who are differently abled. For example, you could read to the blind, learn sign language, or volunteer to be a “buddy” for a child in your church.

Media

Watch the movie Mask, or select parts of the film that reflect the priorities of the mother and the boy.

- What seems to be most important to each of them?
- Do either of them treat the boy's deformity as his most important characteristic?
- How did his friends see him?
- Who is wearing the “mask” from the movie title? Do you ever use masks to cover up who you are?
Everyone Has Gifts

Begin Here: Study Scripture

Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot would say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear would say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honorable we clothe with greater honor, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honor to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.

I Corinthians 12:14-26

Commentary: The passage in I Corinthians is part of a letter from Paul to the church at Corinth. Paul's relationship with this church was sometimes plagued with doubt and suspicion from both sides, but Paul recognized the richness of this gifted community. The letter was written to help the church with theological and ethical problems it was facing.

In chapter 12, Paul writes about the diversity of gifts God shares with each person as an act of divine grace. He calls on the community to respect the gifts of each other and to recognize the importance of each part of the body of Christ. He points out that in caring for each other, the community will prevent dissension.

Questions

- In your group, do you tend to give the people who play more prominent roles more respect or honor? What does Paul say about this in I Corinthians 12?
- What gifts do you admire in a person regardless of their abilities?

Option: Read and discuss the Personal Story.

- What gifts did George have?
- Do you look for negative traits before you see someone's gifts?

Activities

Gift Exercise

Pass out paper and pencil to everyone in the group. Ask the participants to write their names at the top of the paper. Below their name, ask them to list their gifts. When everyone is finished, ask each person to share one gift from the list. The rest of the group can describe ways that the gift can be used in service to Christ or the church. For example, someone who is outgoing could be a greeter at a worship service; another who is sympathetic could be available for others in the group to call. Make a covenant to find some way to use one of your gifts in service to God. Hint: The Bible says all people have gifts given to them by God. Be prepared to help people identify their gifts if they seem hesitant.

Everybody Needed

Stretch a rope or string on the floor. About four feet away place a small piece of carpet or bathroom mat. Assign a limitation to every member of the group: use only one leg; put one arm behind your back; wear a blindfold; put tape over the mouth; wear earmuffs. Tell the group to move each person from behind the rope to the carpet without touching the ground in between. The participants must work as a group and take into account the limitations of each person. Afterwards, talk about the frustrations you experienced trying to complete the task.

Field Trip

Research the facilities in your area that serve people who are differently abled, such as a school for the blind, a respite house for mentally challenged, or rehabilitation center for those who have had an illness or injury. Select one of the facilities and arrange a tour with the administrator to learn how you can help those in your community who are differently abled.
DIVERSITY

Stereotypes

Objective
Youth will be able to identify stereotypes commonly used to judge others. They will describe the influence of stereotypes in their own lives.

Personal Story
Paul and his family moved to a new town on Friday, and as was the family's custom, they went to church on Sunday. Paul, a sophomore in high school, was 6’4”, 180 pounds, most of which was arms and legs.

Standing in the parish hall after the service, he noticed a poster on a bulletin board which read: Pianist needed for choir—Auditions Sunday evening. Grabbing his mother by the arm, he said, “Mom, look at this. Do you think I should try out?” Before his mother could answer Paul was surrounded by a group of high school boys.

Even before asking his name they asked Paul how tall he was. Then like clockwork came the standard second question: “Do you play basketball?”

Paul, accustomed to these questions, cordially responded, “I’m 6 feet 4 inches, and I occasionally play basketball.”

Almost before he finished his sentence came the group's enthusiastic reaction, “Great! We have a team at the church, and our first game is tonight. Do you think you can be here?”

Paul immediately felt himself getting anxious. He really wanted to audition as pianist for the choir. Playing the piano was really his first love, and he knew playing for the choir would lead to other opportunities. Yet, he was new in town and also wanted to make friends.

Paul's anxiety quickly turned to frustration. Ever since elementary school and a major growth spurt, people expected Paul to be a basketball player.

“Why is it,” he asked himself for the hundredth time, “that just because you are tall, people assume you want to play basketball?”

After much soul searching, Paul made his decision. He is now the regular pianist for choir rehearsals.

SESSION 7

Scripture
Jeremiah 1:4-10
Mark 8:27-30
Exodus 20:3-17

Skill Focus
Independence
Influences
Prayer

O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Dismissal

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

1 God Calls People of All Ages

Begin Here: Read Scripture

Now the word of the Lord came to me saying, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations.” Then I said, “Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy.” But the Lord said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am only a boy’; for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you, Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the Lord.” Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth; and the Lord said to me, “Now I have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.”

Jeremiah 1:4-10

Commentary: The prophet Jeremiah was called by God during the reign of King Josiah. In the early years of Jeremiah’s ministry, he might have belonged to a guild of professional prophets. As chapter 1 indicates, Jeremiah was very young, probably in his teens, when God first called him. Working with other prophets gave him the opportunity to learn. He later broke away from this group, but early prayers and prophecies include a legacy of traditional prophecy.

Jeremiah fearlessly faced more than one king. Ministers under King Zedekiah wanted to kill him, but did not dare because of his popularity with the people. They did, however, manage to imprison him. He was freed by the Babylonians after they conquered Jerusalem in 586 BCE, and later was forced to flee to Egypt by the Jews who were left.

Questions

- Describe an experience in or outside the church in which you were stereotyped as being too young.
- Have you ever felt like Jeremiah that you were too young to do something? Describe the experience and how you felt.
- Have you ever wrongly stereotyped a person? How did you find out?
- Are stereotypes always negative?
- Why do people use stereotypes?

Activities

Photo ID

Bring in a variety of magazines. Ask the group to tear out pictures of as many kinds of people as possible—all ages, shapes and sizes. Number each picture. Give each person a piece of paper and pencil and ask him or her to write a caption describing something you think the person might do.

- Did everyone see people the same way?
- What factors influenced your captions?
- Did you stereotype some of the people?
- How do people see you? Do people ever assume you can or can’t do something by the way you look?

Look again at the pictures. See if the group can write new captions that do not use stereotypes based on the way a person looks.

Never Too Young or Old

Ask the group to list on a large piece of paper or chalkboard every activity and service opportunity at your church that they can think of. Put a check next to the activities that they are involved in, such as altar guild, lay reader, choir, missions. Ask the participants which of the activities they are not involved in that they would like to be a part of.

Find out if you can participate in these activities. How could you convince adults that young people can make important contributions?

Meeting of the Ages

Interview older members of the parish about what the church was like when they were young.

- What did they like to do?
- Did they ever leave the church?
- Did they feel that God had called them to this church?
- Are there things that they would like to do but people don’t ask them because they are old?

Plan a social activity with seniors in the church. Be sure that both groups—old and young—are included in the planning process.
2 Expectations

Begin Here: Study Scripture

Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” And they answered him, “John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.” He asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Messiah.” And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

Mark 8:27-30

Commentary: Jewish groups at the time of Jesus were expecting a variety of messiah figures to deliver Israel from bondage. While some groups hoped for a princely descendant from King David, others anticipated a prophetic messiah. The community that produced the Dead Sea Scrolls expected a priest-like figure. Mark 8:27-30 reflects the diversity of Israel's hopes for the Messiah. When Peter confesses Jesus is Messiah he does not fully know what he is saying, and as later passages in Mark make clear, Peter is unaware that the Messiah must suffer, die, and be raised again. Peter's expectations for Jesus do not fit the Messiah's true role.

Questions

- How did Peter stereotype Jesus?
- How do people stereotype Jesus now?
- How have people stereotyped you?
- How would you stereotype yourself?
- Do stereotypes set up certain expectations?

Option: Read and discuss the Personal Story.

- How was Paul affected by how other people saw him?
- Have you ever felt forced to do something because of people's stereotypes of you?

Activities

Radio Charades

List every kind of music you can think of. For example:
- Classical
- Rap
- Alternative
- Oldies
- Christian
- Jazz
- Rock and Roll
- Hard Rock
- Folk
- Others

Divide into small groups, if possible. Pass out slips of paper with one type of music to each group or individual. As a group or individually act out the kind of person that you would expect to listen to a certain kind of music. Let the others guess the type of music you are representing.
- Do we stereotype people by the music they listen to?
- How open are you to new music that doesn't fit your image?
- Has anyone ever assumed you are a certain kind of person because of the music you like?

You Think You Know Me

Pass out paper and pencils. You may wish to divide into small groups if there are more than ten in the group. Ask the youth to write down three things on separate index cards about themselves that they think the rest of the group does not know about them. For example, “I watch cartoons after school every day.” Give each group different colored cards so no one will get his or her own card. When everyone is finished, gather the cards, and redistribute them. (If one group used yellow cards, give them the blue cards.)

Each person should have three different cards. Ask the group to find the person who wrote each card, and write the name below. Share the results with the entire group.
- Were there any surprises?
- Do stereotypes of other people box you into certain behaviors or choices?
- Are stereotypes always wrong?

Movie

Watch together the movie Roxanne, starring Steve Martin. The film is based on the novel about Cyrano de Bergerac, who refused to confess his love because he felt his enormous nose made him an ugly person. Discuss the role of stereotypes in the relationships of the different characters.
Expectations of God

Begin Here: Study Scripture

... You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol. ... You shall not bow down to them or worship them. ... You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God. ... Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy. ... Honor your father and your mother. ... You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Exodus 20:3-17

Commentary: Commandments were verbal or written requirements or orders, used to define God's relationship with God's people. The people were called to keep the commandments as part of their covenant with God. Commandments were not seen as a hardship; a psalmist called them his "delight" and "love." In the Ten Commandments, God says those who obey his edicts are "those who love me" (Exodus 20:6).

According to Exodus 19 the Ten Commandments were given to Moses during his sojourn on Mount Sinai. Moses's role was as a mediator who represented God to the people and the people before God. In the Ten Commandments, God sets forth the duties of the people not only toward God, but also toward neighbors.

Questions

- How do people stereotype Christians?
- How do you respond to people's expectations of you as a Christian?
- Have you ever had an experience in which people treated you negatively because you are a Christian?

Read Mark 12:28-31.
- What did Jesus say about God's commandments?
- What does this mean for each of us?

Activities

Expectation Comparison

Ask the group to read the Baptismal Covenant in The Book of Common Prayer, p. 304-305, and the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20:3-17. Ask them to list, individually or as a group, what both say in their own words.

Pass out scissors, glue, construction paper, and plain white paper. Cut paper dolls out of the construction paper, and glue them on the white paper. Ask the participants to write down on the paper doll "internal" expectations that come from God, and around the cutout, external expectations from God. Encourage them to refer back to the lists made from the Baptismal Covenant and the Ten Commandments. Give each person time to share their creations with the entire group.

- Have you ever thought about God's expectations for you?
- Do God's expectations ever clash with expectations of others, such as your friends, coaches, or teachers?

Christian Qualities

Ask each person in the group to think about one person who is a Christian that he or she admires. This person does not necessarily have to attend your church. Pass out paper and pencils, and ask the participants to list every characteristic they can think of to describe the people they chose. Encourage the group to work individually.

When everyone has had time to complete the list, ask the group to share the characteristics they wrote down. Keep a master list of the characteristics as they are reported by the group.

- Are any of the qualities from the different lists similar?
- What are the three of four most important qualities you feel a Christian should have?
- Is this something you would want people to say about you?

Select one of the characteristics from the master list you would like to incorporate in your own life. Think about ways you can demonstrate this quality to the people you live with every day.

Field Trip

Break down your stereotypes about other faiths by visiting another house of worship, such as a synagogue. Ask a rabbi to speak to the group about Jewish laws and customs. Find all the things you have in common with another faith.
DIVERSITY

Men and Women

Objective
Youth will be able to define key differences in attitudes toward and communication between males and females. They will discuss ways that respect for one another can improve existing relationships and initiate new friendships.

Personal Story
We met early, our enthusiasm quelled by the early hour. Ten of us were joining the Habitat for Humanity team from our church that works on houses in an inner-city neighborhood.

The team leader assigned us to cars and briefly described the neighborhood we would be working in. Several of us were unnerved by his description of the location and the necessary safety precautions. Many of my friends had never been in this part of town.

Most of us have little, if any, construction experience. However, Jill knows her way around a construction site because she often accompanies her father, who is a builder, to work. Today she brought her own tools and wore heavy work boots.

The team leader assumed Alan, who is over six feet tall and strong, would be the natural leader. Alan often takes a leadership role in the group, but he doesn't really know anything about construction work. Patrick almost didn't show up this morning. He is an artist and likes working with his hands, but has never excelled at woodworking.

I just like being with the group and came to have a good time.

When we arrived at the site, the team leader suggested that part of the group work on repairing and shoring up a stairwell. He gave Alan brief instructions and then took the rest of the group to the basement to clear debris. Alan was lost. Meanwhile, Jill climbed up an alcove and started measuring the braces. She sent Laura and me to find several pieces of lumber and long nails. She instructed another on how to cut the wood. With Alan's support she leaned over the stairwell to remove rotten wood. By noon, our group had almost finished the task.

Meanwhile, Patrick and one of his friends had wandered to the rowhouse next door where a team from a local bank was painting. Both youth offered to help, and began to work on the dining room. When the group leader discovered Patrick had the patience to do precise work, she gave him small brushes to paint the ornate fireplace the workers had rescued and restored.

At the end of the day, the stairwell was in use, the dining room next door sparkled with fresh paint, and the empty basement awaited a new furnace. Everyone on our team had a new respect for Jill. She realized, however, that the stairwell could not have been constructed if Alan had not been there to support her and the rest of us not provided the materials. Patrick learned something about himself and being a part of a team, and I kept the group from being too serious.

All of us learned new skills, discovered sore muscles we didn't know we had, and realized that we could accomplish a great deal by working together.

SESSION 8

Scripture
Genesis 1:26-28
Judges 4:4-10
II Samuel 11:2-5, 14-15, 26-27

Skill Focus
Relationships
Communication
Prayer
Almighty and everlasting God, you made the universe with all its marvelous order, its atoms, worlds, and galaxies, and the infinite complexity of living creatures: Grant that, as we probe the mysteries of your creation, we may come to know you more truly, and more surely fulfill our role in your eternal purpose; in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

For Knowledge of God's Creation
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 827

Dismissal
Go in peace to love and serve the Lord. Thanks be to God.

1 Created in the Image of God

☐ Begin Here: Study Scripture

Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.” So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.”

Genesis 1:26-28

Commentary: The first book of the Bible is a narrative account of the beginnings of both the world and the community of Israel. The first eleven chapters of Genesis are the story of the “primeval” times that tell how the blessing of God enabled humanity to multiply, diversify, and disperse throughout earth. This section's significance is not in the scientific origins, but in the understanding that the world was formed by God and accountable to God's purposes, living toward God's hope.

In the passage for this session, God created humankind, both male and female, differentiated sexually and given the power to reproduce and exercise dominion over the earth. Men and women working together are made in God's image and share the responsibility of being God's stewards on earth.

☐ Questions

☐ What does it mean to be created “in the image of God”?  
☐ What new insight did you learn about both the opposite gender and yourself?  
☐ What will you do differently in the future in your relationship with those of the opposite gender?

Option: Read and discuss the Personal Story.  
☐ How did the group work around the team leader's assumptions about what they could do?

☐ Activities

Clay Creations
Pass out balls of clay to each participant. At first, don't make any comments and see what happens. Now put blindfolds on each person. Ask them to make a clay creation, using only the sense of touch. Ask them to think about what God “saw” when creating the world. During this exercise, ask the group to work in silence.

When everyone is finished, take off the blindfolds and talk about what each person has made.

• Was God's creation of the world an internal or external experience?
• Did the texture of the clay determine what you made?
• Display the creations in your church with no explanation of how they were made. What did people say about them?

Hint: You may need to encourage those who claim they lack artistic talent. This exercise taps more into their creative spirits.

Quiz Show
Ask each person to write down one question (on a 3"x5" card) he or she would ask a person of the opposite gender. Collect cards with questions written by females and by males. Ask a volunteer to draw and answer a question from the opposite gender—males will answer females' questions and vice versa. Continue until all questions are answered. Hint: The group should respect the right of anyone to pass before or after a question is drawn.

• What kinds of questions do males and females have about each other?
• Were there significant differences in the questions males or females asked?
• Were you surprised by any of the answers?

Television
Watch a television drama such as ER or Chicago Hope that depicts men and women working together. Discuss the roles that they play, and how both men and women perform tasks that they are trained for to accomplish their joint work.
2 Need Each Other

☐ Begin Here: Study Scripture

At that time Deborah, a prophetess, wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel. She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim; and the Israelites came up to her for judgment. She sent and summoned Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, “The Lord, the God of Israel, commands you, ‘Go, take position at Mount Tabor, bringing ten thousand from the tribe of Naphtali and the tribe of Zebulun. I will draw out Sisera, the general of Jabin's army, to meet you by the Wadi Kishon with his chariots and his troops; and I will give him into your hand.'” Barak said to her, “If you will go with me, I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go.” And she said, “I will surely go with you; nevertheless, the road on which you are going will not lead to your glory, for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.” Then Deborah got up and went with Barak to Kedesh. Barak summoned Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh; and ten thousand warriors went up behind him; and Deborah went up with him.

Judges 4:4-10

Commentary: The Book of Judges covers the period from the Israelites' settlement of the promised land under Joshua to the time of Samuel, the last judge before the monarchy. The stories in Judges tell the exploits of champions in times of crisis for the tribes of Israel. At this point, the tribes were loosely joined in a federation, with no central authority. The “major” judges in the book refer to those champions who also performed military and administrative functions. “Minor” judges arose to face down specific crises.

The passage for this session tells the story of the prophet and judge Deborah and the military commander Barak. They joined forces in a war for the fertile plains that were held by the Canaanites. These lands were crucial for control of central and northern Palestine. Several of the tribes banded together for this war in which God joins the Israelites against the enemy.

Questions

☐ How would you characterize Deborah's and Barak's relationship?
☐ What was the primary difference between their roles?
☐ Can you think of an experience in which the skills and abilities of both males and females were needed?

Option: Read and discuss the Personal Story.
☐ How did the group work together to complete the task?

Activities

Women in War

Reread the scripture passage about Deborah and Barak in Judges 4:4-10. The story of Deborah is not that unusual; women have participated in wars throughout history. In the Revolutionary War, female camp followers cooked, washed, and cared for the wounded. In World War II women primarily took over military desk jobs, but some faced danger as nurses and drivers. Women today are beginning to fully participate in the military as pilots and in combat roles.

• Compare Deborah's experience with recent roles played by women in conflicts.
• Are there ways that men and women complement each other and provide a more comprehensive military approach?
• What are some of the problems with an increased role of women in the military?

To find out how Deborah and Barak fared in their battle against Sisera and Jabin's army, finish reading Judges 4. The next chapter of Judges is called the Song of Deborah, and is thought by some scholars to be one of the oldest parts of the Hebrew Bible.

Images

Divide the group into males and females. Distribute to both groups a range of magazines, scissors, glue, and poster board. Ask each group to look for images of the opposite gender in words and pictures. Cut out the pictures or words and mount them on the poster board. When both groups are ready, ask them to share their collages.

• Did you find negative images in your collage?
• Did you find negative images in the collage made by the other group?
• Were the images biased in any way?
• How are we influenced by images we see in the media?

During the next week, ask the group to be aware of the images of men and women portrayed in the media—magazines, newspapers, television, and radio. Awareness can take away some of the negative power of the media.

Movie

Watch the movie and read the book Circle of Friends. In this film, the main character finds the real meaning of friendship. Compare the ending in the book with the movie. Which did you like better?
3 Our Bodies, Our Selves

☐ Begin Here: Study Scripture

It happened, late one afternoon, when David rose from his couch and was walking about on the roof of the king's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; the woman was very beautiful. David sent someone to inquire about the woman. It was reported, “This is Bathsheba daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite.” So David sent messengers to get her, and she came to him, and he lay with her. . . . Then she returned to her house. The woman conceived; and she sent and told David, “I am pregnant.” . . . David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah. In the letter he wrote, “Set Uriah in the forefront of the hardest fighting, and then draw back from him, so that he may be struck down and die.” . . . When the wife of Uriah heard that her husband was dead, she made lamentation for him. When the mourning was over, David sent and brought her to his house, and she became his wife, and bore him a son.

II Samuel 11:2-5, 14-15, 26-27

Commentary: The writer of II Samuel tells for the first time about the domestic and political problems of the royal family in the scripture passage. The private life of David and his family was filled with sordid acts that would later lead to tragic consequences. After the murder of Uriah, Nathan comes to David (II Samuel 12:1-24) and rebukes him in the name of the Lord, promising that the secret sins of David would have public repercussions. The child that he bore with Bathsheba died, and later his son fought against him. Throughout David's life, he was forced to recognize the need for repentance and divine mercy. Unlike Saul who believed in his own might, David knew that God was his strength.

☐ Questions

- What is the Christian responsibility in terms of sex?
- What does Jesus's command to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:39) have to do with the way we treat others in sexual relationships?
- What does it mean to be made in God's image?

☐ Activities

When No Means No

Reread the scripture passage. As a group write a screenplay for a movie set in the present day but based on the story of David and Bathsheba. The screen play should meet the standards applied to a PG or G rated film, one that you would be comfortable showing to your younger siblings, your parents, or the clergy.

Before beginning, discuss the characters and the qualities of each. Some of the participants may want to look ahead in II Samuel to find out what happens to the characters after this story. Remember that although David's kingly power was absolute, he was still expected to follow God's commands.

- Do you think Bathsheba planned for David to see her?
- Have you ever dressed a certain way to attract the attention of someone from the opposite sex? What do you wear at the pool or the beach? What message are you sending? What message is being received?
- Do you think David would have left Bathsheba alone if she had stood up to him? Have you ever been in a situation in which the person you were with did not seem to understand the word “no”? What did you do?
- Could Bathsheba, the wife of one of David's soldiers, have refused David's overture?
- Have you ever been in a situation with someone of the opposite sex in which you felt powerless?

Think about these questions as you write your drama. Your screenplay might provide a different ending. Imagine, for example, how the story would have turned out if Bathsheba had said no to David and remained loyal to her husband. If possible, find a way to stage the play as a live drama or as a film by using a video camera. Share the drama with a group of middle school or junior high youth. Discuss the meaning of the play, using some of the questions above.

Speaker

Ask the administrator or director of a spousal abuse program to speak to the group. Find out how counselors help people leave destructive relationships. Often one of the first things a person must do is believe he or she has true worth. Find out how the group can support the work of the program. Because the location of these shelters is usually confidential, you probably cannot visit the facility. However, the group could collect toiletries for the residents and toys and clothing for the children who are often present. You could also plan a fund-raiser to purchase needed equipment, such as high chairs and cribs.
DIVERSITY

Making a Difference

Objective
Youth will be able to list ways diverse people have enriched others and the Church. They will compose a statement that reflects the group's consensus about what they have learned and how they can help span the differences among people.

Personal Story
Accepting and being around people who are different is difficult because we all have stereotypes and prejudices. No one can avoid them, and no one should feel ashamed to think about them. Our ability to accept diversity is influenced by family, friends, movies, books, and life experiences. Sometimes our preconceived notions are correct, while other times they turn out to be totally wrong.

I remember a recent experience that I entered into with completely false ideas. As part of a community service project, I signed up to tutor a 10-year-old girl who was in the fourth grade. She attended a nearby elementary school, and although she was intelligent and as diligent as the other students, she was different because she was blind. When I was told that Amy couldn't see, I was scared and tempted to ask for another child to tutor. At the same time, I was curious about her blindness and about methods of learning for the blind.

The first day as I waited to meet Amy, I thought of what she would be like based on my limited knowledge of blind people. I imagined she would be like Helen Keller as a child, helpless and probably quiet. I was afraid she would be scared to talk to me and a hard student to teach. I expected her to have a negative attitude and a rude demeanor. I thought this would be a learning experience for me on dealing with people who were “different” from me.

When I recall that day, I can't believe how wrong I was. I have never seen a little girl with more things to say and more questions to ask. She was bright and expressive and funny. While I was ready to set her apart because of her blindness, her classmates saw her as just another person. I had expected her peers to leave her out of games, but I learned that they saw past what I was so focused on. They treated her with respect and as an equal. She was given no special treatment because she was blind.

During the five months I worked with Amy, I changed more than she did. I talked and laughed with Amy and became fond of her and her classmates. I remember walking down the halls with Amy and watching parents move or tug their children aside to make room for her, as if she couldn't find her way around. I knew that five months ago I would have done the same thing.

This has been a very important learning experience for me. I'll never forget the time I spent working with Amy. I realized that having stereotypes and prejudices is normal as long as you go into new situations with an open mind. The willingness to be open to different people and new experiences can make life more interesting and fulfilling.

SESSION 9

Scripture
Galatians 3:26-28
Micah 6:8

Skill Focus
Responsibility
Independence
**Prayer**

O Lord, mercifully receive the prayers of your people who call upon you, and grant that they may know and understand what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to accomplish them; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

_Proper 10_  
_The Book of Common Prayer, p. 231_

**Dismissal**

*Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.*

Thanks be to God.

---

**Begin Here: Remembering Scripture**

. . . for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.  

*Galatians 3:26-28*

He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?  

*Micah 6:8*

**Connect with the Personal Story**

Read the personal story for Session 9. Write your own personal story based on what you have learned through exploring diversity. Think about an experience that helped you to be more open to people who are different from you.

**Questions**

- How diverse is your youth group? Your church?
- How can you better appreciate the diversity of people in the world?
- As a group, are you kind to one another?
- What are some specific ways you can each be more kind and humble to those who are different from you?
- Do you treat everyone equally in the group? In the church?
- Do you treat people equally in our families? At school? In your community?
- What have you learned from the time you spent looking at diversity?

**RESPONDING ACTIVITIES**

Outreach activities suggested in Sessions 2 through 8 are summarized in the chart at the end of Session 9. Use these ideas or create your own to help make your church and community a more diverse and welcoming place.

- **Individually**
  - Individually or as a group think about ways an individual can respond to issues raised in the Diversity module. Share your ideas, and write them on a piece of newsprint. Possible responses:
    - If you recognize the need for more diversity in a particular group to which you belong, write a letter to the group or its leaders expressing your concern.
    - Make a conscious effort to change your vocabulary to use inclusive rather than derogatory language regarding race, gender, appearance, and ability.
    - Conduct a diversity inventory of your school, sports teams, clubs, and other groups to which you belong, and share those results with the specific group.
    - Join an organization or group in order to make it more diverse.
    - Offer to be a buddy on Sunday morning to a person with special needs.

- **Group**
  - Brainstorm ideas about how this group can respond to issues raised in the Diversity module. Write them on a piece of newsprint. Possible responses:
    - Conduct a diversity inventory of your church or groups within the church and share those results with the rector and vestry.
    - Write a group statement about diversity to be published in the church newsletter or posted in a public location.
    - Establish an ongoing relationship with a youth group with a different racial or cultural makeup than your own. Plan joint activities, and take turns hosting events.
    - Rewrite some of the Sunday morning liturgy, such as the Prayers of the People, to reflect diversity and inclusiveness.
    - Write a skit on diversity that can be performed in place of a sermon, for a worship service, or during an adult or intergenerational educational forum.
    - Offer to assist in building handicap ramps where necessary.
    - Write a statement for the rector and vestry on how young people contribute positively and uniquely to the life of the church.
Celebrate!

Celebrate the completion of the Diversity unit with a specific activity. Let the group think of an appropriate activity or use one of the following options:

Art
- Give each person a poster board and a marker. Each draws a stick figure of him or herself and labels the figure with words which positively describe unique qualities or characteristics. Display the posters around the room when everyone is finished.

Liturgy
- Say together a General Thanksgiving or A Litany of Thanksgiving beginning on p. 836 of The Book of Common Prayer.
- Ask each person to write a prayer of thanks for his or her own uniqueness. Say the prayers aloud as the group prays in a circle.
- Read together Psalm 129 (The Book of Common Prayer, p. 784) or Psalm 133 (The Book of Common Prayer, p. 787).
- Use “A Form of Commitment to Christian Service” (The Book of Common Prayer, p. 420) to create your own liturgy to celebrate diversity and individual gifts of service.

Community
- Make a banner that welcomes all people to your church.

Fun
- Throw a party and invite as many different kinds of people as you can. Bring different kinds of food from different cultures.

FOLLOW THROUGH

1. **Individual Response:** Make a covenant with God to do the best you can to respect the diversity of all people. Write down at least one thing you plan to do to make diversity more than just something to talk about at church. Think about the steps you need to take to accomplish your goals.
   - Do you need help to accomplish your goals?
   - Can you identify someone in the church or community who can help you?

2. **Group Response:** Look at the list of responses the group has made. Decide which of the actions the group would like to accomplish. The group may decide only one is feasible, or work on several. On a separate piece of newsprint write down the idea(s) at the top of the page. List the actions that must be taken to complete the task. Next to each action, estimate the time it will take, and ask the participants to designate someone to be responsible for getting it done. Appoint someone to oversee the activity who can make sure each component has been completed.
   - How did you determine which action to take?
   - Can every person in the group participate?
   - Can you identify people in the church or community who can help the group complete its task(s)?

3. **Celebrate:** Select one person or a group of people to choose an appropriate liturgy response to your study of Diversity. Set a time when the group can create or say the selected liturgy. Ask a volunteer to gather materials for art projects, and find out who would like to participate in making a banner or other undertaking. If the group decides to have a party, delegate responsibility for invitations, food, and decorations.
   - Does the celebration include all participants?
   - Could people outside the group join in the celebration?
## LOOKING BACK AND GOING FORWARD
### Outreach Activities in Sessions 2-8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Diversity</th>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Suggested Outreach Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Racism    | 2       | • Make a census of your church using new categories.  
          |         | • Find ways to show love for your neighbor individually and as a group. |
| Rich & Poor | 1     | • Give away excess personal property or sell it and give proceeds to the poor.  
         |         | • Sponsor a church-wide rummage sale.  
         |         | • Go “gleaning” if a program is available; give your harvest to a food bank or soup kitchen. |
|          | 2       | • Draw up your own church budget. Find out how youth can get involved in budget process. |
|          | 3       | • Stage a play based on “The Gift of the Magi” for another group in the church.  
         |         | • Plan a food scavenger hunt to gather food for the poor. |
| Ethnicity & Culture | 1 | • Share stories about language and culture the group has created with another group in the church. |
|          | 2       | • Prepare a meal with different ethnic food; serve it at a senior facility or to another group at your church. |
|          | 3       | • Display at your church the images of Jesus the group created. |
| In the Church | 1 | • Sponsor a program on conflict resolution at your church.  
          |         | • Write a “state of the gospel” report for your church about opportunities open to all members to spread the gospel. |
| Differently Abled | 1 | • Research simple and inexpensive ways to make your church more accessible.  
         |         | • Select a project and complete it. |
|          | 2       | • Share “beatitudes” in the church newsletter.  
         |         | • Find a way to show God's love to those who are differently abled. |
|          | 3       | • Covenant to use one of your gifts in service to God.  
         |         | • Visit a facility that helps the differently abled. How can you help? |
| Stereotypes | 1 | • Get involved in a committee or program at your church.  
          |         | • Plan a social activity with seniors. |
|          | 3       | • Select a positive attribute of a Christian you admire. Incorporate it into your own life. |
| Men & Women | 1 | • Display clay creations the group made while blindfolded.  
          |         | • Stage a play based on the story of David and Bathsheba. |
|          | 3       | • Find a way to provide necessities at a spousal abuse shelter. |