

What's Next?

This is the question! Now that we have gone through this little booklet together, what would you like to have happen next?

How do you feel about considering Jesus as Christ/Messiah and Lord of a person's life? Would you consider Jesus as *your* Lord and King?

How can I pray for you?

What's next for you or for us?

4 Invitations for you to consider

1. Continue conversation together (future 201 booklet or Bible Study resource)
2. Church
 - a. Do you want to meet my pastor?
 - b. Do you want to be baptized?
3. Bible Study (personal or group)
 - a. Do you want to come to a small group?
 - b. Do you want to ask someone else to join us and we can go through this same book with that person?
4. Emmaus / Closer Walk



A real and authentic faith community who are seeking to communicate the gospel of Jesus the Christ through: connecting with one another; sharing our knowledge with one another; growing with one another; and going out into the world to make disciples with one another.

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101 Booklet

SUMC Basics

How we understand "the basics" of what Christians believe and how Christians live

If you are reading this, then you have been in some kind of conversation with someone from Sherburne United Methodist Church about religion, church, faith, etc and you have been invited for a deeper conversation. This is awesome! THANK YOU so much for even reading this, as it shows us that you are at least considering that what we have talk about is worth talking more about.

With so many opinions about Jesus, the church, and faith floating around just about everywhere these days we are hoping that this booklet will provide a foundation that will be a great conversation between two or more people about Christianity. Speaking as a member of SUMC, we also hope to share what it has done in personal ways in our own lives. Our goal is to communicate the Gospel of Jesus Christ through knowing, growing, and going at SUMC. This booklet is an aid for the people at SUMC to do just that - communicate the Gospel in inviting and non-threatening ways. By going through a little, some, or all of this book with someone from SUMC, you are helping us - and we THANK YOU again for your considering a further conversation.

Another reason for putting this booklet together is to dispel some myths that people have about Jesus and church. We want to get down to the nuts and bolts of what is believed about key things within Christianity, and talk about how they are relevant today and what they actually have done in the life of a "believer." That is the idea behind the final question with every conversation - "How or why might this matter for modern Christians?"

Our great hope at the end of this ongoing conversation you are about to embark on will at least give you a clear understanding of some of the basics of the Christian Religion, and a way of faith and practice. We love that you are having this conversation and are (at least considering) joining in this journey. We hope for at least one conversation past what may be an initial encounter or regular small talk

Use this booklet however you see best in your conversations. Also know that this is a "fluid" document, meaning it will be updated often as we discuss how our conversations have gone, have found better questions to ask, and change according to feedback from those whom we do this booklet with.

May God bless you in your journey and conversations!

Sharing my story

OPENING QUESTIONS

1. Is your perception of me that I have this all figured out?
2. What questions do you have for me regarding my faith?

This is how I understand God working in my life ... (share testimony)

What would you like your life story to be?

Can I pray for us? (Let's have prayer together)

Christians often follow and are taught certain things in order to grow in their faith.

OPENING QUESTIONS

1. How might a Christian “grow” in their faith? What might they do to better understand God and how he wants them to live?
 - a. In other words, how does a Christian learn to be a Christian?
2. Are we done after committing to Jesus for salvation?
3. Is it possible to grow in your faith through prayer, going to church, and devotionals only? How else could we grow in faith?

This is how we understand faith

Christians grow in their faith in two key areas: personal growth and community growth.

Biblical Stories to consider ...

1. Hebrews 6.1-3
2. Parable of Seeds on Soil (Matthew 13:1–23, Mark 4:1–20, and Luke 8:4–15)
3. Parable of Fig Tree (Matthew 24:32–35, Mark 13:28–31, and Luke 21:29–33)
4. Parable of Mustard Seed (Matthew 13:31–32, Mark 4:30–32, and Luke 13:18–19)
5. Parable of Talents (Matthew 25:14–30 Luke 19:11–27)

How or why might this matter for modern Christians?

Can I pray for us? (Let’s have prayer together)

Jesus Christ was a real person who lived in the Roman Empire between 3BC and 33 AD.

OPENING QUESTIONS

1. Who do you think/ what is your perception of who Jesus was?
2. What do you know about how he died? What about the concept of resurrection?
3. What is your understanding of the relationship between Jesus and God?
4. You’ve probably had some experience knowing about Christmas and Easter, what is your understanding of those events?

This is how we understand Jesus:

We believe in one God, and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, and we believe in the Holy Spirit - and they are unified in every way.

Jesus is God and man combined in order to show us God is real, loves us, and has a different kind of life in mind for us.

Biblical Stories to consider & discuss ...

1. He was born and grew up: Birth Narratives Matthew 1:1-25; 2.1-12; Luke 1.1-80; 2:1-20
2. He shows up and feels: Jesus Wept (John 11.35)
3. He died: Crucifixion (Matthew 27.45-66)
4. He forgives: Prodigal Son and Restoring Peter (Luke 15.11-32; John 21.15-23)
5. He prayed often: Teaching Disciples How to Pray (Luke 11; baptism (Luke 3:21) Regular time of withdrawal from the crowds (Luke 5:16) After healing people in the evening (Mark 1:35) Before walking on water (Matt 14:23, Mark 6:46, John 6:15)

How or why might this matter for modern Christians?

1. Other historians that aren’t Christians have written about Jesus, the man
2. Historian Flavius Josephus wrote one of the earliest non-biblical accounts of Jesus (first-century Jewish historian)
3. Another account of Jesus appears in Annals of Imperial Rome, a first-century history of the Roman Empire written around 116 A.D. by the Roman senator and historian Tacitus. In chronicling the burning of Rome in 64 A.D., Tacitus mentions that Emperor Nero falsely blamed “the persons commonly called Christians, who were hated for their enormities. Christus, the founder of the name, was put to death by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea in the reign of Tiberius.”
 - a. As a Roman historian, Tacitus did not have any Christian biases in his discussion of the persecution of Christians by Nero

How or why might this matter for modern Christians?

Can I pray for us? (Let’s have prayer together)

Prayer: Most people of faith pray, and in various styles and ways ...

OPENING QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever prayed?
2. Is the idea of praying uncomfortable for you?
3. Everyone says “my thoughts and prayers are with you” - what does that mean to you? Or How do you react and feel when people say it to you?

After your prayer time, it is valuable to take a few moments and review what you experienced in prayer. What promptings of the Spirit did you perceive? What was your mood? Where were your mind and heart drawn? What was enjoyable? Moving? Uncomfortable? Where was God working? How did you respond?¹

This is how we understand prayer:

You can just do it! - it's like talking to a friend

Biblical Stories to consider ...

1. Wisdom: James 1.5; Proverbs 3.7; Solomon's Prayer (1 Kgs 3.1-15 [2 Chron. 1])
2. Meekness: The Tax Collector's Prayer (Luke 18:9-14)
3. Intercession: Abraham Intercedes for Sodom (Genesis 18:22-19:29); Moses Intercedes for Israel (Exodus 32.1-14); Jesus Intercedes for us (Romans 8.34; 1 John 2.1; Hebrews 7.25)
4. Prayer of Abandonment to God's Will
 - a. I am no longer my own, but yours. Put me to what you will, place me with whom you will. Put me to doing, put me to suffering. Let me be put to work for you or set aside for you, Praised for you or criticized for you. Let me be full, let me be empty. Let me have all things, let me have nothing. I freely and fully surrender all things to your glory and service. And now, O wonderful and holy God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, you are mine, and I am yours. So be it. And the covenant which I have made on earth, Let it also be made in heaven. Amen.
5. Teaching the Disciples, Our Father ...

How or why might this matter for modern Christians?

Can I pray for us? (Let's have prayer together)

No doubt you've heard the question, or have been asked, “**Are you saved?**” Describe what it's like in Methodism in our terminology of what it's like to be saved

OPENING QUESTIONS

1. What do you think people mean when they ask “are you saved?”
2. Do you think that baptism and ‘being saved’ are the same thing? Is baptism necessary?
3. Do you think that you, or anyone, needs to be ‘saved’ (so to speak)?

This is how we understand salvation

Salvation is the idea that through faith in Jesus Christ, we are re-created in God's image to do a 180 with our lives; to begin to sense and live into being a new creation little by little right here in this life and it goes on into eternity.

Biblical Stories to consider ...

1. Romans 3 (esp. 17-24, 30-31), 8 (esp. 5-14, 26-30, 38-39), 10 (esp. 9-15); John 17.1-8
2. Eph. 1.4-11; Phil. 2.3-13; Phil 3.12-16
3. Heb. 7
4. Prodigal Son (Luke 15)
5. Born Again (John 3)

How or why might this matter for modern Christians?

Can I pray for us? (Let's have prayer together)

*** Being ‘saved’ isn't rescue from problems of life, and it's not the ‘end’ of religion but the beginning of a great, wonderful, mysterious, tough, but blessed journey with God - that's where faith comes in, and it's different for everyone.
Assurance

¹ Ortman, Dennis C.. Transcending Post-Infidelity Stress Disorder (p. 205). Potter/Ten Speed/Harmony/Rodale. Kindle Edition.

Jesus as Messiah and God

OPENING QUESTIONS

1. You may have discussed Jesus as an actual person, but what do you think about the idea of him being God as well?
2. Who is God to you?
3. What do you think God is like?

This is how we understand Jesus as Messiah and God

We know that Jesus is God, the fullness of all that God is, who is in the man Jesus Christ - who is also God's son.

Biblical Stories to consider ...

1. Word of God became flesh
2. Healings and teachings
3. Resurrection & visiting Paul
4. Who do you say that I am (Colossians 1.13-20)

How or why might this matter for modern Christians?

Can I pray for us? (Let's have prayer together)

Scripture verses - 7 I am statements?

Illustration

"Law" Scriptures about Jesus being judge, but also taking our sentence upon himself

Church (more than weddings and funerals)

OPENING QUESTIONS

1. What has been your experience of church?
2. What do you think church ought to be like?
3. What kind of church would you attend?

This is how we understand church:

Church is a place for renewal, and to gather with others who've experienced God working in their lives to praise God and talk about our experiences with Him

Biblical Stories to consider ...

1. Acts 2 and sharing as needed
2. Acts 11.26
3. Lord's Supper Together
4. Order (cf. Titus and elders)
5. Spiritual Gifts

How or why might this matter for modern Christians?

Can I pray for us? (Let's have prayer together)

Christian Discipleship

OPENING QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever heard the term "disciple" or "discipleship"?
2. What do you think a disciple was in Jesus' day?
3. What does a disciple of Jesus look like in our time? Or what should one look like?

This is how we understand discipleship:

Is a journey with others to know more about God, understand who Jesus is, and live in a way that is acceptable to God. This happens on our own, and together in church.

Biblical Stories to consider ...

1. Jesus and Disciples
2. Barnabas and Paul ([Verses with Barnabas](#))
3. Apollos with [Priscilla and Aquila](#); More on [Priscilla and Aquila](#)
4. [Peter](#) from fisherman to Gentile evangelist
5. [Nicodemus](#)

How or why might this matter for modern Christians?

Can I pray for us? (Let's have prayer together)

Scripture (or, the Bible ... more than what's on a T-shirt or FB meme)

OPENING QUESTIONS

1. Do we understand Scripture is revealed by God? How does understanding Scripture as being revealed by God change the way we might approach reading Scripture? What does God want us to see and experience about Him?
2. If you don't read the Bible, why don't you?
3. Were there things that were confusing? Or hard to understand? What were they? Let's talk!
4. Why do you think there are so many versions of the Bible?
5. Why is the Bible important?
6. If we believe in Jesus the Christ, how can we not read Scripture?!

This is how we understand the Bible:

It's the revealed word of God, written by witnesses of what God has done, so that people like us can understand how to live in a way that is pleasing to God with timeless principles.

Biblical Stories to consider ...

1. Passage from Timothy about Scripture (2 Tim 3.1-17; *particularly* vv.16-17)
2. Sound doctrine passage from Titus (1.9; 2.1)
3. Law and Grace (grace to grace; Romans 3:20-24; Romans 6:14; Romans 11.6; 2 Corinthians 3)
4. God's story!
 - a. Before the foundation of the world
 - b. It was good
 - c. Falleness
 - d. A Chosen People
 - e. Kingdom Established
 - f. Kingdom Lost
 - g. Messiah - Kingdom Established
 - h. A Chosen People
 - i. End Times
 - j. Resurrection

How or why might this matter for modern Christians?

Can I pray for us? (Let's have prayer together)