

Our denomination, the Methodists, began with the teaching of Englishman, John Wesley (1703-1791). John Wesley spoke about the need to have a "catholic spirit" (The word "catholic" here means "relating to everyone" as distinct from "Roman Catholic" which is a Christian denomination.)

According to John Wesley, a person with a catholic spirit "...loves, as friends, as brothers (sic) in the Lord, as members of Christ and children of God, as joint partakers now of the present kingdom of God and fellow heirs of his eternal kingdom, all of whatever opinion or worship, or congregation, who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; who love God and man..."

What attitude is John Wesley trying to encourage toward Christians who have different opinions from us or who worship differently from us?

Finish today's class by sharing any needs you or your family have at present and praying for each other.

Homework

Before the next class read John 3.1-18 and consider:
How do I know that God loves me?
Why did God send Jesus into the world?
What happens when we believe in him?

Write down a question that you'd like to ask God and bring it to the next class.

Confirmation Studies



Study 1 - Meaning & Reasons



This Confirmation study material is a **Refresh** Resource produced by Andrew Gamman
Mission Resourcing: *Inspiring and resourcing our communities for a journey with Christ that enriches lives and relationships*

Baptism and confirmation

When and where were you baptised?

Why do parents bring their children to church to be baptised?

Most people who come for confirmation were brought by their parents to be baptised as babies or young children. Baptism marks your entry into the community of faith. At the time of your baptism your parents promised to help you to grow up with an appreciation and understanding of the Christian faith. There comes a point when you decide for yourself that you want to be a follower of Jesus. At this time we have a public ceremony called "confirmation" in which you confirm your membership in the church on the basis of your own personal faith in Jesus.

At what age do you think people are old enough to decide for themselves?

What was your first experience of sensing God involved in your life?

Share your journey of faith with the group.

Being a follower of Jesus means that we commit ourselves to do those things that please God. However, we often let God down. We make mistakes and wrong choices.

If we claim that we're free of sin, we're only fooling ourselves. A claim like that is errant nonsense. On the other hand, if we admit our sins - make a clean breast of them - he won't let us down; he'll be true to himself. He'll forgive our sins and purge us of all wrongdoing. If we claim that we've never sinned, we out-and-out contradict God - make a liar out of him. A claim like that only shows off our ignorance of God 1 John 1.8-10

In this passage what does John tell us to do when we sin?

What does he say that God will do?

Jesus said "Anyone who won't shoulder his own cross and follow behind me can't be my disciple. Is there anyone here who, planning to build a new house, doesn't first sit down and figure the cost so you'll know if you can complete it?"

Luke 14.27-28

In what ways could it be costly to be a follower of Jesus?

Is it possible for someone to be confirmed without having personal faith in Christ?

Is it possible to have personal faith in Christ without being confirmed?

The church

Confirmation is a mark of full adult membership of the church and a sign of your intention to follow Jesus for the rest of your life.

When we talk about "going to church" we are using the word "church" for the building where we meet. Sometimes we use the word "church" to mean the denomination to which we belong.

But the proper use of the word "church" is for the people who are followers of Jesus. In the Bible the word "church" means those who are "called out" to be the community of God's people. Sometimes it refers to a local group of Christians and at other times it refers all the people everywhere who believe in Jesus.

How important is your church building?

If the building was gone would you still have a church?

Jesus chose twelve disciples to learn from him about the ways of God. After his death and resurrection the number of followers began to grow. We usually date the start of the church from the time the Holy Spirit was given on the day of Pentecost. At that time there were 120 people present. As everybody started talking about Jesus the news spread. Today 1.1 billion people, about one third of the world's population, call themselves Christian.

Over the church's history Christians have done many good things. They have also made some very bad mistakes and had disagreements with one another. This has resulted in Christians being divided into groupings or denominations.

What different denominations can you name?

Do you know how they differ from one another?

The church is constantly changing. What changes would you like to see?