

Free Methodist Church Membership Training

Course Overview and Teaching Notes

Free Methodist Church Membership Training: Course Overview and Teaching Notes

Editor: Beth Cullison

No part of this publication may be translated, reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording or any information storage retrieval system, without written permission from the publisher.

Worksheets and forms may be freely duplicated.

Scripture quotations are taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. NIV® Copyright ©1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. All rights reserved.

© 2008

Light and Life Communications
Indianapolis, Indiana
Printed in the U.S.A.

General Instructions:

Membership Training is for anyone interested in exploring membership in the Free Methodist Church. The church does not assume that all participants will join in covenant membership. Participating in the class does not make one a member nor does it require one to become a member. Those who are already members of the Free Methodist Church may benefit from participating in membership classes as a refresher course.

The course overview and teaching notes are intended for use with the five PowerPoint presentations, Membership 1-5. The *text* on each slide may be read. The leader may make additional comments as needed. The *notes* are not intended to be read verbatim, they are to provide clarity.

The five sessions will require approximately eight hours of class time. Participants should plan to spend 5 hours of preparation time in addition to class time. This 5-session resource with out-of-class assignments is not recommended for 1-day intensive formats.

Warm-Up — Provide a warm-up time at the beginning of each class, helping the class to relate to one another. Consider using a brief game or fun quiz that relates to the topic of the day. A pertinent personal story about the topic of the day or other interesting fact may be helpful. Limit warm-up to around 5 minutes.

Wrap-Up — Bring each class session to an end by giving a 1-2 sentence preview of the next class topic, reminding participants of any reading they need to do prior to the next session. Close with prayer. Ask the Holy Spirit to bring understanding and clarity to the topics for that day, ask the Lord to help each participant discern His direction for them in membership.

Materials Needed:

1. Extra paper and pens for participants to use.
2. A copy of the Membership Ritual for Adult Membership ¶18800, *Book of Discipline*. Providing a copy of the ritual will help participants become familiar with the questions they will be asked during the membership ritual.
3. *Classic Catechism* book* — One copy for each participant. Pages 48-58 should be read prior to Session 2.
4. *Our Calling to the Poor* booklet* — One copy for each participant. This material should be read prior to Session 3.
5. *The Female Pastor: Is There Room for 'She' in Shepherd* booklet* — One copy for each participant. This material should be read prior to Session 3.

6. “The Christian Journey” chapter — One copy for each participant. This material should be read prior to Session 4. A free download of this chapter is available from www.freemethodistchurch.org under resources, *Book of Discipline*, chapter 3.
 7. *Denominational Web Site Quiz* (provided with this resource) — One copy for each participant. This should be completed prior to Session 5.
- *Available through the Wesleyan Publishing House at www.wesleyan.org/wph or 1-800-493-7539.

Class Environment:

Chairs around a table work well, providing a casual class environment. Membership training may feel foreign and intimidating to some participants. Providing a warm and inviting atmosphere can help. Light refreshments help “break the ice” and give participants something to do while they listen. Be conscious of the room temperature — rooms that are too cold or too hot. Try to stay on schedule. Beginning and ending on time demonstrates respect and builds trust. Be sure to give opportunities for questions during class time. Be available after class for those who may have additional questions. Encourage class participation; avoid allowing one or two participants to dominate discussions.

Contact Information:

Ask participants to complete the class roster form provided with this resource.

Optional Ideas:

Begin a new membership class by going around the room and asking participants to share how they came to attend your church. This can later serve as a good example of the “prevenient grace” topic — how God works in our lives bringing about good for us before we may be aware of His goodness.

Some participants come to the membership class with preconceived questions or ideas about membership. Allow participants to submit anonymous questions by providing a large envelope for them to submit questions via the “Membership Question Form” provided with this resource. Be sure to address each question in some form as you work through the course material.

Use of Hyperlinks within PowerPoint Presentations:

Hyperlinks, the ability to jump from one slide to another, are used within the PowerPoint presentations. In preparing for a session you may want to look at every slide and familiarize yourself with how to navigate through the material. If you go straight through the slides you may notice that some slides are duplicated. These slides are duplicated so that the hyperlink function will work smoothly when you actually present the material to the class. In other words, don't worry about duplicate slides.

Course Overview

Session 1

- I. Length: 2 hours
- II. Goal: To help participants become familiar with the beginning steps of membership.
- III. Objectives: By the end of Session 1 participants will:
 - A. Know why membership is important.
 - B. Know the difference between casual and covenant memberships.
 - C. Know the basic steps and requirements of membership.
 - D. Know the steps of growing in faith.
 - E. Feel free to ask questions during the class.
 - F. Have the opportunity to build friendships with other class participants.
 - G. Realize the seriousness of covenant membership.
 - H. Experience the encouragement of the Holy Spirit to grow closer to God.
- IV. Outline
 - A. Welcome/Prayer/Introduction of Participants
 - B. Why Membership?
 - C. The Meaning of Covenant
 - BREAK
 - D. Membership Requirements/Steps to Membership
 - E. First Steps: Personal Faith
 - F. Wrap-up
 - i. Tell participants what the next class will cover.
 - ii. Distribute the “Membership Question Form,” page 11 (optional)
 - iii. Distribute *Classic Catechism* book* — One copy for each participant. Participants should read pages 48-58 prior to the next class.
 - iv. Participants should collect at least 2 newspaper articles or TV/radio statements that demonstrate wrong teaching with regard to the Articles of Religion. These statements will be discussed during the next class session.
 - v. Close the class time in prayer.

Session 2

- I. Length: 1:20 hours
- II. Goal: To help participants become familiar with the Articles of Religion in the *Book of Discipline*.
- III. Objectives: By the end of Session 2 participants will:
 - A. Know the six topics addressed in the Articles of Religion.
 - B. Have an opportunity to ask questions regarding the Articles of Religion.
 - C. Realize the depth of content and careful formulation of the Articles of Religion.
- IV. Outline
 - A. Welcome/Prayer
 - B. Warm-Up suggestions:
 - i. In Unison, read the Apostle's Creed from page 62-63 in *Classic Catechism* or reading #716 from the Affirmations of Faith section in *The Hymnal for Worship & Celebration*.
 - ii. Listen to a song about the Apostle's Creed. ("[Because We Believe](#)," by Nancy Gordon and Jamie Harvill, © 1996 Mother's Heart Music/Integrity's Hosanna! Music.)
 - C. The Articles of Religion
 - i. God
 - ii. The Scriptures
 - iii. Humankind
 - iv. Salvation
 - v. The Church
 - vi. Last Things
 - D. Wrap-up
 - i. Tell participants what the next class will cover.
 - ii. Distribute *Our Calling to the Poor* booklet. Participants should read this material prior to the next class.
 - iii. Distribute *The Female Pastor: Is There Room for 'She' in Shepherd* booklet. Participants should read this material prior to the next class.
 - iv. Distribute Chapter 3, *Book of Discipline*. Participants should read this material prior to [Session 4](#).
 - v. Close the class time in prayer.

Session 3

- I. Length: 1:20 hour
- II. Goal: To help participants become familiar with Church History.
- III. Objectives: By the end of Session 3 participants will:
 - A. Know Martin Luther's relationship to the Protestant Reformation.
 - B. Know John Wesley's relationship to the Methodist Church.
 - C. Know B.T. Roberts' relationship to the Free Methodist Church.
 - D. Understand God's special call to the Free Methodist Church.
 - E. Realize God's grace and patience with man's stumbling efforts to further God's kingdom throughout history.
- IV. Outline
 - A. Welcome/Prayer
 - B. Warm-up suggestions:
 - i. Sing or listen to the song "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" written by Martin Luther in 1529. An Mp3 sound file is attached to the first PowerPoint slide of this session.
 - ii. Sing or listen to the song "O For A Thousand Tongues to Sing" written by Charles Wesley in 1739. Charles was John Wesley's brother and wrote more than 1,200 hymns.
 - C. Church History
 - i. The catholic "universal" church
 - ii. The Protestant Reformation — Martin Luther
 - iii. The Methodist Church — John Wesley
 - iv. The Free Methodist Church — B.T. Roberts
 - v. Reflections on church history and the reading of *Our Calling to the Poor* and *The Female Pastor* booklets.
 - D. Wrap-up
 - i. Tell participants what the next class will cover.
 - ii. Remind participants to read Chapter 3, *Book of Discipline* ("The Christian Journey") prior to the next class.
 - iii. Close the class time in prayer.

Session 4

- I. Length: 1:20 hour

- II. Goal: To help participants become familiar with The Christian Journey Goals in the *Book of Discipline*.

- III. Objectives: By the end of Session 4 participants will:
 - A. Know the difference between the Articles of Religion and the Christian Journey Goals.
 - B. Have an opportunity to ask questions regarding the Christian Journey Goals.
 - C. Realize the church's commitment to help each participant grow in their relationship with God and others.
 - D. Understand the scope of commitment made to the church in membership.

- IV. Outline
 - A. Welcome/Prayer
 - B. The Christian Journey
 - i. Goals Regarding God
 - ii. Goals Regarding Ourselves and Others
 - iii. Goals Regarding the Institutions of God
 - iv. Goals Regarding the Church
 - C. Wrap-up
 - i. Tell participants what the next class will cover.
 - ii. Distribute the *Denominational Web Site Quiz*. Encourage participants to explore the denominational Web site at www.freemethodistchurch.org. You may want to review the *Web Site Quiz* as a warm-up to Session 5. The level of interest participants take with this take-home activity will determine the amount of time you spend in reviewing some of the slides in Session 5.
 - iii. Close the class time in prayer.

Session 5

- I. Length: 2 hours
- II. Goal: To help participants become familiar with the structure of the Free Methodist Church.
- III. Objectives: By the end of Session 5 participants will:
 - A. Know the frequently asked questions and answers about the denomination.
 - B. Know the names of key leaders in their local church and conference.
 - C. Know the basic organizational structure of the denomination.
 - D. Know where to look for denominational resources and be familiar with the church's Web site.
 - E. Know the next steps to take at the completion of membership training.
- IV. Outline
 - A. Welcome/Prayer
 - B. Warm-up: Review the *Denominational Web Site Quiz*.
 - C. Frequently Asked Questions
 - BREAK
 - D. The Free Methodist Church Structure
 - E. Our Local Church
 - F. Next Steps
 - G. Wrap-up
 - i. Provide a calendar for participants to schedule informal follow-up appointments with the pastor.
 - ii. Close the class time in prayer.

Membership Class Roster

Name	Address	City	State	Zip	Home Phone	Email Address

Membership Question Form

“I really hope we talk about ...”

“I wonder what the Free Methodist Church believes about ...”

Membership Question Form

“I really hope we talk about ...”

“I wonder what the Free Methodist Church believes about ...”

Apostle's Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth;
And in Jesus Christ, His only son, our Lord;
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried;
He descended into Hades;
the third day He arose from the dead;
He ascended into Heaven,
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

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.
Amen.

* "catholic" refers to the universal church

A Mighty Fortress is Our God

Martin Luther, 1529

A mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing;
Our helper He, amid the flood of mortal ills prevailing:
For still our ancient foe doth seek to work us woe;
His craft and power are great, and, armed with cruel hate,
On earth is not his equal.

Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing;
Were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God's own choosing:
Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He;
Lord Sabaoth, His Name, from age to age the same,
And He must win the battle.

And though this world, with devils filled, should threaten to undo us,
We will not fear, for God hath willed His truth to triumph through us:
The Prince of Darkness grim, we tremble not for him;
His rage we can endure, for lo, his doom is sure,
One little word shall fell him.

That Word above all earthly powers, no thanks to them, abideth;
The Spirit and the gifts are ours through Him Who with us sideth:
Let goods and kindred go, this mortal life also;
The body they may kill: God's truth abideth still,
His kingdom is forever.

O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing

Charles Wesley, 1739

O for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise,
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of His grace!

My gracious Master and my God,
Assist me to proclaim,
To spread through all the earth abroad
The honors of Thy name.

*So come on and sing out
Let our anthem grow loud;
There is one great love — Jesus.*

Jesus! the name that charms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease;
'Tis music in the sinner's ears,
'Tis life, and health, and peace.

He breaks the power of canceled sin,
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean,
His blood availed for me.

*So come on and sing out
Let our anthem grow loud;
There is one great love — Jesus.*

He speaks, and, listening to His voice,
New life the dead receive,
The mournful, broken hearts rejoice,
The humble poor believe.

Glory to God, and praise and love
Be ever, ever given,
By saints below and saints above,
The church in earth and heaven.

*There are so few words
That never grow old.
There are so few words
That never grow old — Jesus.*

- Italicized words by David Crowder, 2007.
- Listen to the traditional version (the first 2:07 minutes) at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l16VuHpgDgI&feature=related>
- Listen to David Crowder's version at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AWekq9bHtKU>

THE
NATURE, DESIGN, AND GENERAL RULES
OF THE
UNITED SOCIETIES,
IN LONDON, BRISTOL, KINGSWOOD,
NEW CASTLE-UPON-TYNE, etc.

1. In the latter end of the year 1739, eight or ten persons came to me in London, who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin, and earnestly groaning for redemption. They desired (as did two or three more the next day) that I would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come; which they saw continually hanging over their heads. That we might have more time for this great work, I appointed a day when they might all come together, which from thenceforward they did every week, namely, on Thursday, in the evening. To these, and as many more as desired to join with them, (for their number increased daily,) I gave those advices, from time to time, which I judged most needful for them; and we always concluded our meeting with prayer suited to their several necessities.
2. This was the rise of the United Society, first in London, and then in other places. Such a society is no other than “a company of men having the form and seeking the power of godliness, united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation.”
3. That it may the more easily be discerned, whether they are indeed working out their own salvation, each society is divided into smaller companies, called *classes*, according to their respective places of abode.

There are about twelve persons in every class; one of whom is styled *the Leader*. It is his business,

- (1.) To see each person in his class once a week at least, in order to inquire how their souls prosper; to advise, reprove, comfort, or exhort, as occasion may require; to receive what they are willing to give toward the relief of the poor.
- (2.) To meet the Minister and the Stewards of the society once a week; in order to inform the Minister of any that are sick, or of any that walk disorderly, and will not be reprov'd; to pay to the Stewards what they have received of their several classes in the week preceding; and to show their account of what each person has contributed.

4. There is one only condition previously required in those who desire admission into these societies, — a desire “to flee from the wrath to come, to be saved from their sins:” But, wherever this is really fixed in the soul, it will be shown by its fruits. It is therefore expected of all who continue therein, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

First, by doing no harm, by avoiding evil in every kind; especially that which is most generally practiced: Such is, the taking the name of God in vain; the profaning the day of the Lord, either by doing ordinary work thereon, or by buying or selling; drunkenness, buying or selling spirituous liquors, or drinking them, unless in cases of extreme necessity; fighting, quarreling, brawling; brother going to law with brother; returning evil for evil, or railing for railing; the using many words in buying or selling; the buying or selling unaccustomed goods; the giving or taking things on usury, that is, unlawful interest; uncharitable or unprofitable conversation, particularly speaking evil of Magistrates or of Ministers; doing to others as we would not they should do unto us; doing what we know is not for the glory of God, as the “putting on of gold or costly apparel;” the taking such diversions as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus; the singing those songs, or reading those books, which do not tend to the knowledge or love of God; softness, and needless self-indulgence; laying up treasures upon earth; borrowing without a probability of paying; or taking up goods without a probability of paying for them.

5. It is expected of all who continue in these societies, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

Secondly, by doing good, by being, in every kind, merciful after their power; as they have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, and as far as is possible, to all men; — to their bodies, of the ability which God giveth, by giving food to the hungry, by clothing the naked, by visiting or helping them that are sick, or in prison; — to their souls, by instructing reproving, or exhorting all they have any intercourse with; trampling under foot that enthusiastic doctrine of devils, that “we are not to do good unless our heart be free to it:” By doing good especially to them that are of the household of faith, or groaning so to be; employing them preferably to

others, buying one of another; helping each other in business; and so much the more, because the world will love its own, and them only: By all possible diligence and frugality, that the gospel be not blamed: By running with patience the race that is set before them, “denying themselves, and taking up their cross daily;” submitting to bear the reproach of Christ, to be as the filth and off-scouring of the world; and looking that men should “say all manner of evil of them falsely for the Lord’s sake.”

6. It is expected of all who desire to continue in these societies, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

Thirdly, by attending upon all the ordinances of God. Such are, the public worship of God; the ministry of the word, either read or expounded; the supper of the Lord; family and private prayer; searching the Scriptures; and fasting, or abstinence.

7. These are the General Rules of our societies; all which we are taught of God to observe, even in his written word, the only rule, and the sufficient rule, both of our faith and practice. And all these, we know, his Spirit writes on every truly awakened heart. If there be any among us who observe them not, who habitually break any of them, let it be made known unto them who watch over that soul as they that must give an account. We will admonish him of the error of his ways; we will bear with him for a season: But then if he repent not, he hath no more place among us. We have delivered our own souls.

JOHN WESLEY,
CHARLES WESLEY.

May 1, 1743.



**Free Methodist Church
Denominational Web Site Quiz**

ANSWER SHEET

1. **What is the first frequently asked question or “FAQ” about Free Methodism?**

(HINT: About Us section)

Answer: “What is the difference between the Methodist Church and the ‘Free’ Methodist Church?”

2. **What bishop’s last name begins with a “K”?**

Answer: Kendall

3. **What are the three main headers in the Missions section?**

Answer: Pray, Give, Go

4. **What is the name of the denominational magazine? (HINT: News section)**

Answer: Light & Life

5. **How many educational institutions are associated with the Free Methodist Church?**

(HINT: Organizations section)

Answer: 6

6. **What special group of Free Methodists are highlighted in the Prayer section?**

Answer: Free Methodists in the military

7. **True or False — Is there a store you can order Christian materials from through Light & Life Communications? (HINT: Resources section)**

Answer: Yes, Free Methodist resources and other Christian materials can be ordered and are distributed through the on-line Wesleyan Publishing House Web site at www.wesleyan.org/wph.

8. **How many links to other Web sites are listed?**

Answer: 8



Free Methodist Church Denominational Web Site Quiz

www.freemethodistchurch.org

1. What is the first frequently asked question or “FAQ” about Free Methodism?
(HINT: About Us section)
2. What bishop’s last name begins with a “K”?
3. What are the three main headers in the Missions section?
4. What is the name of the denominational magazine? (HINT: News section)
5. How many educational institutions are associated with the Free Methodist Church?
(HINT: Organizations section)
6. What special group of Free Methodists are highlighted in the Prayer section?
7. True or False — Is there a store you can order Christian materials from through Light & Life Communications? (HINT: Resources section)
8. How many links to other Web sites are listed?