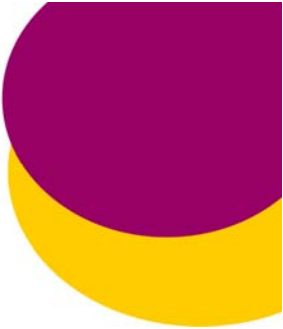




**CURRICULUM  
LEADER'S  
GUIDE**

**READ  
THIS FIRST**





This curriculum is designed to be both flexible and easy to use. It offers a four-session basic course with the option of expanding to five or six sessions using the materials provided.

## COURSE OVERVIEW

### Session 1: God's Generous Hospitality (*expandable to 2 sessions*)

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** This session explores the biblical significance of hospitality, what it entails, those to whom it applies, and what it means to be called to practice God's radical hospitality in today's world. Participants will explore hospitality as an obligation that we have to all those we come into contact with, including strangers and those who make us feel uncomfortable. The focus is not on the worthiness of the stranger, but rather on the faithfulness of the one providing the hospitality.

Participants will be invited to share their experiences of hospitality and lack of hospitality and the impact of those encounters. Learners will identify ways in which true hospitality can be incorporated into their daily lives and into the daily life of the church community.

### Session 2: Called to Love

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** As Christians, we know that God's love and grace extend to all. This session focuses on God's call to love one another and Jesus' imperative to love our neighbor as ourselves. Participants will delve into how they as individuals and as a church community measure up on the love scale. Where do we do well at practicing love, and where do we fall short? How would lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people and their families and friends rate our practice of love? Participants will identify ways to include people who regularly fall outside the circle of love in our church and commit to specific actions that demonstrate God's love.

### Session 3: Justice for All (*expandable to 2 sessions*)

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** Jesus spent his ministry reaching out to the downtrodden and calling for the just treatment of others. As people of faith, we believe in and work toward justice for **everyone**. We strive to eliminate marginalization and discrimination as our belief in kindness and fairness informs our actions. In this session, participants will explore the experience of being marginalized and identify ways in which LGBT people are marginalized in society and in the church. Recognizing that silence and inaction on the part of well-meaning Christians contribute to marginalization, participants will pledge to specific actions aimed at including LGBT people and their families and friends in the full life of the church.

## Session 4: One Family Tree

**SESSION DESCRIPTION:** We're all part of one global family. As people of faith, we share concern for the well-being of all members of God's family—including LGBT people and their families and friends. Participants will explore how branches of God's family tree are being hurt and excluded by United Methodist Church practices and how LGBT teens are at risk, then look at the blessings that could be available to the church if all members of God's family were celebrated for who they are and the gifts they bring. Participants will reflect on and honor actions they have taken during this course and create a plan for continuing action.

### FACILITATOR

This course is designed to have a facilitator prepare for and lead each session. Preparation includes selecting the specific activities to be used. The curriculum consists of activities to fill at least 90 minutes. The facilitator should read through the entire lesson, then select the activities that best fit the group and session length.

### ESTABLISHING A RESPECTFUL ENVIRONMENT

As the leader, you set the tone from the beginning by your example. Or you can read the following paragraph to the group at the beginning of the first session.

*As a community of faith, the value of loving our neighbors as ourselves calls us to establish together a respectful, warm environment for this experience. In this course, we will encourage one another to think and grow together in our understanding of inclusiveness. Many of the activities call for discussion, personal reflection, and sharing. You're encouraged to interact honestly and openly with one another and with the material and to show respect for people and their thoughts and ideas. Together we will **be** the body of Christ.*

### COURSE ORGANIZATION

#### MEETING FORMAT

As you choose the activities for each session, it helps to follow a similar session format. As time permits, add additional activities from the Core Lesson Components section.

1. Opening Activity *Choose one or more from:*
  - Prayer
  - Scripture
  - Hymn or song to sing together
2. Core Lesson Components *Choose one or more from:*
  - A brief video and discussion
  - Several learning activities with guides for discussion and reflection

3. Call to Action  
Activity that invites participants to identify and commit to specific actions related to the theme of the session
4. Closing Activity *Choose from:*  
Prayer, blessing, or sending forth  
Closing hymn or song (*see the hymn suggestions at the beginning of each session*)

Each component lists the appropriate time the activity takes and is ranked to help you select the activities that best fit your group.

#### SETTING AND TIMING

Ideally this course should be offered in an informal setting that contributes to a relaxed, community-building atmosphere. Chairs set in a circle encourage interaction. Allow at least 45 minutes for each session.

#### MATERIALS NEEDED

See the beginning of each activity for the list of materials needed.

#### BEYOND DISCUSSION

Good discussions enliven any classroom, and this curriculum is designed to facilitate lively, thoughtful interchanges. However, discussion without action misses an important dynamic of our faith—the opportunity to put our words into practice. For this reason, the *Call to Action* section of each session in this curriculum is an essential component. Be sure to plan time for participants to reflect on and choose what they will do to put their faith into action. God calls us to be not only hearers of the word, but doers as well.

#### Key to Component Ranking

##### CAUTIOUS

A comfortable, safe activity suitable for all, even the most cautious and timid

##### READY FOR MORE

An activity that requires more critical thinking and sharing: suitable for groups that are ready to take more risks and expand their views

##### ADVENTUROUS

An activity suitable for groups that are eager to tackle tough subjects, are open to new ideas, and are willing to challenge the status quo