



I Choose Jesus Christ

Goals

To help youth claim Jesus as Savior and Lord of their lives.

Core Teaching

Our faith is based on the affirmation that “Jesus is Lord,” meaning that he is the one to whom we give our allegiance and honor. We also claim Jesus as Savior, meaning that Jesus died to cancel our sin and allow us to live in right relationship with God.

Scripture

Acts 5:27-42 (If this Jesus is just another prophet, his influence will pass away.)
Acts 16:25-34 (“What must I do to be saved?”)
Romans 10:9-13 (If you confess Jesus is Lord, you will be saved.)
2 Corinthians 4:13-14 (The one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also.)
Philippians 2:9-11 (Every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.)
Philippians 3:12 (Christ Jesus has made me his own.)
1 John 4:7-16 (God abides in those who testify that Jesus is the Son of God.)

Preparation

Gather reference materials.
Make copies of the handouts.

Your Options

Keepsake Book

Practices of the Faith

Visual Treasury

Think About It
(15–25 minutes)
What is a Lord?

Come Into the Community
(5–10 minutes)

Dig Deeper
(35–45 minutes)

- A. Search the Scriptures
- B. Strangely Warmed (Handout)
- C. Professing Jesus (Handout)

Go Forth With a Blessing
(5 minutes)

Keepsake Book *The Name Above All*

Come Into the Community

Practices of the Faith

Singing (Use songs that celebrate Jesus as Savior, such as “Blessed Assurance” [UMH 369], “He Lives” [UMH 310], and “Victory in Jesus” [UMH 370]; also sing the Gloria Patri [UMH 70 or 71] as a song that recalls the triune nature of God.)

Announcements

Prayer Concerns and Lord’s Prayer

Offering and Doxology

Affirmation of Faith

Think About It

What is a Lord?

Write on a markerboard or a large sheet of paper the word *Lord*.

Ask:

- What comes to mind when you hear the word *lord*?
- What is a lord? What does a lord do?

Record the responses for all to see. Then have several youth look up *lord* in a dictionary and in any other reference resources you may have. Have them fill in any gaps as to what a lord is and does on the list you’ve started.

Ask:

- Which of these definitions or descriptions apply to Jesus? Which do not?

Put a star by the ones that apply to Jesus; put a check mark beside those that describe only a secular lord.

Say:

While the title lord describes Jesus in many ways, some of its connotations do not apply to him. Lords were often lacking in humility—Jesus is humble. Lords were often autocratic and harsh—Jesus is loving and forgiving. Lords often forced people to pay tribute—Jesus asks for our whole being, but given of our own free will.

Throughout the Bible the word lord is used as a term of respect for someone in authority. A slave addressed his master as lord; a common person called a ruler lord. God is called Lord, the ruler of all the earth. Jesus is also addressed as Lord, one whom people recognized as having authority from God.

Part of accepting Jesus as Savior and Lord is understanding God’s grace, God’s gift of unconditional and unearned love. When we recognize our need for God, ask for forgiveness for our sin, and in faith commit our lives to God’s Way, we are saved by grace. God loves us, forgives us, changes us, and establishes Christ as the authority over our lives.

Provide dictionaries, encyclopedia, Bible dictionary, markers, and markerboard or large sheets of paper.

In the Middle Ages, the title *lord* was used to designate a person who owned property on which other people farmed and lived. The lord’s castle was a haven during attacks or storms and other natural disasters. The lord, as payment for his property and protection, had authority over all who lived on his land. His people, in return for their livelihood and the protection of the lord, were expected to pay him from the harvest, to respect him, and to grant his just requests.

Dig Deeper

Search the Scriptures

Have Bibles, large sheets of paper or markerboard, and markers, masking tape, paper, pencils or pens.

Give to pairs or small groups the following passages on slips of paper for easy reference. Have the youth read the passage to discover what it says about professing Jesus as Lord or Savior.

John 4:39-42
Acts 5:27-42
Acts 16:25-34
Romans 10:9-13

2 Corinthians 4:13-14
Philippians 2:11
Philippians 3:7-14
1 John 4:7-16

Ask:

- What does the Scripture say about professing Jesus as Lord and Savior?

Record the responses on the markerboard or large sheets of paper.

Adapted from "Jesus Christ: Savior and Lord," by Sam Halverson, in *Connect: Faith and Life for Young Teens*, Volume 15 (Abingdon Press, 1999). Used by permission.

Strangely Warmed

Provide copies of Handout 1, pens or pencils, and *A Visual Treasury of United Methodism*.

Show the youth the panel The Beginnings of Methodism from *A Visual Treasury of United Methodism*. Have volunteers read "The Holy Club," "Failure!" "Aldersgate," the statement on the frame of the panel, and "The World Is My Parish."

Ask:

- What difference did it make in John Wesley's life to move from a "head" understanding to a "heart" assurance?
- Who else had an experience of assurance just a few days before John? (*Charles Wesley*)

Say:

John Wesley experienced an assurance that Jesus had died for his sins, as well as the sins of other people. Intellectually, he had known this; but he had not felt it as a reality for his own life.

Give everyone a copy of Handout 1. Have the class read silently the story about John Wesley's experience of assurance and answer the questions on the handout.

Invite volunteers to talk about their responses. Help the youth understand that not everyone has such a dramatic "heart-warming" experience; however, in our Wesleyan theology, we can expect to receive assurance of our salvation. Even if the youth don't have that feeling of assurance now, that's OK. Assurance didn't happen for the Wesleys until they were in their mid-30's.

Visual Treasury

Give each youth a copy of the keepsake book *The Name Above All*. This keepsake book has already been used in Session 27. This session, read together the whole book, especially concentrating on pages 11–24. Send the book home with the youth this time; the book is for them to keep.

Say:

In the confirmation service you will be asked to profess Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord. In our Wesleyan understanding, we believe that there comes a time when we must respond to God's grace and make that commitment. Hear now the question for your decision:

“Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Savior, put your whole trust in his grace, and promise to serve him as your Lord, in union with the church which Christ has opened to people of all ages, nations, and races?”

(Baptismal Covenant I, *The United Methodist Hymnal*)

Give each youth a copy of Handout 2 and a pen or pencil. Give them quiet time to read the handout and reflect. Invite them to express their commitment by responding to the option at the bottom of the handout.

However, do not pressure the youth to fill this in; it's OK to wait. There will be other opportunities in the next few sessions (and, thanks be to God, throughout their lives if they are not ready now!).

On the other hand, for some youth, providing a time when they can openly profess faith in Jesus Christ is very important. Give them the option of reading out loud the statements—with their name—from the bottom of Handout 2.

Go Forth With a Blessing

Give this blessing to the youth from 2 Corinthians 13:11b, 13.

Live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

Provide copies of Handout 2, pens or pencils, and the keepsake book *The Name Above All*.

Keepsake Book

1

Wesley's Faith Struggle

One of the major struggles in John Wesley's early life was his relationship with God. He wanted desperately to feel God's love and forgiveness. He worked hard at living faithfully—studying the Bible, worshipping, praying, preaching, and doing good to others in Jesus' name.

On May 24, 1738, John Wesley began his day by reading in Mark 12. Verse 34, "You are not far from the kingdom of God," sent him into depression, because he felt he was a long way from God. That evening, though, he had a profound experience and recorded it in his journal.



"In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for my salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death."

—Journal, May 24, 1738

Did you ever go somewhere unwillingly and have it turn out to be a great experience? What happened?

John's brother Charles had a similar experience of assurance a few days earlier; John was 35 years old and Charles was 31. Do you think it's possible for someone to have such an experience as a teenager?

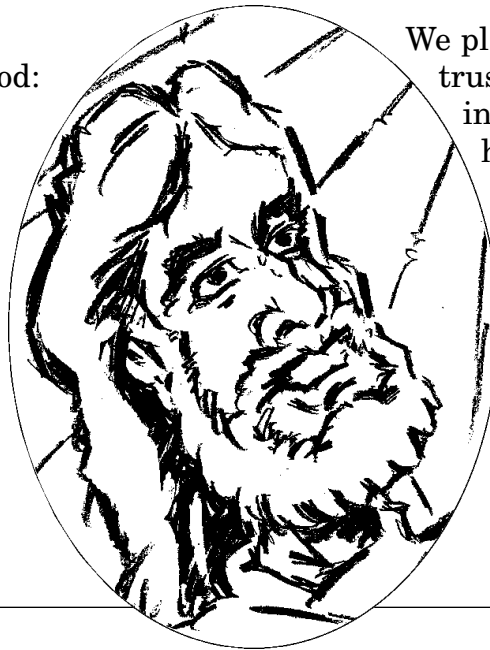
Do you think it's OK if you don't have such an experience as a teenager?

2

Professing Jesus

With his death and resurrection, Jesus Christ makes it possible to be at-one with God. This is what the word *atonement* means: “at-one”—the relationship broken by sin can be restored. Through this self-giving love, Jesus breaks the bonds of death and cancels the power of sin. Jesus Christ is the Way for us to be in right relationship with God—
Jesus is our Savior .

All this is a free gift from God:
God gave God’s own Son.
What we have to do is recognize our need for forgiveness and accept the new life God offers. That’s what being “born again” means—a fresh, new start in our relationship with God and with one another.



When we accept that gift and make a commitment to Jesus Christ, we are saying **Jesus is our Lord**

- the one to whom we give our loyalty and honor;
- the one we look up to for guidance and care;
- the one we will obey.

We place our lives before him in trust and love. We choose to live in ways that are pleasing to him. We honor him as our Lord.

We choose
God’s Way for
our lives.

Have you decided to allow Jesus to be the Lord and Savior of your life? Have you recognized that Jesus died to take away your sin? Do you trust in Christ alone for your salvation? If so, fill in each space (except the last one) with your name.

Jesus died to take away the sins of _____

Jesus has given _____ eternal life.

I, _____, confess Jesus as Lord and Savior of my life.

Date: _____