

The Methodist Church Around The World

The great big church

At the end of confirmation class, you're going to make a set of promises about participating in the life of your church. Well, not just your church. The United Methodist Church exists all over the world in some form or another. That's right—you belong to a global church that is part of the body of Christ and stretches from your hometown to the other side of the world and includes people from almost every continent on earth.

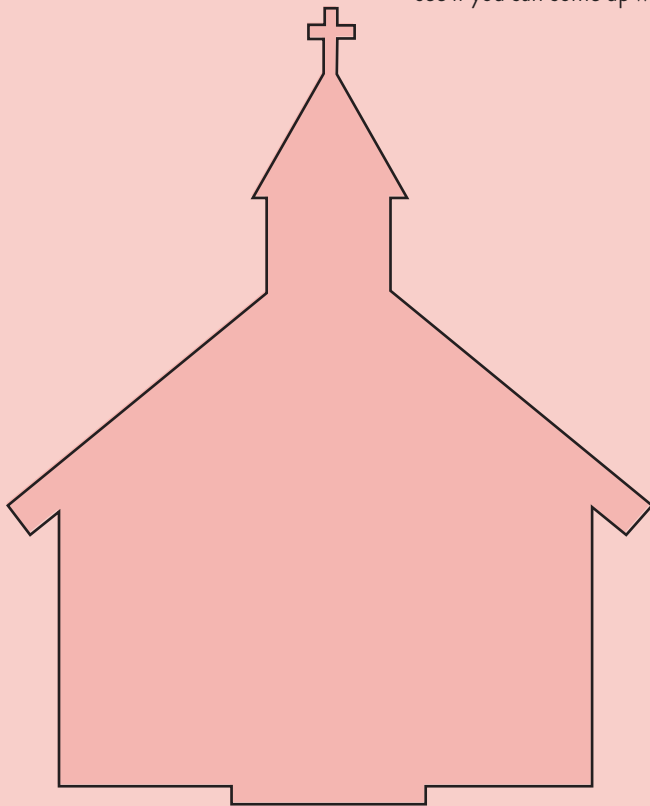
Philippians 1:6

"I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ."

ONCE YOU'RE CONFIRMED, YOU'LL BE A PART OF THE NICE LITTLE COMMUNITY YOU'VE GOTTEN TO KNOW DURING THIS CLASS. WON'T THAT BE GREAT? DRAW A PICTURE OF YOUR CHURCH ON THE HILLSIDE.

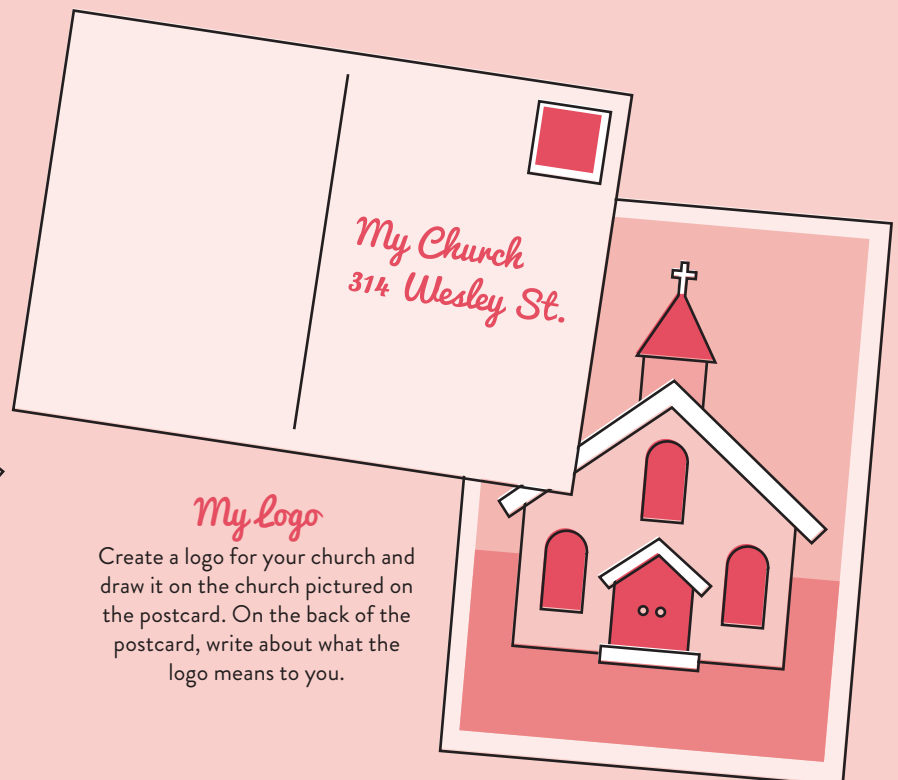
My Mission

Many churches have a mission statement that helps them define who they are and what they want to be about. See if you can find your church's mission statement. Look on a church bulletin or brochure, or ask your pastor or parents. Once you find it, use the banner above as a space to write down a few ways you see your church living out this mission. If your church doesn't have a mission statement, see if you can come up with one based on what you know about your church.



My Church

Do you know why you or your family chose to attend your church? Write about it inside the outline of the church above.



My Logo

Create a logo for your church and draw it on the church pictured on the postcard. On the back of the postcard, write about what the logo means to you.

I know all about my Methodist church. What else do I need?

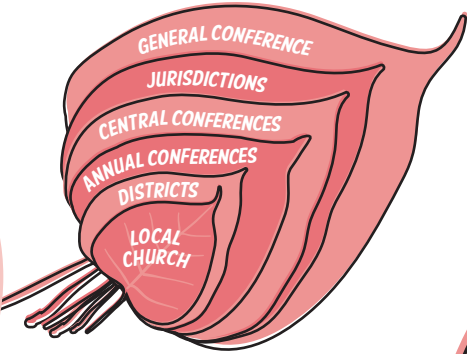
The Great Big Church

Confirmation connects you to your local church and to the global Methodist movement all over the world.

THE BANYAN TREE GROWS FROM ONE LARGE TRUNK, BUT AS THE BRANCHES REACH OUT, THEY DROP ADDITIONAL ROOTS TO THE GROUND. WHAT LOOKS LIKE AN ENTIRE FOREST OF INDIVIDUAL TREES IS REALLY ONE UNITED AND CONNECTED TREE. YOUR LOCAL CHURCH IS NOT ONE ISOLATED TREE ON A HILL; IT IS A TREE THAT HAS BRANCHED FROM THE LARGER ONE AND SET DOWN ROOTS OF ITS OWN.

OUR CONNECTION

The way a denomination is structured and run is called polity. Look over the structure of the Methodist denomination. How can this kind of structure be helpful to churches? What challenges might it create?



Who Knew?

The Great Banyan tree in Kolkata, India, is more than 250 years old and covers more than 3.5 acres of land. From a distance, it looks like a forest, but it's actually one connected structure of branches and aerial roots.

Our Timeline

Methodists have a long history, and this is just a small piece of it. Add a leaf to the bare tree for when your local church was founded. Add another for when you first started attending a United Methodist Church congregation. You are an important part of the church's history!

- 1784 Organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church
- 1816 Formation of the African Methodist Episcopal Church
- 1870 Colored Methodist Episcopal Church organized (name changed to Christian Methodist Episcopal Church in 1952)
- 1946 Formation of the Evangelical United Brethren Church
- 1968 Formation of The United Methodist Church

Turn back to the timeline in the lesson on the growth of Methodism. Add a few leaves to the tree to represent other moments in our history that interest you.

Our Evangelism

One big branch of our Methodist identity is that we share the gospel of Jesus Christ with others and invite them to consider those beliefs too. This is how Methodism moved around the world. Note all the arrows on the map that show how Methodism spread from one place to another. What surprises you about the directions the arrows move?

OUR GROWING FAMILY
THE WORLD METHODIST COUNCIL IS MADE UP OF 80 MEMBER METHODIST DENOMINATIONS, REPRESENTING 75 MILLION PEOPLE IN APPROXIMATELY 133 DIFFERENT COUNTRIES. THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH IS ONE OF THESE MEMBERS, REPRESENTING MORE THAN 12.8 MILLION PEOPLE IN OVER 43,000 CONGREGATIONS ACROSS THE GLOBE.

OUR STRUCTURE

The Book of Resolutions and The Book of Discipline set the foundation, policy, and guidelines for serving and worshipping together as United Methodists. They are revised every four years by representatives of UMC churches all over the world who come together to pray, worship, debate, and dream about the future of the church at an event called General Conference. Knowing that there are Methodist churches all over the world, why might it be helpful to have these books? What's one rule you think all Methodist churches should follow? Write your ideas on top of the books.

Book of Discipline

Book of Resolutions

Our Missions

The United Methodist Committee on Relief, known as UMCOR, is one example of how we love our neighbors through service. Because The UMC is a global denomination, we are uniquely organized to help in times of crisis. We're already in many of the communities that need help, making our response fast and effective. One example is The UMC's effort to combat malaria, which kills someone in an African country every 60 seconds. Through UMCOR, United Methodists have distributed 2.3 million bed nets, communicated prevention measures to more than 4.6 million people, trained nearly 12,000 health-care workers, and maintained more than 300 clinics throughout the continent of Africa. Draw hearts on some of the areas of the world where you know people are in need of help. Don't forget about the needs in your part of the world.

IT STARTS WITH ONE
READ EPHESIANS 2:13-22. ADD A FEW BRANCHES TO THE TREE AND FILL THEM WITH WORDS FROM PAUL'S LETTER THAT REMIND YOU OF THE CONNECTION WE HAVE WITH OTHER CHRISTIANS AROUND THE WORLD.

THE MISSION OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH IS TO MAKE DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE WORLD.

ROOTED TOGETHER
HOW IS THE MISSION OF THE UMC FOUND IN THE ROOTS OF THIS TREE SIMILAR TO THE MISSION STATEMENT YOU FOUND FOR YOUR CHURCH? HOW IS YOUR CHURCH LIVING INTO THE MISSION OF THE UMC? ADD YOUR THOUGHTS TO THE MAIN TRUNK OF THE TREE.

Our Global Church

Being Methodist means we are linked to other congregations around the world, sharing the joys and struggles of people everywhere. Being Methodist also means we care about the unity of the body of Christ. We try to live well with people in other denominations and other faiths.

Option 1: Shared Mission

With all these branches reaching out all over the world, the Methodist Church has lots of opportunities to love and serve others. Above the branch, draw or write about one way your church or youth group could help a group of people on the other side of the world. Below the branch, draw or write about one way a group of people from another part of the world could help your youth group.

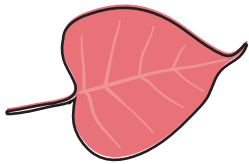


Option 2: Growing Together

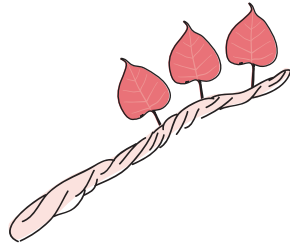
Supplies: butcher paper, markers, scissors, tape

Build your own banyan!

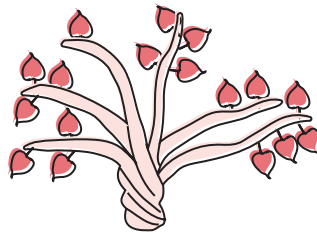
1. Working in small groups, use the butcher paper to cut some leaves, church buildings, UMC logos, or other shapes that represent The UMC for you. On each one, write something you learned about The United Methodist Church today.



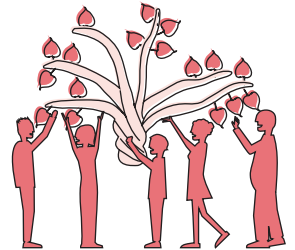
2. Get a loooooong piece of butcher paper—as long as the room you're in!—and roll it up lengthwise to create a branch. On the branch, write down one way you can be part of the work of the global UMC.



3. Tape your cutouts from step 1 to the top half of the branch. Then get back together as a large group and twist the lower parts of your branches into one big trunk.



4. Spread out so everyone is holding the tree, and hoist it over your heads while you chant, "UMC! UMC! UMC!" Hang or set your tree somewhere where everyone can see it, and keep adding cutouts to it whenever you take part in the work of the church.



1. Think



2. Share



3. Discuss



Why is it important to be part of a globally connected church?