What Every Teacher Needs to Know

Orientation for New and Returning Teachers

Purpose
At the end of this approximately 2½ hour session, teachers will have
• Received information on teaching in the congregation
• Explored reasons for teaching
• Learned ways to increase effectiveness
• Assessed their own knowledge in the areas covered in the What Every Teacher Needs to Know leaflets
• Gained information and knowledge in at least two areas covered in the leaflets

Materials
• Copies of all nine of the What Every Teacher Needs to Know leaflets
• Bibles
• Newsprint
• Notebook paper
• Felt-tip markers
• Pencils
• Five-by-seven paper for nametags that are hole-punched and strung with yarn
• Kitchen or cell phone timer
• Photocopies of the handouts “Assessment Tool” and “The Purpose of Christian Education” (pages 8–9 and 10) and learning center handouts
• Learning center supplies (see descriptions of learning centers)
• Congregation-specific handouts

Preparation
• Prepare a notebook for each teacher that contains congregation-specific information, such as substitute procedures, yearly training schedule, curriculum to be used, locations of equipment and supplies, class rosters, congregational youth and child protection policies, emergency procedures, and so forth.
• Gather supplies listed above, plus those for each learning center.
• Set up a room (or rooms) with space for the teachers to sit at tables for the group time and space for the nine learning centers.

Workshop Outline
• Gathering and Group Building (20 minutes)
• The Basics for Teaching (30 minutes)
• Why Teach? (20 minutes)
• Break (10 minutes)
• Summary and Assessment (15 minutes)
• First Learning Center (15 minutes)
• Second Learning Center (15 minutes)
• Assessment of Next Steps (10 minutes)
• Closing (10 minutes)
Workshop Plan

Gathering and Group Building (20 minutes)
1. Welcome the participants and ask them to make nametags. (Do this even if the members of the group know one another well.) In addition to their names, ask them to draw or write the following in each corner of the nametag:
   • Upper left—Name of the teacher they remember best
   • Upper right—Name of a Bible story they love
   • Lower left—A fear they have of teaching
   • Lower right—A prayer they have for teaching

2. Introduce yourself and ask each person to say his or her name and one item from his or her nametag.

3. Ask a volunteer to read aloud Matthew 28:18-20. Remind the group that teaching children, youth, and adults is part of carrying out this commandment given to us by Jesus.

4. Lead the group in prayer, asking those who wish to include their own prayers for teaching this year.

The Basics for Teaching (30 minutes)
Hand out the notebooks you prepared containing congregation-specific information. Review all items, and answer questions from the group.

Why Teach? (20 minutes)
1. Ask, “Why do we teach?” Invite the group members to turn to a neighbor and discuss the question. Say, “The church has something to say about why we teach. We will look first at the primary task of the congregation and then at the purpose of Christian education.”

2. On newsprint write the definition of the primary task of every congregation (Who Am I as a Teacher?, p. 4). Use the material in this section of the leaflet to describe the primary task.

3. Give each person a photocopy of “The Purpose of Christian Education” and read it aloud. At each of the three phrases of the purpose, pause and ask the group, “Who can recall a teacher, a small group, or an activity that helped you (1) know and experience God through Jesus Christ, (2) claim and live God’s promises, and (3) grow and serve as Christian disciples?” Allow those who wish to respond verbally. After each response, have the group affirm the response by saying, “Thanks be to God.”

4. Lead the group in discussing how the purpose of Christian education relates to and supports the primary task of the congregation. Talk about how this answers the question of why we teach. If your congregation has an intentional plan for disciple formation, describe how this plan is related to the primary task and the purpose of Christian education.

Break (10 minutes)
Summary and Assessment (15 minutes)

1. Pass around copies of the *What Every Teacher Needs to Know* leaflets. Tell the group that these were prepared to help teachers look at areas of knowledge that are basic to teaching. Say, “In the next few minutes, we will explore some of these topics. I am not assuming that everyone needs to spend time on every topic. However, it would be difficult for me to say what areas each of you needs to concentrate on. Therefore, we have an assessment that will help each of us decide which areas we most need to study.”

2. Hand out photocopies of the “Assessment Tool.” Assure the group that this is for their own personal use. Allow ten minutes for all to respond individually to the questions on the assessment. When all have had a chance to complete the assessment, say, “We now have time to explore two of the areas covered in the assessment. Nine learning centers are set up for you to use, one on each of the topics covered by the leaflets. You will need to pick two areas. You may want to pick the two areas that most interest you. Or you may want to pick the two areas you think you need to know more about. You will have fifteen minutes to work in a center. After fifteen minutes, I will call time and you can switch to a new center.”

Learning Centers (30 minutes)

Allow the group members to select centers. Set the kitchen or cell phone timer for fifteen minutes. At the end of that time, direct the participants to choose a second center. Reset the timer. Have the participants come back to the group when the time is up. (See pages 4–7 for information on setting up each learning center.)

Assessment of Next Steps (10 minutes)

1. Ask for volunteers to name one thing they learned in exploring the centers. List on newsprint all ideas mentioned.

2. List on newsprint all nine topics covered in the leaflets. Ask participants which topics they would like to explore further. Discuss the best ways to do this: a teacher study group, a scheduled day of training at the church, an online class, or other ideas for further study together. Determine what will be done to continue the learning and who will do it.

Closing (10 minutes)

1. Evaluate the session. Ask these questions and have the participants answer orally or in writing:
   • What were some of the things you learned today?
   • What are some ideas you want to continue to explore?
   • What will you do individually to continue improving as a teacher?
   • What do you wish we had done today or hope we will do in the future to help you continue growing as a disciple of Jesus Christ?

2. Sing together the hymn “Jesu, Jesu” (*The United Methodist Hymnal*, 432). Then end with a closing prayer.
Learning Centers

In addition to the supplies listed, participants will use their *What Every Teacher Needs to Know* leaflets in the centers. The directions for the learning centers can be photocopied, mounted on construction paper, and displayed in the center.

A People of God

Read the leaflet *A People of God*, and then do one or more of the following activities.
1. Review the developmental chart found in this center. Concentrate on the age group you teach. Using the notecards provided, make notes about the key characteristics you want to remember. Write a key characteristic of your age group on a light bulb shape; then glue it on the posterboard labeled with your age group.
2. Using the worksheet provided in this center, answer the questions about ways to help groups of people work with one another.
3. Using the paper and felt-tip markers provided, draw a picture that reflects something about where you were raised, your family, your home church, your generation, and/or something important from your racial/ethnic heritage. Post your picture at this center.
4. Read Matthew 22:34-39 in the Bible. Select one or two pictures from the magazines, tear them out, and glue them on the posterboard to represent ways we either include or exclude all of those whom God loves.

Your Place in the Faith Story

Read the leaflet *Teachers Know Their Place in the Faith Story*, and then do one or more of the following activities.
1. Find the Book of Psalms in your Bible. Read one or two of the following: Psalm 24; Psalm 68; Psalm 96; Psalm 125. Write on a notecard your responses to these questions:
   a. What is God like?
   b. How does God relate to humankind?
2. In the hymnal find the following: “O God, Our Help in Ages Past,” “Amazing Grace,” “I Sing a Song of the Saints of God,” “O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing.” Write on a notecard your responses to these questions, or discuss these questions with another person at this center:
   a. What do these hymns say to you about our faith story?
   b. Think of the students that you teach. How might you use these hymns in a lesson with your class or group?
3. Imagine that one of your regular class members has brought a non-Christian friend to your class. Write on a notecard your responses to these questions, or discuss these questions with another person at this center:
   a. What could you do to include this guest in your class or group?
   b. With only a few minutes for conversation, what would you say to this guest about the basics of the faith?
4. On a piece of paper, draw a timeline with markers for each one hundred years, starting with the birth of Christ and ending at the present. Now place on this timeline the key events of our faith you have read about or know. Below the timeline list those events you think are important but are not sure where they go.

Materials

- Development Through the Life Span (This developmental chart can be downloaded from the GBOD website.)
- Seven pieces of posterboard labeled:
  - Infants & toddlers
  - Ages 3 to 6
  - Ages 6 to 12
  - Ages 12 to 18
  - Ages 18 to 40
  - Ages 40 to 65
  - Ages 65 and older
- Notecards
- Pencils
- Yellow paper cut into light bulb shapes
- Glue
- Posterboard
- Paper
- Felt-tip markers
- Magazines
- Copies of “Group Dynamics”

Materials

- Pencils
- Hymnals
- Paper
- Bibles
- Notecards
- Felt-tip markers
A Language of Faith
Read the leaflet A Short Glossary of Faith and Church Language, and then do one or more of the following activities.
1. Make a list of other words you wonder about. Using the Bible dictionary, find each of your words and write the definition.
2. Find the following in the hymnal: “Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty,” “God, Whose Love Is Reigning O’er Us,” “Amazing Grace,” and “The Apostles’ Creed.” Make a list of terms contained in the creed and in the hymns that you think are important to know as a Christian. Now think about the group you teach. What words would be difficult for them to understand? What are some ways you could help them with the meanings of those words?
3. Complete the “Seasons of the Church Year” worksheet.

Understanding and Using the Bible
Read the leaflet Understanding and Using the Bible. Using the lectionary in The Book of Worship, find the Old Testament, Psalm, Gospel, and Epistle reading for next Sunday. Do one or more of the following activities.
1. Choose one of the lectionary passages for next Sunday. Read this passage in two different translations of the Bible. Which do you prefer? Why? On a piece of paper, write the reference for the passage you read. Note the translation you prefer and why. Leave this note in the center for others to read.
2. Choose one of the lectionary passages for next Sunday. Choose one word from the passage and use the concordance to find other Bible passages that include the same word. List these references on a notecard provided at this center. Now choose another word or phrase from the passage. Look up the word or phrase in a Bible dictionary. Write your phrase and definition on a notecard and leave it at the center for others to read.
3. Choose one of the lectionary passages for next Sunday. Select one of the Bible study methods listed in Understanding and Using the Bible. Find a partner and study together the passage using the method you have selected.

Understanding The United Methodist Church
Read the leaflet Understanding The United Methodist Church, and then do one or more of the following activities.
1. Take a walk through your church. What signs, symbols, books or other items do you find that relate to United Methodist heritage, beliefs, and practices? Discuss with someone else what you value about The United Methodist Church.
2. Using the information in the leaflet and the other resources at this center, complete the matching game.
3. Read the front page of a recent newspaper. See if you can find anything in The Book of Resolutions that speaks to an issue on the front page.
Who Am I as a Teacher?

Read the leaflet *Who Am I as a Teacher?*, and then do one or more of the following activities.

1. Read the story of Moses’ call to leadership in Exodus 3:1–4:17. Write on the paper provided answers to the following questions:
   a. When you think about being a teacher, what are some of your concerns or feelings that are like Moses’?
   b. What do you think you will need most to be an effective teacher this year?
   c. List three to five leadership traits you possess that will help you be an effective teacher.

2. Using the cloud shapes, write the names of three to five people who have been witnesses to the Christian faith for you. Glue them on the posterboard. Say a silent prayer of thanks for each person you named.

3. Make a list of activities you can use with the group you teach. Select one new activity to use for each month of the teaching year. Write next to that activity the month you will use the activity.

4. Read “The Primary Task of Every Congregation” in the leaflet. List three things you might do in your class that relate to each of the four parts of the primary task.

Teachers as Spiritual Leaders and Theologians

Read the leaflet *Teachers as Spiritual Leaders and Theologians*, and then do one or more of the following activities.

1. Using the “Index of Topics and Categories” in the back of the *The United Methodist Hymnal*, find “Grace.” Read four of the hymns listed under this category; then write your answers to the following questions:
   a. Which hymn about grace has the most influence on your thinking about God? Why is that so?
   b. How could you use music in your class or small group to teach about God’s grace? List three to five ideas.

2. Scan the statements in the section “Basic Theological Beliefs.” What would you add? Which statements do not apply to you? On a piece of paper, write one question you have about God, Jesus, the church, and the Bible. Decide which question is the most important for you right now. During the next week, spend some time talking with others about your question.

3. Draw the story of your spiritual journey. Using a sheet of paper, put a circle in the middle of the paper. Write your name in the circle. Coming out from the circle, list significant places, people, and events that have shaped your understanding of God and what it means to be a Christian disciple. Link those activities (for example, places and people) that go together. Say a silent prayer of thanks for these things that have shaped your faith.

4. Work with a partner on the “Biblical Reflection on Mary and Martha.”
Teachers Live the Faith

Read the leaflet *Teachers Live the Faith*, and then do one or more of the following activities.

1. Think about a teacher who was influential in your life. In what ways did that teacher influence you? Write a short prayer asking God to help you use your power of influence in ways that honor God and respect the worth of each class member. Place this prayer in your curriculum materials or class book and use it as you prepare to teach.

2. Find a partner and together read Romans 14:13. Recall a time when you thought someone was not listening to you. How was this a stumbling block for you? Consider the ways that lack of careful listening might be a stumbling block to a class member’s faith. What does this mean for how you will plan to teach?

3. Choose one of the following Bible passages which describe a vision of people living together in a way that is pleasing to God: Isaiah 65:17-25; Matthew 5:3-11; Luke 1:49-53; Revelation 22:1-5. Use the felt-tip markers and paper at this center to create a picture of how this vision might look if carried out in your classroom.

Classroom Environment

Read the leaflet *Classroom Environment*, and then do one or more of the following activities.

1. Draw a map of your classroom. Identify arrangements or items that may present a barrier to learning. Identify areas that may present a safety issue. List the things you would like to remove from the room. List those things you would like to add to the room. Identify who you would need to talk with or what you would need to do to respond to the items on your list.

2. Describe the rituals of your class to a partner. Identify what is being taught both explicitly and implicitly through these rituals.

3. On the posterboard titled “Wish List” add things that you wish were available in your classroom. Add at least one thing that would be very easy to obtain and one thing that might be very difficult. Brainstorm with others ways that the church might be able to respond to the wish list.

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Assessment Tool

Read each statement; then circle the number that best describes your situation.
1 = Not at all, 2 = Somewhat, 3 = Mostly, 4 = Definitely

Then circle the topics in which you have mostly ones or twos. These are areas that you may want to focus on.
Start by reading the corresponding *What Every Teacher Needs to Know* leaflet.

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<th>Theology</th>
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Assessment Tool—p.2

The United Methodist Church

1 2 3 4 I know the history of The United Methodist Church and can teach this rich legacy to others.

1 2 3 4 I know and live out the mission of the church.

1 2 3 4 I understand the meaning and impact of our connectional system.

1 2 3 4 I understand and can explain to others the organizational structure of The United Methodist Church.

1 2 3 4 I can explain the United Methodist understanding of grace.

1 2 3 4 I understand the “Wesleyan Quadrilateral” and use it as a guide for decision making.

Faith Language

1 2 3 4 I know that the church has its own language to describe the experience of the church and faith.

1 2 3 4 I know and can use words that describe the place where we worship and the articles of worship.

1 2 3 4 I know and can use words that signify the seasons of the church year.

1 2 3 4 I know and can use words that describe God and the relationship human beings have with God.

1 2 3 4 I use appropriate faith language with the group I lead.

Classroom Environment

1 2 3 4 I know my group members’ names.

1 2 3 4 I know how to arrange the space where I teach so that it is appropriate for the group I teach.

1 2 3 4 I know how to create a space for growing in worship and spiritual practices.

1 2 3 4 I know what basic supplies are needed for the age group I teach.

1 2 3 4 I know what to do to create a safe space for the age group I teach.

Christian Heritage

1 2 3 4 I know about our foremothers and forefathers of the faith and feel confident about telling others that information.

1 2 3 4 I have a variety of images of God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit.

1 2 3 4 I feel confident in explaining to people completely new to the Christian faith who we are as Christians.

1 2 3 4 I understand what we mean when we call someone a disciple and understand my place in the disciple-making process.

1 2 3 4 I can identify hymns that help to tell our faith story.

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Purpose of Christian Education

Through Christian education we invite people and communities of faith to be transformed as they are inspired and challenged to:

- Know and experience God through Jesus Christ,
- Claim and live God’s promises, and
- Grow and serve as Christian disciples.


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Group Dynamics

1. Estimate the number of people you will have in your group each week.

2. Write here the amount of time you will have with your group each week.

3. List things that make your group unique (taking into account history, culture, communication styles, and so forth).

4. List things you need to know about the group in order to teach them effectively.

5. List five strategies that will help ensure that all in your age group will have a chance to participate.
Seasons of the Church Year

1. Number the following in order, starting with the beginning of the church year and continuing to the beginning of a new year:
   ___ Lent
   ___ Pentecost
   ___ Season after Pentecost
   ___ Epiphany
   ___ Easter
   ___ Advent
   ___ Season after the Epiphany
   ___ Christmas

2. On the list above, write beside the name of each season the color of the season.

3. On the list above, write beside the name of each season one symbol of the season.
Matching Game

Match the correct definitions in Column B with Column A

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column A</th>
<th>Column B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. To do no harm, to do good, and to attend upon the ordinances of God</td>
<td>a. John Wesley’s General Rules for the earliest Methodist societies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The mission of The United Methodist Church</td>
<td>b. The official statements of doctrine and polity of The United Methodist Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The connectional system</td>
<td>c. To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. <em>The Book of Discipline</em></td>
<td>d. The official statements that describe The United Methodist Church’s vision for the world and its communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. <em>The Book of Resolutions</em></td>
<td>e. Ordained ministers who serve in a variety of appointed relationships to the church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. All Christians</td>
<td>f. Called by baptism to a ministry of servanthood in the world</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Bishops</td>
<td>g. The episcopal leaders of The United Methodist Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Elders and deacons</td>
<td>h. Non-ordained, licensed ministers appointed to serve as pastors in charge of churches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Local pastors</td>
<td>i. A unique organizational structure that enables local United Methodist churches to function as vital parts of the global United Methodist Church</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answers
Biblical Reflection on Mary and Martha

Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet and listened to what he was saying. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me.” But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.” (Luke 10:38-42)

1. Now as they went on their way, he entered a certain village, where a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home.
   In what ways do you welcome Jesus? In what ways do you need to welcome Jesus?

2. She had a sister named Mary, who sat at the Lord’s feet and listened to what he was saying.
   What does it mean for you to listen to Jesus? What helps you listen? What hinders you from listening?

3. But Martha was distracted by her many tasks; so she came to him and asked, “Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself?”
   What tends to you distract you? What distractions do you bring with you today?

4. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.
   How would you define the better part? When have you chosen the better part?
   What do you need to do in order to choose the better part?

5. What does this story tell us about who Jesus is and what kind of relationship we can have with him?

6. How can this story inform how you teach and learn with your group?

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