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ARTICLE

Session 16: To Spread Scriptural Holiness Across the Land

PREPARATION

Read Scripture and background information. Reflect on the questions in the participant book. Review links suggested in the lesson outline below.

Train of Thought

Faith-forming communities centered in Christ practice the means of grace individually and corporately. Leaders in the congregation create environments where the means of grace are regularly practiced. Leaders state the mission and vision of the congregation and then ask people the critical questions, "Why is this our mission? Why is this our vision?"

Desired Outcomes

As a result of this session, participants should be able to:

- Differentiate quality from excellence.
- Understand the need for empowerment of individuals and congregations.
- See personal and corporate holiness as a broadening of our mission.

Lesson Supplies

- [Posters](#)
- Candle and matches, additional symbols or news clippings related to current events in the community and world
- [Full text of Wesley's "The Circumcision of the Heart" sermon](#)
- Copies of ["A Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition"](#)

EXPLORATION AT GROUP SESSION

Total time: 50 minutes

Light the candle, noting symbols of current events. John Wesley challenges Christians to spread Scriptural Holiness across the land and bring God's love into current situations. Pray together the prayer on page 137. Ask participants for insights from this week's preparation.

Focus Study: Day 3

For Wesley, living by faith had power because it made no sense in the eyes of the world. Faith is impressive because it defies logic. How does this understanding of faith compare to Jesus' life? How does Wesley's view of the Christian faith match the way we speak of faith in our congregation? Conclude the discussion by reading together Hebrews 11:1-

3. Provide copies of the [complete sermon](#) for participants who want to read it.

Transition to Our Time

Turn to A Reflective Moment Along the Way, page 142. Ask participants to share the concrete steps needed for the congregation to support and empower people to grow in faith individually and corporately. This is the path of sanctification and personal holiness.

DISCOVERY — APPLYING IDEAS TO THE CONGREGATION

Total time: 45 minutes

Discussion Questions (30 minutes)

Turn to **Discussion Questions** on page 144. Ask participants to share their insights on the questions and concepts in this session.

Many forces in the world work to disempower people. The church is uniquely positioned to empower people, to give them hope, and to connect them to meaningful work. The exercise on pages 145 provides a way for individuals to gain more control in their own lives. Remind participants of the spiritual practices discussed in Session 14. Ask participants about their experiences with new spiritual practices. How are they attentive to God?

Ask participants to identify three specific measurable goals for growth in the next weeks. Allow time for goal setting, then ask pairs to share goals. Ask them to make a plan for accountability to each other in the coming weeks.

Feedback & Evaluation (5 minutes)

Ask, "What have we learned in this session? How can this group share the learning with the congregation?"

Sending Forth (10 minutes)

Look at page 155 and tell participants the celebration will be part of your session next week. Ask participants to share prayer concerns. Conclude by saying together John Wesley's [Covenant Prayer](#).



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EXCELLENCE VS. QUALITY

“... Excellence translates to quality only when it meets the needs of the people in the pews and then exceeds their expectations and delights them.”

— FaithQuest Bible Study, page 153

Excellence	Quality
<p>Your church softball team has won the league championship trophy for the last ten years. To lose the trophy would mean that the team had ceased to achieve a standard of excellence.</p>	<p>Your church softball team strives to work together toward a common goal and to assist all members to discover and improve their skills and abilities.</p>
<p>Our church has met its conference apportionments every year for the past thirty years. We are the only church in the district that can claim such an achievement. Unfortunately, this year we were forced to put a freeze on our staff salaries, but they understood.</p>	<p>This year our congregation had a garage sale to try to meet our budget. Every group in the church participated. This is the first time we have been able to pay our apportionments in twenty years, and we met several new people from the community.</p>
<p>Our church membership increases every year by at least 10 percent. However, our Sunday morning attendance seems to stay the same.</p>	<p>Every new member in our church has the opportunity to join a small group and has a “Faith Friend” who helps them feel a part of the congregation.</p>

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EMPOWERMENT

- Empowerment means “to grant authority to change.”
- People do not resist change; they resist being changed.

A Myth about Empowerment:

“Power is finite. If I give up power, I will have less power.”

Reality:

“Power is infinite. The more people feel empowered, the stronger the community will become.”

A Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition

I am no longer my own, but thine.
Put to me what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.
Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee,
exalted for thee or brought low by thee.
Let me be full, let me be empty.
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.
I freely and heartily yield all things
to thy pleasure and disposal.
And now, O glorious and blessed God,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it.
And the covenant which I have made on earth,
let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.

— *The United Methodist Hymnal*, no. 607