**A Methodist Way of Life service outlines**

**How to use these outlines**

This resource offers outlines for 13 worship services (whether Sunday or midweek, in a church building, cafe or forest) for each of the 12 commitments of A Methodist Way of Life (MWOL). It aims to challenge worshippers to consider what it means to be a Methodist in every moment of our lives, not just on a Sunday morning.

These are guidance notes only, recognising that you know your context and community best. Think of it as a ‘pick and mix’ assortment of options. We also strongly encourage you to give the outlines your own twist by adding personal stories and quotes from books you’ve read or podcasts you listen to. In places, there are suggestions for where such additions may fit well. But it is not intended as a definitive ‘order of service’ and you may wish to skip bits, move bits, or add bits. In fact, if you try to do everything, you will need several weeks for each session!

Similarly, the outlines do not have a set order, nor do they have to be used in a series. If you are doing the whole series, it might be helpful to start with a familiar commitment – something that allows you to celebrate what the community and its members are already doing. But don’t leave all the hard ones until the end! You could rotate through one commitment from each of the four areas of Our Calling, or look at each area in sequence.

These outlines work best when everyone in the church (or circuit) is working together. Rather than specifying the context for each section (eg this bit is for children, this bit is for small groups), the notes are ordered by activity, so that you can decide the best way to use them in your community. Below are some thoughts on how to use different parts of the outlines, depending on your role.

**Superintendents**: Consider running the whole series across the circuit on the same timeline, with preachers encouraged to use the same order, so that all churches experience all 12.

**Ministers**: Encourage co-ordination between preachers, worship leaders, children’s and youth workers, stewards, and small group leaders so that all groups/ages have the option to explore the same themes.

**Preachers**: As well as being part of a series, you can use individual service plans whenever the lectionary passages touch on the themes of one of the MWOL commitments. Contact stewards and worship leaders in advance and request they also use these notes. Utilise the discussion questions and creative activities in your sermons, as well as the sermon notes (see our webpage on [creating conversation spaces](https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/a-methodist-way-of-life/reflect-on-the-journey/conversation-spaces/) in services). Send the activities and discussion questions on to church stewards and worship leaders so they can be passed though the community for use in mid-week groups or pastoral visits.

**Worship leaders**: Get in touch with preachers in advance to see whether they are also using these notes. Consider the song and hymn suggestions, but don’t feel beholden to them.

**Small group leaders**: Pick up and develop the themes and the passages in these outlines using the discussion questions and interactive activities. Ask someone who attended the worship service to summarise the sermon or discussion for those who weren’t present, and as a reminder for those who were.

**Children, youth and family workers**: We believe that some young people are just as capable as adults at getting to grips with meaty topics, and some adults learn better through games and crafts than a sermon. Rather than creating a separate resource or section for young people, we’ve designed this resource to be accessible to all. Pick and choose the bits hat will help you. You know your young people best.

**Lay leaders**: Use these service outlines for local arrangements. While you can simply read out the reflection, we encourage you to break it up with your own stories, or with discussion questions or illustrations. Utilise the discussion questions, activities and sermon notes to organise story sharing and creative options in both traditional Sunday services and at informal or alternative experiences like Cafe or Breakfast Church, or anything else you run (see our webpage on [creating conversation spaces](https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/a-methodist-way-of-life/reflect-on-the-journey/conversation-spaces/)).

**Each outline includes:**

* Key themes – the main ideas to land, particularly for newcomers. Use these notes if you intend to write your own sermon or reflection.
* Background reflection – a reflection that you can read or use as a basis for your own talk. Some ideas for incorporating discussion questions or creative activities are also suggested.
* Further notes – further contextual information (particularly useful for local preachers and ministers) and resources for further exploration.
* Songs and hymns – including suggestions from *Singing the* *Faith* (*StF*)*, Songs of Fellowship* vols 5&6 (*SoF*), the 2014 edition of Mission Praise (*MP*), the [Singing the Faith Plus website](https://www.methodist.org.uk/our-faith/worship/singing-the-faith-plus/) (*StF*+) and secular music.
* Discussion questions – these can be integrated into an interactive sermon or used separately in a small group discussion. It’s good to give people in the congregation a chance to discuss their faith.
* Creative activities – fun, intergenerational activities to help make your services pop.
* Prayer ideas – some suggestions for different, creative, communal prayer times.
* Ways people can respond – a simple, non-threatening way for people to respond to the service individually or in groups.

*With grateful thanks to all those who helped contribute to this resource:*

* *Background reflection and further notes: drawing upon notes from* Proclaiming the Way *by Jill Baker, Peter Howdle, Judith Rossall, Anna Bland, Richard Teal, Jongi Zihle, Tim Baker, Sarah Hooks, Michaela Youngson, Faith Nyota, Calvin Samuel, Anne Browse, and additional content from Rachel Lampard, Hannah Fremont-Brown, Holly Adams, and Andy Fishburne*
* *Hymns: Laurence Wareing and the team at* Singing the Faith Plus
* *Secular music: Tom Hart, Youth President*
* *Other content by Abi Jarvis, Discipleship and Faith Formation Officer*

All Bible verses quoted are from the *New Revised Standard Version (NRSVA) Anglicised* version unless otherwise stated.