

# United Methodist Conversation Guide for New Members

This guide helps lay leaders walk alongside people who are new to The United Methodist Church or exploring what it means to be United Methodist. Each section names a core United Methodist belief and then invites participants to reflect on that belief through conversation.

The goal is formation, not persuasion—helping people understand *what we believe* and discern *where they see themselves within it*.

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## Part 1: Our Purpose and Identity

### United Methodist Belief

United Methodists are rooted in the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. Faith is lived out through love of God and neighbor.

### Conversation Questions

- Because we believe faith is lived, not just believed, what does discipleship mean to you right now?
  - What drew you to explore this congregation or The United Methodist Church?
  - How do you hope your faith might shape your life or the world around you?
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## Part 2: Grace at the Center of Our Faith

### United Methodist Belief

We believe God's grace is at work in every person's life—before we are aware of it, when we turn toward God, and as we grow in love and holiness.

### Conversation Questions

- Where do you see signs of grace—welcome, forgiveness, or new beginnings—in your own story?
  - Because grace is God's gift and not something we earn, how does that shape how you think about belonging in the church?
  - How do you imagine faith continuing to grow and change over time?
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## Part 3: Scripture, Faith, and Growing in Understanding

### United Methodist Belief

United Methodists affirm Scripture as the primary source for Christian faith and practice. We read the Bible prayerfully and in community, alongside tradition, reason, and experience.

### Conversation Questions

- Because Scripture is central to our faith, how has the Bible shaped your understanding of God so far?
  - United Methodists believe Scripture is best interpreted in community. Where have you experienced learning or questioning faith alongside others?
  - How have your life experiences influenced how you hear or understand Scripture today?
  - How do you feel about being part of a church that holds Scripture as foundational while also encouraging thoughtful questions and learning?
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## Part 4: Worship, Sacraments, and Belonging

### United Methodist Belief

We believe worship forms us as disciples and that God's grace is present in the sacraments of baptism and communion, which are gifts of belonging, not rewards for perfection.

### Conversation Questions

- How have worship or sacred practices helped you feel connected to God?
  - Because communion is open to all who seek God's grace, how does that understanding shape your sense of welcome?
  - What does belonging in a faith community look like to you?
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## Part 5: Connection and Shared Ministry

### United Methodist Belief

United Methodists are a connected church, believing we can do more together than we can alone through shared mission and mutual accountability.

### Conversation Questions

- What stands out to you about being part of a connected, worldwide church?
  - How does shared mission strengthen or challenge your understanding of church?
  - Where have you experienced the power of working together for something larger than yourself?
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## Part 6: Mission, Justice, and Service

### United Methodist Belief

We believe faith is expressed through action—loving our neighbors, seeking justice, and serving alongside those who are most vulnerable.

### Conversation Questions

- Where do you feel drawn to serve or make a difference right now?
  - Because faith calls us beyond ourselves, how do you understand the relationship between belief and action?
  - What needs in the world stir your compassion or concern?
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## Part 7: Generosity and United in Impact

### United Methodist Belief

United Methodists practice generosity as a spiritual discipline, trusting that shared giving multiplies impact and supports mission beyond the local church.

### Conversation Questions

- How have you seen generosity strengthen a community or cause?
  - Because we give together through connective ministry, how does that shape your understanding of impact?
  - What helps you connect giving with purpose and faith?
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## Part 8: Leadership, Voice, and Participation

### United Methodist Belief

We believe all people are called to ministry, and that leadership is shared between laypeople and clergy for the good of the whole church.

### Conversation Questions

- How do you feel about a church where everyone has a role to play?
  - Where might your gifts or passions fit within the life of the church?
  - What kind of support helps you grow in confidence or leadership?
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## Part 9: Discernment and Next Steps

### United Methodist Belief

Discipleship is a lifelong journey shaped by prayer, community, and ongoing discernment.

### Conversation Questions

- What has been meaningful or challenging in these conversations?
  - Where do you sense God inviting you to take a next step?
  - How can this community walk alongside you as your faith continues to grow?
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## Continuing the Journey: Trusted United Methodist Resources

This guide is an entry point, not an endpoint. United Methodists grow in faith through Scripture, prayer, learning, and shared mission. The following resources support continued exploration and align with the values of **United in Impact**.

### Learn About United Methodist Beliefs

- UMC.org – [What We Believe](#)
- [This We Believe](#) – William H. Willimon
- [Knowing Who We Are](#) - Lacey C. Warner

### Grow in Faith and Practice

- [Living Our Beliefs](#) – Kenneth L. Carder
- [The Wesleyan Way](#) – Bishop Scott J. Jones
- [Three Simple Rules](#) – Bishop Rueben P. Job

### Understand Mission and Shared Impact

- [Stories of Impact](#) (UMC.org)
  - [Ask the UMC](#) (UMC.org)
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*This guide is designed for lay leaders and is not a replacement for confirmation, theological education, or pastoral teaching. It invites learning, reflection, generosity, and shared mission as part of lifelong discipleship.*