

Theological Coherence

To the Leader:

Weeks four through ten will be exploring each of seven characteristics in kid-friendly language. These traits depict what should characterize every local Nazarene church. *Theological coherence* considers how we understand God and how we should live because of scripture, the Church traditions, our own reasoning/our minds, and our experience. These four things are called the Wesleyan Quadrilateral.

Objective: To understand how the Church of the Nazarene thinks about God and how that influences the way we ought to live as Christians. Students will learn about the Wesleyan Quadrilateral and the key aspects of a holy life.

Material Needed:

- Jenga game
- 4 Bibles for small groups
- Copies of the “Would You Rather?” worksheet

Early Arrival Activity (5-10 Minutes):

As the students arrive, have them complete the “Would You Rather?” worksheet. After completing the worksheet, allow them to play games of Jenga until you are ready to begin the lesson. As the students play Jenga, interact with them by asking questions focused on why they made their decisions. “Why did you choose to move that block?” “How did you know this block would make the tower fall?” “If you take that block, which one do you think the next player will move?”

The Wesleyan Quadrilateral (10-15 Minutes):

Say: Is it always easy for us to make a decision? Sometimes decisions are really easy, and sometimes decisions can be really hard. Let’s take a look at our “Would You Rather?” Worksheet and talk about some different decisions and how we made them.

Review the “Would You Rather?” worksheet together. Allow the kids to discuss some of the reasons for their decisions.

Show the kids the “Sources for Theological Coherence Diagram” from *Nazarene Essentials*, if available.

Say: In the Church of the Nazarene, we have four sources that help us make our decisions. They are scripture, tradition, reason, and experience.

Briefly explain what each part of the quadrilateral is and how it helps us make decisions.

Scripture: Both the Old and New Testaments help us understand how God wants us to make decisions. But it’s not the only thing we have to consider when making a decision.

Tradition: As the church has grown for over 2,000 years, we have already decided how some things ought to be done. We rely on these traditions to help us make good choices now.

Reason: God gave us our ability to think and reason. We believe the Holy Spirit can work through our knowledge and education to help us make new decisions.

Experience: As we faithfully live to obey God, we believe that our own personal experience can help us make good decisions to continue to follow Christ.

Finish this section by saying: In our church, when we need to make a decision, we rely on four sources to help us make that decision. Scripture, tradition, reason, and experience all help us understand God and how to live our lives.

Small Group Discussion: The Holy Life (10-15 Minutes):

Say: Now that we know how the church makes decisions, let's look at some scriptures that tell us how we should live like Christians.

Divide the class into four groups. Assign each group a Scripture. Give them these instructions: Look up your Scripture and make a decision on what the Scripture is trying to tell you. How are we supposed to behave and act? Did you know you were supposed to live this way? Can you think of an example of how we can do this?

Give each group time to look up the Scripture and talk amongst themselves. Then have them share what they learned with the other groups.

1 Corinthians 11:1 (Christlikeness - be transformed daily into the image of Christ)

Deuteronomy 14:2 (Lifestyle - be set apart from the world to be treasured by God)

Mark 8:34 (Power to Choose - be a disciple by putting off sin and taking up the cross)

Galatians 5:22-23 (Fruit of the Spirit - be a perfect example of love in all ways)

Wrap-Up Object Lesson (5 Minutes)

Rebuild the Jenga game into a tower and close your lesson time by saying: Today we have learned how important our decisions can be. Our church has a way of making decisions by relying on scripture, tradition, reason, and experience. As we make decisions, it's like we're building a tall tower. When we make good decisions based on good sources, our tower is straight and doesn't fall down easily.

Begin to take away blocks in random places. **Say:** But if we make bad decisions because we didn't rely on good sources like scripture, tradition, reason, or experience, then our tower is not very stable. It could fall at any moment. If the wind blows or the table gets knocked, our tower would fall over. We could be just like this tower. If our tower is strong, it means that we will live like imitators of Jesus, that we have been set apart to serve God, that we choose to follow God,

and that we are good examples through the Fruit of the Spirit. But if our tower is weak, it means that we do not put God first, that we do what we want to do instead, and that we do not show other people God's love.

Say: Remember to make good choices and to live as God would want us to live.

Optional: You may give the children a piece of the Jenga game as a reminder of what they've learned. Have them write their name on one side and something they learned on the other sides.

Scripture Memory Verse: The Fruit of the Spirit

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law” (Galatians 5:22-23).

Memory Verse Activity (5-10 Minutes):

Option 1: There are many great musical versions of this memory verse available online. Use a computer or a smartphone to play one of these songs for your class.

Option 2: Pass out blank paper and markers. Have the students draw a Jenga tower and write a few words of the verse on each level of the tower. Pass out scissors and have them cut the verse apart as if it were a puzzle. Practice saying the verse and putting their tower together again. Place the pieces in baggies with the student's name on it to take home and practice teaching it to their families.

Review Game: Allow the students to finish the class time by playing Jenga again. This time, however, ask them questions about the lesson before they are able to pull a block. They could list one of the four sources, list a fruit of the spirit, say the whole memory verse, or talk about one of the other verses in the lesson.

Personal Challenge or Take Away Prayer:

Do I read my Bible and study so that I can make good decisions? The reason our church focuses so heavily on reading the Bible is because it helps us make good decisions. Commit to continue reading your Bible and studying so you can make good decisions.

Do I make good decisions as part of how I live? Studying our Bible only helps us when we put it into practice. Make good decisions by loving God and loving others, no matter what.

What's one thing you can do this week to make better decisions? Have children think of something that they need help changing in their life. Have them ask God for help to make better decisions.

PRAYER:

Dear Father, thank You for giving us good ways to make good choices. Help us to follow Your guidance so that we can obey You. As we grow, help us to make good decisions so that we can serve You in the best ways possible. In Jesus' name, amen.