

CHAPTER 11 JOHN WESLEY: THE IMPACT OF HIS LIFE

Refer to **pg 133** in the workbook

Summary

This whole chapter is arranged like a photo album and you, the teacher, are telling the story of the life of John Wesley from these snap-shots. The significant events and persons of John Wesley's life are noted.

The lessons from his life and ministry are considered.

To get ready

1. Extra Bibles, pens and pencils
2. Paper glue
3. A few scissors
4. Memory verse 1 Corinthians 3:11
5. You may want to photocopy some resources from the internet as suggested in this guide.

Teacher's Guide

The matching exercise above should be easy for Sir William Alexander Smith, the founder of the Boys' Brigade and Lord Baden Powell, who founded the Boy Scouts.

The person with the beard is General William Booth who founded the Salvation Army. The YMCA was founded by George Williams.

Refer to **pg 134** in the workbook

Emphasize that it is the learner's own album. Encourage the learners to write down their own comments and thoughts. Use their own style. Decorate the album. Jazz it up! Make it unique for the individual.

Refer to **pg 135** in the workbook

Make sure the learner writes his or her own name down on the line. Remember it is his or her own album. They can write by the side, on top or at the bottom of the pictures. Notes can be written at any available space.

The Wesley Family

Rev. Samuel Wesley was an Anglican minister. His wife was Susanna Wesley (nee Annesley). Together they had 19 children, with only 3 boys.

His elder brother, Samuel Jr., also became a minister of the Church of England.

John Wesley was born in Epworth, Lincolnshire, England, in 1703. He was the second son and fifteenth child.

His younger brother, Charles, was born in 1707, and was his companion throughout most of John's life.

Refer to **pg 136** in the workbook

Here are some suggested comments. The learners can produce their own from their own studies from sources in the internet.

The pictures are not included in this guide.

Events in the life of John Wesley

When he was six years old, John Wesley narrowly escaped death when the rectory caught fire at night. From that point on, his mother always spoke of him as 'a brand plucked from the burning'.

John went on to Charterhouse, London, for his schooling in 1713 and then to Oxford University. When he was there, he became the leader of a group of serious minded students called the 'Holy Club', who worked out their Christian faith in practical ways like visiting prisoners and helping the poor. They were given the nickname 'Methodists' because of their very methodical way of doing things.

Refer to **pg 137** in the workbook

From 1725 to 1737, the Wesley brothers were in Georgia, America.

Here is a picture of John Wesley preaching to the American Indians.

But John was not effective there. This experience led him to question the reality of his own faith.

Something about the history of the church John Wesley served in while in Savannah:

<http://christchurchsavannah.org/History.htm>

After his own heart-warming experience of the Holy Spirit, and the greater ministry after that, Wesley found himself criticized by the Church of England for his unusual method of preaching. In his later years, he found his father's church closed to him and so he preached outside the church on his father's tombstone.

Here is a picture of John Wesley in his last days, writing an encouraging letter to William Wilberforce to urge him to continue to fight for the end of slavery. In his ministry, John Wesley was always concerned for the sufferings of the poor and the neglected people of his day.

Content of Letter to William Wilberforce can be found at this link:

<http://gbgm-umc.org/umw/wesley/wilber.stm>

Refer to **pg 138** in the workbook

John Wesley died in 1791. Here is a picture of him on his death-bed surrounded by his close friends and fellow workers.

His last words were - 'The best of all, God is with us'.

Faces and Places

Let the learner find pictures of James Oglethorpe and Peter Bohler and paste them onto the boxes. Here are some facts about how John Wesley came to know these people.

Some information about Oglethorpe.

<http://www.ourgeorgiahistory.com/people/oglethorpe.html>

You will find clip art pictures of James Oglethorpe in 3 different sizes:

http://etc.usf.edu/clipart/200/212/oglethorpe_1.htm

James Oglethorpe (picture) had started a colony of settlers from England in Georgia, America and he persuaded John and Charles Wesley to go there as missionaries.

Short account of the man Peter Bohler:

<http://chi.gospelcom.net/DAILYF/2003/12/daily-12-15-2003.shtml>

<http://www.tentmaker.org/biographies/bohler.htm>

On his journey to America, John Wesley was very impressed with the calm faith of a group of Christians called the Moravians who sang hymns during a storm at sea while he himself was scared stiff. On his return he sought the counsel of a kind Moravian named Peter Bohler (picture).

Refer to **pg 139** in the workbook

The people on this page are Count Nicholas Von Zinzendorf, George Whitefield and Mrs John Wesley or Mary Vazeille.

You can find out more about the Count by doing an internet search for 'Moravian' which is the movement that he started.

<http://www.zinzendorf.com/countz.htm>

John Wesley (picture, left) also met up with Count Nicholas Von Zinzendorf (picture, right) the founder of the Moravian movement. John was impressed with their assurance of their faith while he himself was so uncertain of his own salvation.

Here is a good article about Whitefield in Christianity Today magazine:

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/special/131christians/whitefield.html>

A friend from Oxford Holy Club days, George Whitefield (picture), introduced John Wesley to outdoor preaching, something that was considered not proper in those days.

You will find a picture of Mrs. John Wesley here together with others:

<http://mywebpage.netscape.com/mgswebaus/wesley/jwesley.htm>

In 1751, John married a rich widow, Mary Vazeille (picture) after a hasty courtship. His travels and many preaching assignments left him no time for any family life. It proved to be a difficult marriage and in 1771, Mary left, never to return to his side.

Refer to **pg 140** in the workbook

Picture of Epworth Rectory

<http://www.historic-uk.com/CultureUK/JohnWesley.htm>

Here is a good picture with an internet tour!

<http://www.epwortholdrectory.org.uk/>

Most of John Wesley's younger days were spent in Epworth Rectory (parsonage), together with his parents and the other children.

Aldersgate Street – find a picture here....

http://www.gbod.org/worship?act=reader&item_id=7968&loc_id=9%2C32%2C50

When John Wesley was attending an evening small group meeting at Aldersgate Street (picture), he found assurance of faith in God. It was May 24, 1738. The time was a quarter to nine. The speaker was reading Luther's introduction to the book of Romans. There Wesley felt his 'heart strangely warmed'.

Wesley set up his headquarters in a building known as the Foundry. This became the center of much of the ministries of the Methodist movement under John Wesley.

Refer to **pg 141** in the workbook

Fill in the blank boxes with these two pictures. Write some notes as to the social impact of John Wesley's preaching and work.

Wesley's orphanhouse at Newcastle

<http://gbgm-umc.org/gifs/historical/orphanh.jpg>

Here is a picture of the typical circuit rider of the early age of Methodism.

Wesley started to preach to the working people, often travelling here and there on horseback. He traveled many thousands of miles around Britain, on horseback and by carriage.

Wesley preaches at Newgate Prison

<http://gbgm-umc.org/gifs/historical/newgate.jpg>

Refer to **pg 142** in the workbook

The next 2 pgs also refer to pg 142.

1. This section will require more input from you, the teacher. Here we will see what we can learn from the life of John Wesley. The quiz below will require your help. The answers are given below. Use each statement for further insights into the contribution of Wesley to God's kingdom.

The explanatory notes will cover three pages altogether in this leader's guide, even though it is one page (page 142) in the workbook.

You might want to write down some of your own notes from your own studies that you feel may be of help to the learners. There is a lot of space for your own notes, if any.

What can we learn from the life of John Wesley?

1. He had his **faults** but God still used him.

Remind the learners that John Wesley was definitely not a perfect man. But he was willing to be used by the great God.

2. He was h**onest** with his own feelings, sought God e**arnestly** and God blessed him.

Wesley wrote very openly about his own feelings in his journal. He wrote about his lack of assurance and his struggles to find faith. He did not just decide to leave things as they were but rather he sought God, desiring to have that close relationship with the Father.

Refer to **pg 142** in the workbook

This is still discussing page 142 in the Manual.

3. He was willing to try things he was not **comfortable** with at first.

Being an Anglican minister of that period of history, Wesley was very reluctant to preach outside the church. But he decided to follow the promptings of the Spirit rather than his own feelings. Assigning lay preachers (i.e. preachers who did not go through the ordination process of the Anglican Church) was another matter that troubled him. But he saw how the Lord was using the laity and agreed to move with the Spirit. He also very reluctantly acknowledged women lay preachers, something which was unheard of that day.

4. He was **passionate** that people from all walks of life come to know Jesus.

John Wesley wanted to see people come to know Jesus and mature in him more than anything else. This spurred him to do so many things so that many will come to know Christ. He rode on horseback to different places, he preached sometimes 8 sermons a day, he visited hospitals, prisons and asylums.

5. He wanted to see not only the whole person, but the whole **environment** changed by the good news.

Wesley's concern was always for the total being. He started orphanages and schools. He took an interest in medicine, the environment and the sciences.

Refer to **pg 142** in the workbook also

This is still referring to the same page in the Leader's Guide.

6. He organized small nurture groups so that new believers can be **disciplined**.

John Wesley was always concerned that the new converts be able to find an environment so that they can be accountable to others for their spiritual growth. He organized the people who were converted through his activities into classes and bands of a smaller number so that a leader can look after their spiritual growth. These small groups met regularly to check one another in their Christian life. They were very strict with each other but yet showed great concern and love for one another.

7. He emphasized the importance of personal **holiness** in all areas of life.

From his Holy Club background in Oxford, Wesley carried on this emphasis on personal holiness of life among his converts. And the small accountability groups he organized helped to maintain this.

8. He **mobilized** other people to join in the work of extending God's Kingdom.

Though he worked with remarkable energy, Wesley was aware that the work cannot be a one-man show. Though reluctantly at first, he arranged for lay preachers to help him. The strength of the early Methodist movement was that it was largely a laity movement.

Refer to **pg 143** in the workbook

Let the learner write his or her own notes both from what you have explained as well as from his or her own research from sources in the internet.

2. Encourage the learners to think about their own lives along the lines mentioned above. Go through each one so that they can choose which area reminds them of themselves. Remind them that is all right if they do not identify with any one of the above.

If the learners have an item, note it down in the star. Choose from the numbers 1 to 8 on the previous page i.e. page 142

Refer to **pg 144** in the workbook

3. Here is where the discussion becomes practical and personal. Encourage the learners to live out what they have learned.

Some may want to deal with personal deeper issues like examining their own lives. Here you may urge them to start a journal like what John Wesley did. Or it could be a desire for personal holiness. This may call for deeper counseling. You may want to assign an older adult for the learner to be accountable to. Or you, as the teacher, could be that adult.

Others may want to do some group project like an environmental consciousness project. They can be directed to get involved in the area round the church or their homes / schools. Or they may want to have a church cleanliness campaign, making posters to remind the people to keep the place clean. Mobilize the people of the church. Encourage them to use their imaginations. But always go back to the spiritual significance of all their projects. We do it not because we have nothing to do but because we realize that God is also interested in all this.

Give some time for discussion and encourage them to take down some notes.

Refer to **pg 145** in the workbook

4. The memory verse is 1 Corinthians 13:11. Let the learners look it up themselves and then write it down in the scroll given.

1 Corinthians 3:11

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Revise the other verses they have memorized, if time permits.

Let the learners go through this summary quiz and help them wherever necessary. They may remember other aspects of the life of John Wesley. Encourage sharing among themselves and direct them to what they can learn to apply to their own lives.

TODAY I LEARNED ...

- 1 that the person who started the Methodist movement was **John Wesley**
- 2 that he was born in 1703 in **England** and his parents were **Samuel** and **Susannah** Wesley.

Refer to **pg 146** in the workbook

- 3 that he had a younger brother named **Charles** who was his partner in the movement he started
- 4 that he went to **Georgia** in America as a missionary but was not successful there
- 5 that on his return to England, he had a heart-warming experience in a small group meeting at **Aldersgate** Street on 24 May 1738 where he was assured of his salvation in Jesus Christ
- 6 that he reluctantly started outdoor preaching at the invitation of his friend, **George Whitefield** , and found that the common people responded enthusiastically
- 7 that he organized the converts into **classes** and **bands** so that they can grow in the faith
- 8 that he traveled widely on **horseback** and preached and wrote extensively
- 9 that he died at the age of 88 years in the year **1791**

AND I LEARNED HOW

to live as a Christian disciple according to the tradition of the **Methodist** lifestyle that John Wesley encouraged