

AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
SPRING 2024

Intermediate  
QUARTERLY

MAR-APR-MAY  
SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION

AMPLE

EXAMINING  
OUR FAITH

# THE ORDER OF SERVICE

- I. Bell tap or organ voluntary as a signal for silence
- II. Singing
- III. The Apostles' Creed
- IV. Prayer, closing with the Lord's Prayer in concert
- V. Singing
- VI. Calling roll of officers and teachers
- VII. Responsive reading of the lesson text by school
- VIII. The Decalogue

## THE LESSON

- I. Organ interlude while the classes are being arranged
- II. Class study of the lesson
- III. Warning bell — 5 minutes
- IV. Closing bell — silence

## THE CLOSING

- I. Singing
- II. Review and application of the lesson
- III. Secretary's report
- IV. The Church School Creed
- V. Singing
- VI. Benediction

## EDITORIAL STAFF

Rev. Dr. Roderick Belin, Publisher  
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A.L. Stanfield, Copy Editor  
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## THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; the third day He arose from the dead, He ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Church Universal, the communion of the saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

## THE CHURCH SCHOOL CREED

I believe my AME Church School must grow and grow; and that I must make it a top priority to make it so. Every member a Christian, every Christian a worker, every worker trained so that a worker need not be ashamed. This we ask in Jesus' name.

SAMPLE

# Sustaining Our Faith

*Yes! With God We Can*

Lesson Scripture: Jude

Focus Scripture: Jude 17-25

**KEY VERSES:** Beloved, build yourselves up on your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit; keep yourselves in the love of God; look forward to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. Jude 20-21

## VOCABULARY

**REMEMBER** – to recall information from memory, but without necessarily the implication that persons have actually forgotten

**PREDICTIONS** – to say, speak, utter definite words, and hence implying more than to say or speak

**APOSTLES** – those sent, ambassadors

**INDULGING LUST** – desire; craving

**FOCUS SCRIPTURE: JUDE 17-25**

- 17** But you, beloved, must remember the words previously spoken by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ,
- 18** for they said to you, "In the last time there will be scoffers, indulging their own ungodly lusts."
- 19** It is these worldly people, devoid of the Spirit, who are causing divisions.
- 20** But you, beloved, build yourselves up on your most holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit;
- 21** keep yourselves in the love of God; look forward to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life.
- 22** And have mercy on some who are wavering;
- 23** save others by snatching them out of the fire; and have mercy on still others with fear, hating even the tunic defiled by their bodies.
- 24** Now to him who is able to keep you from falling and to make you stand without blemish in the presence of his glory with rejoicing,
- 25** to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, power, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.

## INTRODUCTION

Bernard enjoyed playing sports. He practiced daily on the techniques which helped improve his game. Bernard played sports year-round - baseball, basketball, and football. He was an all-around player. He encouraged his teammates to do the same thing. He believed to be an outstanding athlete one needed to practice daily.

Bernard and his teammates were traveling for a weeklong tournament. Each morning Bernard would get up early, work out, eat breakfast, shower, and prepare for his day. Some of his teammates only worked out when the team worked out. It really bothered Bernard as he felt if they didn't practice, they wouldn't perform to the best of their ability.

Bernard decided to share his concerns with his team. He explained the standard he had created for himself and how it made him a better player and athlete. Some of the team accepted his advice while others shared that they were natural and didn't need all that extra training to make themselves any better. Bernard struggled but recognized that



his standard was just that, his standard. He understood he could not force others to live by the standards that he had created for himself.

When other teammates were sleeping late or hanging out late, Bernard was determined to maintain the standard that he had created although there were times when he was really tempted to skip his routine.

## **BIBLE STORY**

Jude 17-25 is a reminder to believers to be aware of those things taught earlier by the apostles. The words of the apostle during the time of the writing of Jude were critical as they did not have the Bible to reference related to Jesus' teaching. The words of the apostles were to express the will of God.

Jude reminds believers that they should not be surprised by the false teachers, and those who make a mockery of the teaching because they were warned by the prophet of the time when people would try to cause division among believers.

Jude then provides us with words of guidance to keep ourselves in the love of God and to look forward to mercy which leads to everlasting life.

The closing of Jude is a traditional benediction used for the church still today.

## **LIFE APPLICATION**

Jude appeals to us to contend for the faith once entrusted to Jesus' followers. Today, we have access to so much information, and determining what is true and false is often tricky. Some say we have entered a time of misinformation.

As a believer, how do we know what is true?

Today's lesson reminds us to keep ourselves in the love of God and to look forward to the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ. Daily prayer, reading of the scriptures, demonstrating acts of kindness toward

others, and seeking forgiveness when we've wronged someone else are examples of God's love. Therefore, we can measure truth by its relationship to love. Truth doesn't cause harm; we may not like it because it may not be what we want to hear. However, truth is hard at times yet beneficial in life. We also must remember that there are people whose purpose is to deceive and present untruths.

How can you use today's lesson to provide mercy to someone who has not been kind toward you? \_\_\_\_\_

In what ways can you keep yourself in the love of God? Share examples. \_\_\_\_\_

## SUMMARY

Jude is one of the smallest books in the New Testament, yet its conclusion is used by many as a benediction, a blessing, especially at the end of a religious service. Jude warned believers to remember the apostle's teachings as they would lead and guide them in discovering false teachers and deceivers. We have the Bible as our guide, which includes the words of the apostles (the Gospels), and we can carry it with us everywhere we go. We are fortunate to have access to God's Word like never before and the ability to share it easily to help others who may experience doubt about knowing God's Word.

What actions can you take to avoid false teachers and deceptive individuals? \_\_\_\_\_

How can you deepen your relationship with God? \_\_\_\_\_

How do you remain true to your values in competition with social trends? \_\_\_\_\_

In the end, Jude reminds us that we serve a God who is ABLE to keep us from falling and present us clean before God.

## CLOSING DEVOTION

*Lord, thank you for the lesson today which reminds us to keep the love of God within and to watch for those who will try to deceive us with false teaching. Help us, God, to keep your Word in our hearts and to help others see you through our lives. Amen.*



APPENDIX

Read Jude 17-25 and identify the sources of unrest identified by Jude and how God is a source of strength. We've provided an example; you can complete it with other examples.

Unrest identified by Jude	What are causes today?	What can you do to avoid?
Division	Talking about others and not telling them (those you talk about) what you feel or what could help them. People taking sides to support other's views.	Don't participate in gossip. If a person talks about others, they will talk about you also. Be polite and remove yourself from the conversation.

Based on the unrest identified above, how can we help others see God as a source of strength?

# Testing Our Faith

## *Discovering Our Deepest Values*

Lesson Scripture: 2 Corinthians 13:1-11

Focus Scripture: 2 Corinthians 13:5-11

**KEY VERSE:** Test yourselves. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you? 2 Corinthians 13:5b, c

### VOCABULARY

**EXAMINE** – submit another to a test, to learn the true nature or character

**TEST** – to regard something as being worthwhile or appropriate

**PERFECT** – adequacy, completion, improvement

**AUTHORITY** – jurisdiction, control, power, right to judge

**FOCUS SCRIPTURE: 2 CORINTHIANS 13:5-11**

- 5 Examine yourselves to see whether you are living in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless, indeed, you fail to meet the test!
- 6 I hope you will find out that we have not failed.
- 7 But we pray to God that you may not do anything wrong—not that we may appear to have met the test but that you may do what is right, though we may seem to have failed.
- 8 For we cannot do anything against the truth but only for the truth.
- 9 For we rejoice when we are weak but you are strong. This is what we pray for, that you may be restored.
- 10 So I write these things while I am away from you, so that when I come I may not have to be severe in using the authority that the Lord has given me for building up and not for tearing down.
- 11 Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Be restored; listen to my appeal; agree with one another; live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

## INTRODUCTION

The Apostle Paul contributed to the writings of most of the New Testament books. *The Epistles*, also known as the letters, were mainly written to the church and a few to young ministers he mentored. Paul's life is interesting because before the writing of these letters Paul was named Saul. Saul was a soldier of Rome, and his job was to stop people who called themselves followers of the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Rome was filled with Jewish believers, and there was but one God. Rome wanted to stop teaching at all costs. Many people died, others hid, and some had to leave the land to avoid death.

Paul understood the fear of many believers. He had experienced many obstacles in his faith journey. Paul experienced beatings, time in jail, and several shipwrecks trying to teach and preach Jesus to the world.

His letters encouraged many to maintain their faith regardless of their situation.

## BIBLE STORY

The second letter to the Corinthians warns Christians to examine themselves to make sure they are living in the faith. Paul's letter to the church in Corinth provides guidance to the new followers of Jesus Christ. Paul informs the church to examine themselves to make sure they are living in their faith. He asked that they look within and see the *Spirit of Christ* within themselves.

Paul encourages the reader to do what is right, and not to do anything wrong. He states, *do nothing against the truth but do everything for truth*. Paul states the teacher doesn't mind being weak if the student is strong. As teachers, they pray that the ones learning will become perfect. Paul concludes his letter with instructions to put things in order, agree with one another, and to live in peace.

## LIFE APPLICATION

What does it look like to have Christ within us?

How would we act if we were aware that Christ is within us? Most would probably consider what they would say and do. Paul's advice to the church was to examine themselves. What are ways we can examine ourselves today? Imagine living daily as if Christ is walking with you and sitting beside you at every encounter.

How and where do we find the courage to live authentically, keeping true to our ideals?

## SUMMARY

There are many times when our faith will be tested. There are times when we may even wonder if God exists. We should consider Paul's letter to the people of the church when those times occur. We should remember what is right and what is wrong. Remember what we've been taught by parents, schoolteachers, church leaders, and many others.

Identify a time when you made a bad choice – how were you able to examine yourself?

## CLOSING DEVOTION

*Lord, help us to examine ourselves and discover how our choices affect our faith in God. Bless each person studying today's lesson and open our hearts. Let the Word of God penetrate our hearts and let our witness speak loudly for others to know God. Amen.*

## APPENDIX

Below are characteristics of Christ that are heroic and could be considered superpowers. Review the superpower and decide which superpowers can help one face difficult things.

Christ's Attribute	What would you do if you had Christ's attribute?
Patience	
Knowledge	
Virtue	
Charity and love	
Hope	
Faith	

Reviewing the superpowers you selected – Share how the powers you've chosen could help you face difficult things.

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# Defending Our Faith *Do Not Fear!*

Lesson Scripture: 1 Peter 3:8-17

Focus Scripture: 1 Peter 3:8-17

**KEY VERSE:** Who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good? 1 Peter 3:13

## VOCABULARY

**FINALLY** – point of time marking the end; result of an event or process

**UNITY OF SPIRIT** – likeminded, of one mind, harmonious, agree among yourselves

**LOVE ONE ANOTHER** – formally, loving one's brother

**INHERIT** – gain possession, transfer land or possessions from a parent to a child or descendant



**FOCUS SCRIPTURE: 1 PETER 3:8-17**

- 8 Finally, all of you, have unity of spirit, sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind.
- 9 Do not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse, but, on the contrary, repay with a blessing. It is for this that you were called—that you might inherit a blessing.
- 10 For “Those who desire to love life and to see good days, let them keep their tongues from evil and their lips from speaking deceit;
- 11 let them turn away from evil and do good; let them seek peace and pursue it.
- 12 For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer. But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”
- 13 Now who will harm you if you are eager to do what is good?
- 14 But even if you do suffer for doing what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated,
- 15 but in your hearts sanctify Christ as Lord. Always be ready to make your defense to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you,
- 16 yet do it with gentleness and respect. Maintain a good conscience so that, when you are maligned, those who abuse you for your good conduct in Christ may be put to shame.
- 17 For it is better to suffer for doing good, if suffering should be God’s will, than to suffer for doing evil.

## INTRODUCTION

The young girl was sick, and her mom took her to the doctor. When she asked her mom what was wrong, she told her that her appendix had erupted. The girl then asked her mom what would happen, and her mom explained she would have surgery. In the meantime, the doctor entered the room, looked at the girl’s chart, and said, “I guess you are prepared for the worst?” She smiled and said, “No, I’m prepared for the best. I’m a Christian and God has promised to work all things for my good. Plus, mom told me everything would improve after the surgery.” Her mom was filled with pride at her daughter’s response and smiled.

## BIBLE STORY

Peter wrote the letter to believers. In chapter 3, Peter talks about appropriate conduct for believers in understanding how Christ died for us all. As believers, we are responsible for conducting ourselves in the love of God.

Peter reminds us to live in loving harmony (v. 3); God rewards humanity with good (vs. 9-14); worship Christ as Lord, and always be ready to explain your faith to others (v. 15); and be ready to defend your faith (vs. 16-17).

## LIFE APPLICATION

Thousands of years ago, Peter told believers to be a blessing to others and the world. The scripture tells us to do good, love, and bless others regardless of how they treat others. As believers, our conversations should uplift others. If we treat others well and intentionally choose words that make others feel good, then others will treat us well and potentially treat others they encounter along the way.

## SUMMARY

As believers, we should have the unity of spirit, demonstrate sympathy, love for one another, a tender heart, and a humble mind. We should not repay evil for evil or abuse for abuse but rather repay with blessings. How do we live as described by Peter?

As human beings, we believe in retaliation when we are offended. While this may be true, imagine what it would looklike to demonstrate love to those who have offended us. Peter urges his readers to defend their faith with humility, gentleness, and reverence. The Christian witness is more powerful when believers have Christ set apart in their hearts; the courage makes them always ready to testify about him.

## CLOSING DEVOTION

*Lord, help us to speak words of kindness, love, peace, and goodness to everyone we encounter. Teach us, Lord, to be kind to those who are not kind toward us. Bless our mind, heart, and soul to be the model of who you are in our lives. Amen.*

**APPENDIX**

The Typical Day in the Life of \_\_\_\_\_

Reflect on a regular day and capture the things you do during the day. Write down the things and see if there are things that you should have done differently based on today's lesson. Imagine if someone woke you up before 8:00 am and you didn't want to get up yet, how would you respond? Does your response align with Peter's instructions?

8:00 am
9:00 am
10:00 am
11:00 am
12:00 noon
1:00 pm
2:00 pm
3:00 pm
4:00 pm
5:00 pm
6:00 pm
7:00 pm
8:00 pm
9:00 pm
10:00 pm and later

## What Would Jesus Do – What Would You Do?

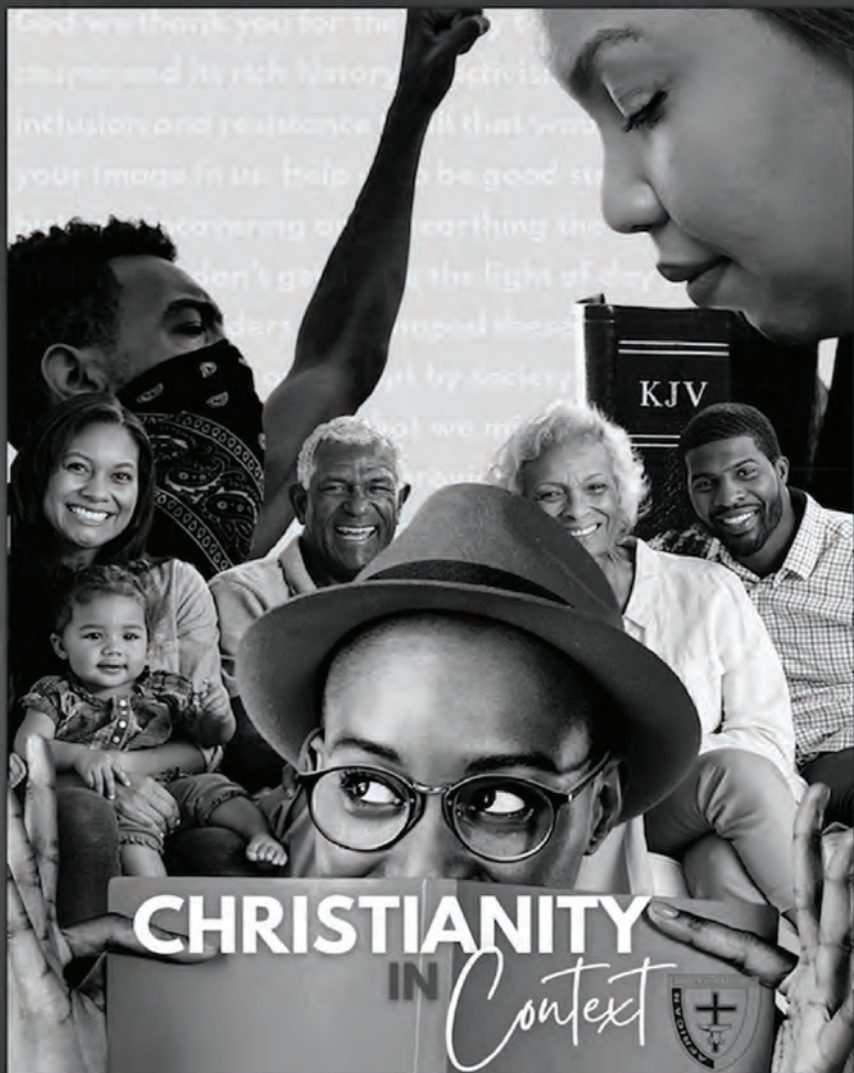
Think about today's situations and how would Jesus respond (WWJD). Consider how you would respond with today's situations (WWYD).

Someone	Jesus' Response	Your Response
Gossip		
Stealing		
Spreading misinformation		
Bullying		
Questioning Identity		
Physically Assaulted (Hit You)		

Is there a difference between how Jesus would respond and your responses? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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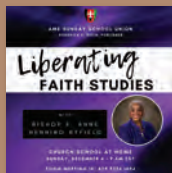
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