

A stylized white dove is depicted in flight against a solid blue background. The dove's wings are spread wide, with the upper wings curving upwards and the lower wings curving downwards. The tail feathers are visible at the bottom, pointing downwards. The overall design is minimalist and modern.

NAZARENE
ESSENTIALS

WHO WE ARE—WHAT WE BELIEVE

LEADER'S GUIDE CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

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Welcome to *Nazarene Essentials*!

A Few Words on the Course

This course has been created to provide an overview of the Church of the Nazarene's purpose, mission, organization, and key beliefs. We hope that by the last session you and your group will have a better understanding of the church and be challenged and inspired to fully embrace your Nazarene heritage and identity for the sake of God's kingdom.

Sessions 1-6 have been arranged to address the broadest and most general topics first, then revisit and expand upon a number of those topics in more depth. Session 7 is provided as an optional gathering. This may serve as a time to resume discussions that were begun in a previous session or ask new questions, share insights, cast a vision for your church's life together, or provide information on how to become a member of the Church of the Nazarene. See Session 7 for more details.

Because this is a survey course, it will raise a number of topics and issues that are worthy of lengthy discussion. However, given time limitations, you will have to be selective about which subjects to emphasize. Do not feel pressured to cover every question provided. Try to find a balance between what information you think is important to cover and what your class feels the need to discuss in greater depth. You will probably find it necessary to put certain discussions on hold in order to keep the class moving. Inform your group that your time together is limited, and there may be times when you will need to table a discussion in order to cover other material. This should help keep group members from feeling like they have been inappropriately interrupted. When it becomes necessary, look for a natural break in the conversation and say something like, "This has been a good discussion. There is clearly a lot more to this issue than we can resolve in a few minutes. Let's make a note to revisit this at a later time or outside of class."

The members of your group may be at different levels of familiarity with, understanding of, and commitment to the beliefs, practices, and goals of the Church of the Nazarene. Keep this in mind as you prepare for each session. What one person finds new or confusing another may find common and obvious. Be sensitive to this dynamic, and make an effort to be affirming and encouraging to everyone as they engage the material in their own way. When disagreements or conflicting perspectives arise, maintain an environment of friendly inquiry. You're all there to explore the issues together, and differing perspectives need not disrupt this process.

To help you plan your time effectively, each section of the lesson has a suggested time limit with the expectation that each session will last one hour. You will be the best judge of how much structure your group needs and how much flexibility is necessary to allow the Holy Spirit to move as you discuss each topic. If you have more than an hour available, that's even better!

Resources

Each group member will need to have access to a paper or electronic copy of *Nazarene Essentials*.

In addition, recommend that each group member keep a record of their questions, thoughts, and insights as they read *Nazarene Essentials* and during the class sessions. This can be done on a paper or electronic notepad or journal. Keeping a record of one's questions will help the group members pursue answers to their questions on their own or in further discussion outside of the class. It can also be helpful to look over one's notes at the end of the course to see how one has grown in the past several weeks.

Refreshments are suggested for sessions 1 and 7. You may, however, want to provide refreshments at each session. Decide this at the outset in order to budget accurately for the class.

Further resources will be listed at the beginning of the session in which they are needed.

Electronic resources and media can be found online at nazarene.org. Check the website often for additional resources which will be updated.

Promoting *Nazarene Essentials*

When putting *Nazarene Essentials* on your church's calendar, determine whether you will offer the six-week course or the seven-week course. Determine whether your church would like to offer this course as a prelude to membership classes, a baptism service, church elections, or some other church or district event.

Begin announcing the class a month before the first session. Try to determine who will be participating so you can make sure each person has access to *Nazarene Essentials* at least one week before the first meeting. All participants will be expected to read the designated chapters before each session.

Be sure to use the graphics, logos, and other resources for bulletins, flyers, or PowerPoint slides. They are located in the Graphics and Artwork folder of the *Nazarene Essentials* pages on nazarene.org.

Session 1: The Basics--A Brief History and Our Core Values

Chapters: “Our Wesleyan-Holiness Heritage,” “Our Global Church,” “Our Core Values,” “Our Mission”

In This Session:

- Overview of the theological developments and historical events that led to the formation of the denomination
- Examination of our Core Values and mission statement, which summarize our beliefs and goals
- Encourage a deeper sense of Nazarene identity

Resources: Refreshments, world map, two colors of pins or flags for marking the map

Welcome and Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

As people arrive, direct them to the refreshments, and introduce yourself to anyone you do not know. When everyone has found a seat, welcome the group and begin the session with prayer, asking God to bless your time together and to speak to the group throughout this course of study.

Getting Started (10 minutes)

Have each person in the group introduce him or herself. Ask the following questions to get an idea of where each person is in their relationship to and understanding of the Church of the Nazarene.

1. How long have you attended a Church of the Nazarene? What led you to choose this church?
2. On a scale of 1 to 10, how well do you think you understand the teachings, practices, and goals of the Church of the Nazarene?
3. What do you hope to gain from this series of lessons?

Explain that this course has been created to provide all Nazarene congregations with an overview of the church’s purpose, mission, organization, and key beliefs. In this session, we will discuss the first four chapters of *Nazarene Essentials*, which gives an overview of our history and Core Values. In following sessions, we will explore many of these topics in greater depth. Remind the class to make use of their notepads to keep track of their thoughts and questions.

Digging In (30 minutes)

Select from the following questions to lead discussion of the readings for this session.

Before your group meets, mark the places on the map that were mentioned in “Our Wesleyan-Holiness Heritage” and “Our Global Church.” Mark the ministry locations that pre-date the Church of the Nazarene in one color and ministry locations that came into the picture after the formation of the Church of the Nazarene in another color. Place the map where everyone can see it, and explain what the colored pins or flags signify. Refer to the map when discussing questions 2 and 3.

1. After reading the brief history of the denomination, what features stand out to you? What do they reveal about the Church of the Nazarene's identity?
2. Identify people or ministries in Nazarene history that were in or near your area. How much were you aware of your connection to these ministries of the past? (Invite a knowledgeable group member to tell what they know about the origin of your congregation and its place in Nazarene history. Prepare to give this information yourself in case no one is familiar with the founding of your church.)
3. How does the scope of Nazarene ministry shape your view of the denomination as a whole and your church in particular?
4. What do we mean when we identify ourselves as a Christian people?
(We participate in the historic, creedal Christian faith. We accept believers from other denominations as fellow members of the body of Christ. We are Christ-focused and faithful to Scripture.)
5. What do we mean when we identify ourselves as a holiness people?
(We believe that God is holy and calls us to Christlikeness. This entails receiving God's grace so that we can have holy hearts and holy lives. We believe that through both crisis moments and process, people may be born again and come to a deeper experience of grace called "entire sanctification," in which the heart is cleansed and believers are empowered for Christlike living.)
6. What do we mean when we identify ourselves as a missional people?
(We believe that worship of God should flow out in ministry to others through evangelism, meeting people's needs, discipleship, and education. We are committed to ministering to the whole person.)
7. How do you see each of the core values expressed in the history of the church?
8. Our Core Values are summed up in our mission statement: "to make Christlike disciples in the nations." How are each of the Core Values expressed in our mission?
("Christian" is expressed through our focus on Christ and His model for our lives. "Holiness" is expressed through our belief that Christlike living is possible and is God's desire for us, as well as in our commitment to spiritual growth through a life of discipleship. "Missional" is expressed in terms of discipleship as well as our vision of spreading the gospel to all people in every nation.)

Wrapping Up (10 minutes)

Select one or more of the following questions as time allows.

1. What in today's session was new to you or sparked your interest?
2. How can what you have learned about Nazarene history and our Core Values shape the way you think about your spiritual life and the kind of Christian God is calling you to be?

3. What can you do this week to more fully embrace your Nazarene heritage and identity?
4. What other questions or comments do you have pertaining to this session's material? (Keep in mind that you will be addressing each topic in more detail in future sessions with the exception of Nazarene history.)

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Divide the class into smaller groups. Referring to the world map, assign a region of the world to each group. Ask them to pray for believers in that region in general and the work of the Church of the Nazarene in particular. After a few minutes, lead the group in a closing prayer, thanking God for the work He has done through our predecessors and asking for the grace and vision to continue His work among the people of every nation.

Inform the group that the next session will cover "Our Nazarene Characteristics: Meaningful Worship and Theological Coherence." Remind them to read these passages in preparation and to keep a record of their questions and thoughts.

Session 2: Worship and Theology

Chapters: “Our Nazarene Characteristics: Meaningful Worship and Theological Coherence”

In This Session:

- Explore what meaningful worship entails
- Discover the beliefs and methods that provide us with theological coherence
- Consider how we might deepen our worship and live holy lives

Resources: 20 index cards or sticky notes, lyrics (music optional) for “Holy, Holy, Holy” or similar song

Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

Begin the session by reading the Call to Worship provided in *Nazarene Essentials*. Lead the class in prayer, asking God to teach us the value of the ways we relate to Him, think about Him, and let those practices shape our lives.

Getting Started (10 minutes)

1. In our last session, we discussed our history, Core Values, and mission. How have these subjects influenced you since then?
2. Have you had a particularly memorable experience of God in worship? If so, share your experience with the group. What was the result of your experience?

Digging In (30 minutes)

Select from the following questions to lead discussion of the readings for this session.

1. Why do we worship God?
(*Because He is our Creator, Savior, Shepherd, and so on*)
2. Discuss the relationship between worship and ministry. Why do you think the two are irrevocably connected? In other words, why would it be a mistake to disconnect worship from ministry?
3. What are the main characteristics of meaningful worship?
(*Coming to God in praise and having an encounter with Him. This encounter inspires and empowers us to be like Jesus.*)
4. How does worship relate to the spiritual disciplines?
(*Spiritual disciplines lead us into worship.*)
5. What are our four sources for theological coherence? Why is each one important?

Before class, write a shortened version of the 20 beliefs that give us theological coherence on index cards or sticky notes (e.g., “Triune God,” “orthodox creeds,” “authority of Scripture,” “changed lifestyles,” and so on). Determine how many cards each group member should be

responsible for so that each member is responsible for roughly the same number of cards. Have the members select cards and group them under their correct heading. Designate a spot for each heading: Christian, Protestant, Wesleyan, and Evangelical. (For our purposes here, we will include the witness of the Spirit under “Wesleyan.” When the class is finished sorting the cards, go through each card with the class to make sure they have been categorized correctly. As you do so, select a few cards for special attention and ask one of the following questions:

- Why do you think this matters?
- How does this distinguish us from other groups?

A second option for this activity is to randomly select one of the 20 beliefs from the book and ask the group which category it belongs in, and then discuss its significance.

6. Identify and briefly summarize the four essential aspects of a holy life. What do you think of this list? Is it different from what you expected? Explain.
7. The *via media* (middle way) approach is based on the idea that the truth is usually found somewhere between polar-opposite ideas. What is the value of this approach? How might this idea be misapplied?
(It encourages people to find common ground, avoid being reactionary, have compassion for those with whom they disagree, and so on. The via media should not be used to weaken our theological commitments or to suggest that the truth is found between every set of two propositions.)

Wrapping Up (10 minutes)

Select one or more of the following questions as time allows.

1. How can we personally and corporately make room for God during worship?
2. Which aspect of the holy life from today’s discussion challenges you most?
3. What other questions or comments do you have pertaining to this session’s material?

Read or sing together the first verse and chorus of “Holy, Holy, Holy” or another song of praise and adoration.

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Lead the group in a closing prayer, praising God for His greatness and all He has done in the lives of the members of your class, your church, and the denomination. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you as you strive to maintain theological coherence amid the cultural opportunities and pressures you face.

Inform the group that the next session will cover “Our Nazarene Characteristics: Passionate Evangelism and Intentional Discipleship.” Remind them to read these passages in preparation and to keep a record of their questions and thoughts.

Session 3: Evangelism and Discipleship

Chapter: “Our Nazarene Characteristics: Passionate Evangelism and Intentional Discipleship”

In This Session:

- Consider the reasons why evangelism is important
- Examine the value and means of discipleship
- Encourage class members to participate in evangelism and discipleship

Resources: Index cards, pens or pencils

Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

Begin the session with prayer, asking God to open our hearts to whatever He wants to tell us or however He wants to challenge us to engage others for the sake of their relationship with Him and His people.

Getting Started (10 minutes)

In session 2, we learned about two Nazarene characteristics that dealt with how we relate to and think about God. In this session, we will look at the outworking of worship and theology through sharing God with others.

Distribute index cards and pens or pencils to the class. Ask the class members to draw an object or write a word that represents the answer to one of the following two questions (e.g., a picture of a cup of coffee, the word “compassion,” and other examples). Encourage all class members to answer both questions even though they will only use their index card for one.

1. How did you first hear about Jesus and the offer of salvation through Him?
2. What did the Christians in your life do to help you find Jesus?

Digging In (30 minutes)

Select from the following questions to lead discussion of the readings for this session.

1. What role does Jesus play in our evangelistic efforts?
(He modeled it. He commands it. He sends us out.)
2. What role does the Holy Spirit play in our evangelistic efforts?
(He empowers, motivates, and directs us.)
3. What is the purpose of evangelism?
(To influence and invite others to enter a saving relationship with Jesus Christ.)
4. What are the sources of the content of our witness?
(Nazarene Essentials mentions the Bible and our personal experience with Christ. We might also draw from reason [i.e., apologetics] or the life circumstances of the people with whom we are talking.)

5. What positive effects does evangelism have on the person who shares the gospel?
(We come to know Christ more deeply; we rely on the Holy Spirit and the power of God's Word; it inspires creativity; it motivates us to disciple converts; and so on)
6. What is the purpose of discipleship?
(To lead people to dwell in Christ, grow in Christlikeness by the power of the Holy Spirit, follow Christ's example in denying himself and loving and obeying God with His whole being.)
7. Why should we be intentional about discipleship?
8. What are the seven ways we seek to promote discipleship? Why is each one important?
(See points in section C under the heading "Intentional Discipleship" in Nazarene Essentials.)

Wrapping Up (10 minutes)

Select one or more of the following questions as time allows.

Recall a few of the different ways people came to know the Lord from the beginning of the session before asking questions 1 and 2.

1. Are there any evangelistic methods that are unlikely to have drawn you toward the gospel? Explain.
2. What important truth does this reveal?
(Not everyone comes to Christ through the same evangelistic methods. That is why the Church employs a diversity of methods. This diversity encourages all Christians to use their spiritual gifts to advance the gospel. Not everyone will share the good news the same way, but everyone needs to participate.)
3. How does your church carry out the ministries of evangelism and discipleship? Are there areas for growth? If so, what are they? What can you do to help your church grow in this area?
4. How well do you take advantage of the means of discipleship available? Identify an aspect of discipleship that you could improve upon, and challenge yourself to incorporate more of it into your life.
5. What other questions or comments do you have pertaining to this session's material?

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Lead the group in a closing prayer, asking God to provide each person in your group with an opportunity to witness to others in the coming days. Ask the Holy Spirit to create a hunger in each person to pursue discipleship and a deeper relationship with Him.

Inform the group that the next session will cover “Our Nazarene Characteristics: Church Development, Transformational Leadership, and Purposeful Compassion.” Remind them to read these passages in preparation and to keep a record of their questions and thoughts.

Session 4: Leading and Serving

Chapter: “Our Nazarene Characteristics: Church Development, Transformational Leadership, and Purposeful Compassion”

In This Session:

- Understand that church development is about helping people, not institutionalism
- Identify the qualities the church seeks to cultivate in leaders
- Highlight the importance of compassionate ministry for individuals and churches

Resources: Lyrics (music optional) for “The Church’s One Foundation” or similar song

Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

Begin the session with prayer, asking God to make us the kind of ministers of His grace that He wants us to be, and to guide us as we serve Him by serving others.

Getting Started (10 minutes)

Come to class prepared to talk about a recent example of a Christian or church in the news for doing something unchristlike, and another story of one being recognized for doing something Christlike. You may include the members of your class in thinking of examples.

- Consider the people (or churches) we have been discussing. What do their actions seem to say about their views of the church’s purpose and the role of leaders in the church?

As an affirmation of a proper view of the church’s relationship to Christ, read or sing one or more verses of “The Church’s One Foundation” or another song that deals with the centrality of Christ in our lives and ministries.

In session 3, we looked at evangelism and discipleship, which deal with introducing individuals to Christ and helping them mature in relationship with Him. Today, we will consider aspects of our life as a community: ministry to believers, the qualities we look for in our leaders, and our call to live lives of purposeful compassion.

Digging In (30 minutes)

Select from the following questions to lead discussion of the readings for this session.

1. What do we mean by “church development”?
(*A God-inspired, Spirit-led effort to reach and disciple people for Christ.*)
2. What difference does it make that we view church development in terms of God’s desires for the people we minister to rather than the advancement of an organization?
3. Why are personal sacrifice and flexibility in ministry so important for church development?

4. What characteristics does the Church of the Nazarene seek to cultivate in its leaders? Which of these do you think would be the hardest to exhibit in the life the church? Explain.
(Christlikeness, submission, humility, servant-heartedness, visionary, strategic, teambuilding, compassionately assertive, and training new leaders)
5. How are the persons of the Trinity involved in our ministry of purposeful compassion?
(It arises from the Father's heart and His mission; Jesus is our model; the Holy Spirit empowers and guides us.)
6. What do we mean when we say that purposeful compassion is part of a "holistic" mission? How does this differ from a non-Christian approach to compassionate work?
7. Our text says that purposeful compassion flows naturally from transformed believers. If a believer does not feel concern for others, what might be the problem? How would you encourage such a person to grow in this area?

Wrapping Up (10 minutes)

Select one or more of the following questions as time allows.

Ask your group to silently consider questions 1-3 and write down the answers in their notebooks.

1. How has the Holy Spirit challenged you in today's session?
2. In which areas do you recognize a need to grow?
3. What is a good first step for you to take in obedience to the Spirit's leading?
4. What other questions or comments do you have pertaining to this session's material?

As a class, make a list of the leaders in your church (pastor, ministerial staff, lay leaders, committee members, and other examples). Divide the class into small groups. Assign each small group to pray for certain leaders on the list.

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

After the groups have had a sufficient time to pray, conclude your time together with a prayer asking God to work in the hearts and lives of all those who participate in the ministry of the church. Ask Him to purify motives, broaden thinking, and unite everyone in God's mission and love.

Inform the group that the next session will cover "Our Wesleyan Theology," and "Articles of Faith." Remind them to read these passages in preparation and to keep a record of their questions and thoughts.

Session 5: A Closer Look at Wesleyan Theology

Chapter: “Our Wesleyan Theology,” “Articles of Faith”

In This Session:

- Review the points of Wesleyan theology discussed in previous sessions
- Clarify our understanding of sin
- Examine the idea of entire sanctification

Resources: Lyrics (music optional) to “Grace Greater than Our Sin” or similar song

Welcome and Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

Begin the session with prayer, asking God to open our hearts and minds to hear His call to allow the Holy Spirit full control of every area of our lives.

Getting Started (10 minutes)

In the last session, we discussed the last of our Nazarene characteristics. In this session, we return to the subject of Wesleyan theology for a closer look at the ideas that distinguish Wesleyan-Holiness theology from other theological camps.

1. Recall the Wesleyan elements of our Nazarene identity that we have discussed so far in this course.
 - holistic mission of compassion
 - accountability partners
 - grace for all
 - prevenient grace
 - transformation into holy people
 - assurance of salvation
 - emphasis on love
 - free will
 - discipleship
 - victory over sin
 - guidance from the Spirit
 - holy hearts, holy lives

Digging In (30 minutes)

Select from the following questions to lead discussion of the readings for this session.

1. “Our Wesleyan Theology” highlights the theme of “transforming grace.” How does transforming grace characterize Wesleyan theology in general?

The Articles of Faith firmly situate the Church of the Nazarene in the bounds of classical Christianity. They also express our Protestant convictions. Let us take a closer look at the Articles that differentiate Wesleyan theology from other theological traditions. The articles that most characterize us as Wesleyans are “Article V. Sin, Original and Personal,” “Article VII. Prevenient Grace,” and “Article X. Christian Holiness and Entire Sanctification.”

2. Describe original sin.
(It is a disposition to sin that affects every aspect of who we are. We are born with this disposition because of the Fall. See Articles of Faith, 5.3.dacoda)

3. Describe personal sin.
(It is a known and intentional sinful act or attitude.)
4. What is the essence of sin?
(See Articles of Faith V. Sin Original and Personal)
5. Does this understanding of sin differ from other definitions you have heard? Why is the definition of sin important?
(Our understanding of sin is directly connected to our understanding of God's remedy for it. We believe that God's remedy for sin is available to everyone in this life, and the result enables the Church to fulfil the mission God has given.)
6. Describe prevenient grace. Why is it important?
(It moderates the effects of original sin to make free will possible and allow every person to respond to God's offer of salvation.)
7. Define entire sanctification in your own words.
(Christlikeness; purified motives, desires, and attitudes; keeping the law of love as expressed in the Scriptures; and other examples)
8. Why is it important to make a distinction between purity and maturity?
(Purity has to do with the heart and being motivated by love for God. Maturity has to do with the way we express our hearts. We make a distinction between a person's spiritual condition and his or her level of wisdom, emotional, psychological, and intellectual development, and culturally conditioned beliefs and behaviors. Maturity comes with time and experience. Heart purity comes via God's grace.)
9. Why is it important for every Christian to pursue further growth within the entirely sanctified life?
10. How does our understanding of sin fit with sanctification?
(We believe that sanctification begins when we are born again, and this frees us to resist known acts of sin. Entire sanctification is a deeper experience in the Christian life that purifies our desires, attitudes, and motives from the propensity to sin so that we are able to live entirely devoted to God.)

Wrapping Up (10 minutes)

Select one or more of the following questions as time allows.

1. What other questions or comments do you have pertaining to the points of Wesleyan theology we discussed in this or previous sessions?
2. Have someone from your church share their experience of entire sanctification and express how it made a difference in their life.

It is likely that someone will have questions about the way we understand sin or entire sanctification. Take time to look up some of the verses provided under these headings in the Articles of Faith.

If members of your class seem to be having trouble understanding or accepting some of the Articles of Faith, assure them that it is okay to have questions. Encourage them to keep studying and seeking answers.

Inform the group that the next session will cover “Our Ecclesiology,” “Our Polity,” “The Church: Local, District, and General,” and “A Connected Church.” Remind them to read these passages in preparation and to keep a record of their questions and thoughts.

Closing Song and Benediction (5 minutes)

Conclude by reading the verses or singing “Grace Greater than Our Sin” or another song that celebrates the victory over sin that is available through the Holy Spirit’s work in our lives. Offer a benediction and dismiss the group.

Sample benediction: May God bless you, protect you, guide you, and make His presence known in your lives this week.

Session 6: A Closer Look at Polity

Chapter: “Our Ecclesiology,” “Our Polity,” “The Church: Local, District, and General,” “A Connected Church”

In This Session:

- Understand the authority structures of the church
- Consider the roles we should play in the life of the church
- Commit to participate in the Lord’s work through the Church of the Nazarene according to His leading

Resources: List of those serving as superintendents, delegates, and board members, and find videos about World Evangelism Fund and Funding the Mission at medialibrary.nazarene.org/library.

Welcome and Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

Begin the session with prayer, thanking God for our leaders past and present who have served Him faithfully and made sacrifices to serve the church.

Getting Started (10 minutes)

Invite those who have attended district assemblies or general assemblies to describe the experience for those who have not been to one. Ask, “What was your most meaningful experience at an assembly?”

In this session, we will focus on our understanding of the Church of the Nazarene within the wider Christian church. We will also look at the authority structures and procedures we use to put our beliefs, values and calling into practice with integrity.

Digging In (30 minutes)

Select from the following questions to lead discussion of the readings for this session.

1. As Nazarenes, we acknowledge that we are a part of the larger church of Jesus Christ. How should this influence our thinking and ministry?
2. We acknowledge God as the source of our mission. What difference does this make?
3. How should our belief that all members of Christ’s body are equipped for service influence the life of the church?
4. What gifts and graces should the clergy and laity identify in prospective ministry candidates before electing them for ordination?
5. In our polity, what are the responsibilities of the local congregations?
6. What are the purposes of the districts and district superintendents?

7. What is the purpose of the general assembly?
8. What are the responsibilities of the General Board and General Superintendents?
9. What dangers do we hope to avoid by implementing representative government within the denomination? Explain.
10. What is the World Evangelism Fund, and why is it important?
11. Explain the principle of “equal sacrifice, not equal giving.”

Wrapping Up (10 minutes)

Select one or more of the following questions as time allows.

As an exercise in applying what we have learned about our polity and authority structures, ask:

1. The core of our unity as a denomination is a shared commitment to the Articles of Faith. How should a congregation proceed if it is unable to subscribe to the Articles of Faith as they are currently stated?
2. What other questions or comments do you have pertaining to this session’s material?

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Identify the boundaries of your district and the names of those who are currently serving as your district superintendent, district advisory board, district delegates, and anyone from your district (or world region, if you prefer) who are serving as delegates to the general assembly. Also, identify the general superintendents. Pray for those on the list.

If you have decided to offer a seventh session, inform the group of what that session will involve (e.g., fellowship, further questions and discussion, finish covering material from another session, and so on). Remind them to bring their notebooks with their questions and insights.

Session 7 Optional Wrap-up

In This Session:

- Discuss questions or observations that remain from previous sessions
- Create a plan of action for more fully embracing our Nazarene heritage and identity
- Guide prospective new members in the membership process

Resources: Refreshments, list of ministry opportunities in your church

Welcome and Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

Offer refreshments. You may want to allow for a few extra minutes of fellowship and community-building. When you are ready to begin, open with prayer, thanking God for the ways He has spoken to us and challenged us in the past several weeks.

Getting Started (10 minutes)

If you were not able to get through all of the previous six sessions in the time allotted, take this time to finish covering important material from a previous session. Otherwise, begin with the following questions.

What have you found most informative or helpful in this course? What insights will you take with you?

In this session, we're going to take time to address some of the remaining questions we have recorded in our notebooks. The discussion will be guided by the concerns and interests of the group.

Digging In (35 minutes)

Select from the following questions to lead discussion.

1. What remaining questions do you have, thoughts you'd like to offer, or issues you'd like to explore further?
2. What do we need to do as individuals or as a church to more fully embrace our Nazarene identity—our commitments, values, beliefs, and call to minister to the whole person? Create an action plan.

This is a time to cast a vision for how the congregation can live more fully in their Nazarene heritage and identity, and to create an action plan for doing so? (For example, has the church neglected evangelism, holiness teaching, compassionate outreach, or supporting the denominational mission, schools, and so on? Is there a culture of denominational elitism on the one hand or rejection of Wesleyan-Holiness/Nazarene distinctives and identity on the other? Has a new ministry opportunity arisen in the community that the church has not had a chance to respond to yet? What correctives can be implemented?)

Encourage the class members to keep asking questions, investigating, studying the Bible, and growing spiritually.

Wrapping Up (5 minutes)

Select one or more of the following activities as time allows.

If you have people in your group who are interested in joining the church, inform them of the steps they need to take to become a member.

Come prepared with a list of ministry opportunities within your church and ask the group to prayerfully consider how they might participate or contribute in some way.

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Conclude with prayer, thanking God for the time you have been able to spend together as a class and asking for grace to live fully for Him.