



Southern Methodist College
Light of Life Ministry

The Wesley Institute
Of Bible and Ministry Training



Welcome to this overview of the 2012 revised
Wesley Institute of Bible and Ministry Training!

It is our hope you will take just a few minutes to review the information presented here and consider how it might positively impact your local Church or Bible study. You will find enclosed in this packet of information a description of the Wesley Institute program along with a few changes for 2012. You will read comments from teachers and pastors where the Institute has already been implemented, and there will be an opportunity for you to view a brief video about the Wesley Institute on YouTube if you desire to do so. We appreciate you taking time to consider how this educational program can best be used in your local Church.

When we began recruiting people to enroll in the program, I would have been delighted to start with a dozen people and was expecting four or five to enroll. I was satisfied that this modest beginning would at least provide a start that would grow in numbers in the future. I was unprepared for the 26 people who enrolled. Not only did the number astound me, but it meant that the schedule would have to be adjusted. Originally, we had planned to provide classes on Sunday afternoons. Now we are offering classes on both Sunday afternoons and Wednesday evenings. After just a few courses our people are beginning to realize that a Bible Institute is an indispensable part of our church ministry and that every Christian deserves and needs a Bible education. As a pastor I would encourage every church to consider such a program, and would suggest you examine the Wesley Institute program materials and format.

Rev. Dan Shapley, Pastor
New Beginnings Church - Bellevue, TN

We have already gone through Laying the Foundation, and as I reflect on the class sessions, I observed the students really getting involved and asking questions. They were really enthusiastic. They demonstrated their understanding of the topics and issues that were covered. In conversation, I know that many of the students have been applying what they have learned and they have shared it with others. Building on the Foundation has proven to be even more enlightening. The students are very eager to learn how to properly defend their faith. I have observed their facial expressions as they have their 'aha' moment. I have even witnessed the disappointment in their voices if I have to postpone class. The Wesley Institute has truly been a tremendous blessing to me and to my congregation.

Rev. Scott Gardner, Pastor
Orangeburg Miracle Revival Church - Orangeburg, SC

The Traditional Wesley Institute Program

CEU

The traditional Wesley Institute is designed as a Continuing Education Unit (CEU) program. The student earns 3 CEUs per course with the courses being taught in the local church by the pastor or an educator within the church. Each course consists of 12 lessons, and these lessons are taught through 30 hours of classroom instruction (universally one CEU equals ten classroom hours).

We recommend this format be used for students who want to go deeper in Bible study and who desire to prepare themselves for service in the local church and in God's kingdom. Certificates of completion are given for each course successfully completed, and the student can receive program completion certificates for up to three levels of work. It is even possible for those desiring Ministerial credentials in *The Southern Methodist Church* to meet the educational requirements of an Ordained Elder through the Wesley Institute program.

The cost for the CEU program is just \$35 per course, and this includes the course book, keeping of records through SM College, and all certificates. The teacher's materials and any course supplemental material is included at no charge with at least eight students enrolled. This program is ideal for community outreach as well, offering conservative, systematic, and progressive Christian education and ministry training through Southern Methodist College right in the local church.

All that is required to complete a course for the 3 CEU credits is to read the material prior to class, answer the discussion questions, participate in class, attend at least 75% of the classes and do the required make-up for classes missed. There are no papers to write or tests to take as no grade is given. We simply want the student to learn as much as possible in a comfortable and safe setting!

When Light of Life Ministry and Southern Methodist College teamed up to create The Wesley Bible Institute (WBI) it was an answer to prayer. Many (like myself) had been praying for a good solid Bible study Program that could be implemented in the discipleship ministry of the local church! WBI is a program that allows everyone in the church to participate and grow in their knowledge of the Lord. In our WBI we have students who are in their 80's and in their teens. They study together, pray together, and encourage one another. In our WBI we have students who are taking the courses for Bible Certificate credit, several who have decided to take it for college credit, and two of our students are now attending SM College on Campus. Two students have also answered the call to preach and are doing their Clergy studies through WBI. It is exciting to me as a pastor and instructor to see how much growth has taken place in the lives of these students.

Rev. Jerry O'Neal, Pastor
First Southern Methodist Church - Augusta, GA
First Southern Methodist Church - Sandersville, GA

The Advanced Wesley Institute Program

College Credit

The advanced Institute program is designed for those who want to apply their study toward a College degree. Everything described in the CEU program concerning taking the classes locally, attendance, preparation, etc. is still applicable, but in addition the student registers through Southern Methodist College for the course just as would an on-campus student. He or she is assigned a faculty mentor who will act as the teacher of record for the course, assigning additional reading, administering up to three tests, and grading an assigned paper appropriate for each individual course.

Upon successful completion of the work the student will receive 3 college credit hours. The student can work toward a one year Bible diploma, a two year Associates Degree in Bible, or apply the credits earned toward a BA degree from Southern Methodist College. Of course, additional course work in other areas (English, math, science, history, etc.) will have to be completed either on campus or through an approved on-line undergraduate program.

The cost of taking the Wesley Institute courses for college credit is the same as taking a class on campus. However, there are several scholarships available for those meeting the various criteria making the cost per course very reasonable.

Students interested in knowing more about this opportunity should contact Dr. Vic Reasoner, Academic Dean at Southern Methodist College, either by email (vreasoner@smcollege.edu), or by phone (864-923-5076).

In going through the Wesley Institute courses, our class has discovered over and over that each lesson takes us into a deeper understanding of the Bible and all that it has to offer us. Our relationship with the Lord has been impacted as we have come to realize the importance of things such as the tabernacle or the Feasts of the Lord. The Witnessing course has been useful and valuable as we learned of the categories of people which has helped us to be more effective in sharing Jesus with others. The material has not only benefitted our class, some has been shared with our Sunday School teachers when the topic coincides with their curriculum. Information has also been shared in the Ladies Bible Study. We know well that no matter what our background and educational level, the depth of spiritual maturity always has room for growth to expand our walk and relationship with our Lord... We are pleased that one student has enrolled at SMC to gain college credit and we have another that is preparing to do the same this year.

Mrs. Jessie Morris
Director of Ministry Operations
The Worship Center - Bryans Road, MD

The Basic Wesley Institute Program

Personal Enrichment

This is an area of the Institute that is changing in 2012. We have put much thought into this approach and have decided that we will continue to offer the Personal Enrichment (PE) option with the following observations and changes.

First, the intent of The Wesley Institute is to offer something more in the local church than has been traditionally offered. It desires to encourage people to apply themselves, commit to a long-term Christian education program, and to understand that just being satisfied with an hour or two of church per week is not sufficient to obtain the spiritual growth necessary for the Church to function as the Body it is intended to be. The PE option has no requirements as do the CEU and CC options - people can simply come to the class when they want to, do whatever work they feel like doing, and likely gain no more or less than they would in any other program. This is simply not the intent of the Wesley Institute!

Second, we have offered the PE option to those who desired it at a reduced cost as there are no records to be kept, no certificates to be presented, and no college recognition to be awarded. In turn, the question has arisen as to why some were paying more than others for the same class, and those taking the courses for CEU credit have been tempted to drop back to a PE option. Again, this defeats the original intent of having a Bible Institute in the local church. Therefore, we have decided to continue offering the PE option for those who for some reason just can't meet the CEU requirements, but the Institute fee of \$35 per course will be the same as for the CEU student.

I was reluctant at first to share the Wesley Institute with my church. Why? I guess it was the fear of the unknown. It was something new, something I had never done before. Simply put, would I be able to effectively present the material in a manner that would both keep their attention and teach them biblical truths that would help them grow spiritually. But, it is not about me! It is about Christ and building His church! After I presented it to our leadership team and the church body, we began signing people up for the first course. To my delight we started with 17 students! The books are well written and user friendly. Each lesson is relevant to our lives today as it helps us to build a biblical worldview. In each chapter there are well thought out and thought provoking questions. In our group it produced some lively discussions! But the real proof of success of the Wesley Institute comes from the students. One student stated that he had learned more in 12 weeks than in the many years he has been a Christian. Another stated that the lessons were so interesting that she never thought about being in class for over two hours! (It has to be the teacher!) After finishing just the first course my fears have subsided and my excitement grows. May the Holy Spirit, the Perfect Teacher, fill this imperfect teacher with grace and power to teach these lessons from the Word so that it will impact each student to impact the world!

Rev. Larry Sprague
Harleyville SM Church - Harleyville, SC

Questions Concerning the Wesley Institute Program



Q. Who can take these courses?

A. Anyone who has a desire to learn more about the Bible and ministry, has access to a location where the classes are being offered, and is willing to commit themselves to a regular and systematic learning environment.

Q. How long do the classes last?

A. Each course consists of twelve lessons each. Each of the twelve lessons will require approximately 2.5 hours of classroom work. This amounts to 30 classroom hours per course which converts to 3 CEUs per course. The program works best by completing one lesson per week, or 2.5 hours per week of class work. But if a teacher and students prefer to do 5 hours at a time twice per month (say on a Saturday), that is acceptable and the time track will be the same - one course every quarter.

Q. Do I have to take every course, or can I just select the courses I want to take?

A. That depends on whether you are working toward a certain Certificate of Completion, or if you are simply taking courses that interest you. We recommend that everyone take the first two years (or first eight courses) as these are considered foundational courses. Laity that want to achieve the Advanced Lay Certificate will need to complete the first four years (or sixteen courses). If you are working toward ordination (in the SMC) you will need to complete through year five, and for Elder, through year six.

Q. Who will be teaching the classes?

A. LOLM along with the Southern Methodist College will be certifying teachers for each location, usually the pastor or another educator in the local church. The material taught will be consistent for each location, and the teacher will be supplied with additional teaching materials, so class content will be fairly consistent.

Q. How much will this program cost?

A. It is our desire to provide a quality, systematic, and accessible Christian education outlet through the local church to all who will attend. We realize that cost is a major factor for many if not most people. Therefore, we have attempted to make these courses available as inexpensively as we can. The prices for each of the three options have been detailed in the previous discussion.

Q. How many have to attend each class for it to be offered?

A. We recommend setting a goal of at least eight and no more than twenty for each class. But we are willing to work with you where these numbers are not realistic, in either direction.

Q. How can I help support this ministry?

A. As you might guess, the fees collected for this program lack considerably in meeting the costs of producing materials, maintaining records, paying for salaries and travel expenses, etc. LOLM is a 501(c)3 non-profit ministry that depends on your individual and church support to survive. You can help by becoming a regular monthly supporter (much needed), or by sending an occasional gift and, of course, by joining the Institute!

My sincere testimony is that the school has really been a great blessing to the students and to myself based on the evaluation we did after the end of the course. Personally, I think that the course material is exceptionally insightful and easy to follow allowing the student to grasp as they read. Finally, I will say that all is well and very educative. May God bless you and all the pastors and the professors who are helping in making these courses a reality, bringing transformation to lives and efficacy to God's kingdom work.

Rev. Samuel Mainoo, Pastor
Church of Grace Ministries - Atlanta, GA

**Additional Information on
The Wesley Institute Program**

How Can I Help?

It is my goal to see every church with a desire to establish an Institute be able to do so. I will help you in this endeavor in any way I can. So please contact me for more information, to schedule a time when I can come to your church to discuss the possibilities with your Board, Education Committee, or directly with your people, or just to say “I’m ready - Let’s Do It!”

If you would like to view a short video about The Wesley Institute, including interviews with students who have taken classes, you can go to this YouTube link:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XviOI29boVE>

FOR MORE INFORMATION

CONTACT

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Together, Looking Forward to a Great 2012!