
Amish: Our Friends But, Are They Fellow Believers?

Student Workbook



Date: _____

Book belongs
to: _____

Instructor:

Sample Pages

M MISSION TO
A AMISH
P PEOPLE

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PART 1: Mission to Amish People

- 1) About Mission to Amish People**
- 2) Burden**
- 3) Three fold purpose**
- 4) Current status**
- 5) Ministry in action**

PART 2: Anabaptist Movement

- 1) Early years in Europe**
- 2) Menno Simons, founder of the Mennonites**
- 3) Jacob Amman, founder of the Amish**

PART 3: Then and Now

- 1) Amish of yesterday**
- 2) Amish of today**
- 3) Population/2010**
- 4) Locality/2010**

Then and Now

1. Amish of _____

1) Jacob Amman

- A. Lived in Erlenbach, Switzerland
- B. Was an elder of the Mennonite Church
- C. In 1693, he and a small following broke away from the Mennonite movement

The main issues of controversy

- A. Meidung (Shunning one who has been excommunicated)
- B. Whether those who speak falsehoods should be excommunicated
- C. Foot washing and communion twice a year instead of once

2) Coming to America

- A. On October 2, 1727, the first Amish People came to America on *The Adventurer* and settled in Philadelphia, PA.

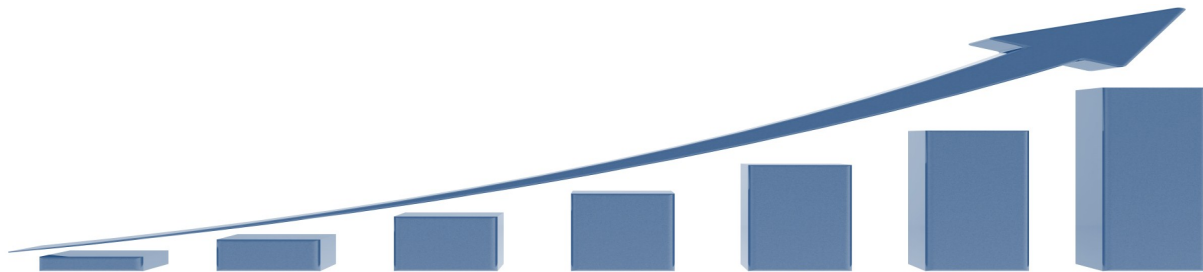
2. Amish of _____

1) **Population:** _____ (doubles every 15-20 years)

2) **Settlements:** _____ (29 States, Canada and South America)

Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Providence of Ontario Canada, South America

3) **Approximately _____ sects (denominations) of Amish exist.**



Progressive _____ **Legalistic**

Beachy | Amish Mennonite | New Order | Toby | King | Old Order | Swiss | Nebraska | Weaver | Troyer | Schwartzentruber

PART 4: Beliefs and Practices

- 1) The six major beliefs**
- 2) The ordinance letter governs every life detail**
- 3) Scripture possibly used to defend beliefs**
- 4) Intolerable activities, practices and beliefs among most sects**

BELIEFS & PRACTICES

1. The gospel according to Amish has _____ major elements

1) _____ obedience



From the time a child is able to communicate, s/he is taught the importance of obeying the parents. Parents and preachers teach that obedience to God and parent is identical. Disobeying one is disobeying the other. The son/daughter who dies outside of the parent's will, dies outside of God's will, and cannot be saved from facing God's wrath.

- A. Considered by many to be the first commandment (Ephesians 6:1-3).



Ephesians 6:1-3 (KJV)

Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

- B. Children are considered under their parents' authority until the child's death.
- C. Other scriptures used to defend parental obedience are Exodus 20:12, Proverbs 1:8, Proverbs 6:20, Ephesians 6:1-3, and Colossians 3:20.
- D. Incest is a problem in many Amish homes, due to the fact that women are less equal to men. And since fathers and sons are the ones in authority, sisters/daughters may not question or go against their father or brothers' will.

Father to Son who left the Amish

I don't know what to write. But I do want to write you that you cannot come home again. If you want to come home to stay home and obey Father and Mother then you are very welcome to come home. If you don't want to come home to stay at home we don't even want you near at home.

We know what you told Harley and we cannot except you at home anymore. But remember you can come home anytime if you want to obey Father and Mother and stay at home. We feel very sorry for you, and you know that we don't want you to get baptized out in that sinful world, and you also know that we don't want you to be driving any cars or trucks.

I do have a question for you. Did we teach you to do what you are doing? I would like to have an answer on this.

God put us in this world to work and to obey His rules. He does not want us to be lost. He will help us, if we let Him in our hearts to help. So at this point, you are on the outside of our family and you don't belong in the family anymore. So whether it's a wedding or a funeral, you don't belong in the family. You know you can't come home again. Unless, like I wrote earlier, if you want to come and stay home and obey your parents.

We have broken hearts and stay at home. You can be in the family again if you come home to stay at home and obey. What a blessing that would be.

—Broken hearted Father and Mother

2)

- A. Takes place between 17 - 20 years, depending on the sect.
- B. This age range is considered the age of accountability. A person who dies after the age of accountability, and hasn't been baptized, could possibly face God's wrath because Amish believe baptism washes away sins.
- C. About three month prior to the ceremony, bi-weekly classes are held by the ministers to instruct the candidates, teaching them the strict implications of what they are about to profess. During this training period, each candidate is watched closely by members of the Church to see if the dress codes and lifestyles measure up to the Ordinance Letter; they must pass the three month test and be approved by the membership, before they can be baptized.
- E. Afterward, the deacon pours three small portions of water on each candidate's head, which represents the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.



Baptism is considered one of the most critical and serious steps a young person takes in gaining favor with God and the Church. A person is given all the responsibility and respect of other adults in the community once this step is taken.

3) Church

Moments after a child is born, the parents label him/her Amish. From then on, to hold favor with God, the son/daughter is expected to live, look, dress, act and marry Amish, join the Church, and die Amish. In the eyes of the Church and parents, this child is *fortunate* to be born into the Amish culture, as they consider it the closest to God.

- A. Church membership is in effect the same day as baptism, but only after a verbal and permanent vow to follow the Church and Ordinance Letter (described under baptism).
- B. As a baptized member, participation in communion and foot washing services, voting on Church issues, and marrying a member are permitted.
- C. Women members are allowed to vote, however voting contrary to men brings immediate discipline.
- D. For a member to leave his/her fellowship and join a more liberal sect brings excommunication.
- E. Right before baptism, each candidate is asked to make the following vows to God and the Church on bended knee:

Uncle to Nephew: You Broke Your Vow to the Amish Church

Dear David, you mentioned that you don't read in the Bible about "ordnung." Well, probably a lot of it is tradition, but history teaches us over and over that when people leave the church, their children, or maybe more often their grandchildren will not belong to any church.

And where do you find a church that observes more of the commandments or ordinances that we can plainly read about, such as feet washing, the woman's head covering and no outward adornments as we read in I Peter 3:3 and I Timothy 2:9, bann and shunning and not to have communion with open sinners? All of these things we can plainly read about in the Bible. Please study the *confession of faith* and look up the references.

Most of you have promised to remain faithful to the church, and if you now leave the church and join another one you are covenant breakers, and this is just like leaving one wife and marrying another in God's eyes. —Uncle Mel

- ◆ Can you renounce the devil, the world, and your own flesh and blood?
- ◆ Can you commit yourself to God and His church, and to abide by it and live therein until you die?
- ◆ And to all the Ordinances of the church, according to the word of the Lord, to be obedient and submissive to it and to help therein?

Membership is irreversible. Those who join the Church and later leave are turned over to Satan and shunned by their former congregation and family.

The main function of the Amish vows is to maintain control. After one becomes a member (what leaders called the fear of God) is used to keep members in line.

Since leaders are not very knowledgeable of the Bible, they have to use mental violence to force members back into the fold.

Members are taught that the church has the power of heaven and hell. Especially the power of hell, to bind any person over to Satan, who continues in disobedience. Disobeying the church is considered the same as disobeying God.

Most members who make the vow, do so because of intimidation. Many young persons leaving the Amish were not familiar with Scripture, and soon reject all religious teaching, due to previous training. Sin is seen as wearing the wrong clothes, haircut, and driving a car. Members were taught that to abandon this teaching is to abandon God.



Sample Page

Eli, former Amish, writes concerning vows to the Amish Church

As a young Amish boy, I was taught that when I reached a certain age I would be expected to join the church. In so doing, I would be declaring Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and also my personal vows to our church. I did this without a full knowledge of how salvation works, although I did receive Jesus Christ into my life at an early age. As I became older, I realized that what I'd been taught did not satisfy my spiritual need for knowing exactly what salvation is.

A very strong sense of not belonging finally led me to leave the Amish. But what about those vows? I had promised on bended knee to help build the church and to obey its every regulation. Was I sealing my own condemnation by breaking those vows? The bishop and ministers certainly wanted me to think so. Yet, I was perplexed by the absence of salvation assurance. The thought of dying was terrifying, even if I was a good Amish youth. Little did I know that you cannot place part of your trust in Jesus, and part of your trust in your good Amish life!

The need for obedience was drilled into us from an early age, yet Jesus' role in our salvation was never talked about. To seek answers only raised suspicion in the minds of those in authority. Was our church the only right way, or were there other churches that had truth?

4) Be not conformed to the _____

Biblical Worldliness Is Described As: cheating, lying, stealing, coveting, murder, adultery, lust, etc.

Amish Worldliness Is Described As: cars, fashions, government, electricity, phones, computers, television, etc.

- Non-Amish (English), including the government, are considered of the world and held at arm's length
- Technology, including electricity, cars, tractors, phones, computers, television, rubber tires, etc. are considered worldly by most Amish sects

- C. Insurance, social security benefits, voting for government officials and going to war were forbidden
- D. Clothing fashions, bright or patterned fabrics, and fads are worldly

Three Scriptures used to defend their beliefs:

Rom 12:2 (KJV)

And be not conformed to this world...

1 John 2:15 (KJV)

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

2 Cor 6:14 (KJV)

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers...



Sample Pages

PART 5: Legalism and Leaving

- 1) The results of a legalistic environment**
- 2) Leaving the church**
- 3) You can help your Amish friend reconsider beliefs**

Legalism and Leaving

1. _____ of a legalistic environment

At times I'm asked, "Is Amish a religion or a cult?" My opinion is that the Amish fall somewhere in-between legalism and cult. Imagine the publicity and outcry if a new group sprung up in the midst of America today and controlled their members like the Amish.

Difference between legalism and cult	
Legalism	Cult
Any system with rules and regulations that promise God's love in return for human effort and obedience	A term used for years in social science referring to religious groups whose religious beliefs and practices differ markedly from those dominant in the particular culture in which they are found.
Firm compliance to the letter of the <i>law</i> rather than its spirit (Romans 7:5-6)	A religion or sect generally considered extremist or false, with followers often living in unconventional ways under the guidance of an authoritarian, charismatic leader.

1) _____ :

- a) Makes salvation a performance *reward*.
- b) Often overrides the laws of the land; including safety, such as sanitation and buggy rules.
- c) Results in members who spend most of their lives in comparison to others rather than God.
- d) Creates social isolation.
- e) Pressures members to make public confessions to the group.
- f) Causes members to become zealous with absolute loyalty to the group leadership.

2) Legalism ultimately creates a life filled with _____ :

- | | | |
|---------------|--------------|-----------------|
| ◆ hypocrisy | ◆ disunity | ◆ abuse |
| ◆ greed | ◆ jealousy | ◆ suicide |
| ◆ selfishness | ◆ favoritism | ◆ unused talent |
| ◆ division | ◆ dishonesty | |

3) Legalistic _____ :

- a) Desperately try to please God, but in their mind they can never be good enough.
- b) Constantly follow "group pressure" rather than sensitive obedience to God.
- c) Trust their religious system for security, rather than God.
- d) Follow human leaders, rather than God.

4) Legalistic _____ :

- 1) Invent a rule and then find scripture to back it up.
- 2) Insist real peace can only come to those who give up and fully submit to the rules of the church.
- 3) Teach their members to believe that anyone living outside the community and standards of living are threatening, ungodly, worldly and gravely in error.
- 4) Claim mental suffering and distress (often group-induced anxiety and guilt) are relieved only by conforming to the group.



Without realizing, members are controlled in how they think and act. Their emotional and spiritual responses become mechanical. In this state, a father and mother can turn their child over to Satan for not following man-made rules and traditions passed on by the forefathers.

2. _____ the church

1) Is it easy to leave?

Anyone who considers leaving the Amish community is put under enormous pressure to stay. Some former members told us that they spent months, sometimes years, trying to gather up the courage to walk out. Many of those who leave are so intimidated that they secretly leave under cover of night.

Testimonies from some who left

Michigan

The Amish were horrified that we would even consider such a move. They came crying, pleading telling us what a big mistake we're making "we'll go to hell" they said. Albert's uncle even said he'd take care of me, if I left Albert. It was a total nightmare. The neighbor ladies came over crying, saying they can't believe I would even go along with such a thing.

Ohio

Much to my dismay, my mom and dad walked out of the barn towards the doddy house (a house that was right across the driveway, where my grandpa and grandma lived). Soon I heard loud sobs from the doddy house, and the tearful voice of my parents blurting out "Monroe is going to leave!"

As I entered the doorway, my mom, who had never hugged me, came over to me, grabbed my arm, and hung on to me like a person drowning. A fresh flood of tears came from both me and her when she sobbed "Oh, Monroe! What have we done? Why do you want to leave us?" I couldn't speak. I cried like a baby, but I had to go.

Iowa

Think about it. You are in a little box. A comfortable box, but a pretty confining one, when it comes right down to it. You wonder what's outside. Peek out a bit, now and then, and peer around. But deep down, you know that if you step outside that box, you are speeding down the highway to hell. And could arrive at any instant. Boom, just like that. It's a brutal thing. A severe mental strain. And it's the reason that in every community when Amish kids run wild, they usually run hard and mean.

It's because once that line is crossed, there are no others. And nothing you can do, absent returning, can make any difference. Believe otherwise, like the Mennonites and the Beachys, who drive cars and prate about being saved, and the devil's got you right where he wants you. *That's what we were taught and what we believed.*

I am a Christian living the Amish culture, which makes it very hard. I go to the Amish church and the preaching seems to me like a barrel with a hole in it. It doesn't fill your up; it's just man's opinion. In other words, it isn't built on the Bible. If you would take the Bible out of the Amish church, not much would change. But if you would take the rules away, the church would crumble to the ground. That's because it isn't built on solid foundation (the Bible). It is very hard living in the Amish group if you are a Christian.

I am an ex-Amish minister and if this would help you in some way in helping people understand from an ex-Amish mans view point, where he came from and how he used to look at things, then how the Lord changed his heart, and how it got turned around and how he looks at salvation today. So they can get an inside view of a person that has been changed by God, and God only, there is nobody else involved that made this change but God.

Wisconsin

I was born into the Amish and lived most of my life in Michigan. When I was 15 my father passed away on December 22, 1997. Then on May 20, 2005 my brother passed away in a farm accident. I always thought the Amish church worried more about the rules than people. The night of my brother's funeral proved that to me. The Bishops came and ex-communicated me, that night, because I knew my brother had a stereo and we had gone to visit my ex-Amish sister. The day after that, they announced it in church. I was eventually allowed back in but was constantly at odds with the leadership over various rules.

In February of 2006 I left the Amish Church. I was ex-communicated and separated from my family. I had a friend who helped me leave and I was taken in by people who helped those in need. For almost four years things went well. I was working steady and taking care of myself. My feelings toward God were that He was there, but other than that, if people left me alone about the subject, I would leave them alone. I would go to church with friends, but it had no real meaning to me.

Kentucky

Indiana

Most who leave on their own are psychologically harmed, often in ways they do not even recognize.

For more testimonies: <http://www.mapministry.org/news/former-amish-testimonies>

PART 6: Evangelizing The Amish

- 1) Why evangelism is necessary**
- 2) Three ways to connect with your Amish community**
- 3) Evangelism approach**
- 4) Cultural do's and don'ts**
- 5) Possible stumbling blocks**
- 6) Jump start your evangelistic exchange**

Evangelizing The Amish

1. Why _____ is necessary

Since Amish do not have radios, TV or internet, they're limited as to how they can receive the gospel. Additionally, the Amish community is close-minded to evangelism and discussing spiritual issues with those outside of their own. In some sects, members are warned that if caught discussing spiritual things outside of their membership, they'll be publicly disciplined before the Church.

For those reasons, it may be easy for us to:

1. Sit back and do nothing
2. Pretend it's impossible
3. Ignore the desperate need
4. Wait on someone more qualified

However, consider that:

1. Sexual, verbal, and emotional abuse is at an historic high. Because Church leaders are often at a loss on how to handle these situations, members are turning to outside programs for help.
2. Turmoil, unrest, and division among the Amish churches are at an historic high.
3. The younger generation is asking questions, and since many are not getting clear answers, they're going to outsiders.
4. Hundreds of Amish place their faith in Christ, each year, because someone outside their community shared the gospel with them.
5. God is moving among Amish communities – could He want to use you?



Isaiah 6:8 (KJV)

Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

PART 7: Helping the Former Amish

1) Physical and social needs

Helping The Former Amish

I. Physical/social needs

1) Housing

- A. Help them buy appropriately fitting clothes.
- B. Teach them how to order at a restaurant and explain menu terms.
- C. Show them how to use a microwave, oven, washer and dryer, the shower, and toilet.
- D. Explain which foods must be refrigerated.

2) Transportation

3) Hygiene

- A. Offer deodorant, toothpaste/toothbrush, towels, haircut, curling iron.
- B. Teach about taking more than one shower a week.
- C. Boys must be taught about toilet use, flushing, putting down the lid and washing hands.
- D. Show how to sort and do laundry.
- E. As they feel comfortable, mention the need to see a dentist.

4) Locate/obtain personal records

- A. Birth certificate & social security card are needed. Go with them to the county of their birth.

5) Money management

- A. Go with them to meet a bank associate and set up bank accounts, and explain simple banking terms and procedures.
- B. Model and teach how to save money, as well as save for retirement.
- C. Explain the many insurance options, i.e., Auto, life, medical.
- D. Consider asking them to enroll in a Dave Ramsey or other financial aid course.

6) Manners —Amish are trained to suppress feelings, to “deal with it” silently, and ignore those with whom they disagree.

- A. Patiently teach about emotions and appropriate ways to express feelings, thought, and words.
- B. Help former Amish realize that adult questions are a polite way of getting to know them and not an attempt to butt-in and control their life.
- C. Model and teach about saying “thank you” and “please,” how to hold the door open for someone, giving eye contact and a firm handshake. (See “I just Left the Amish, Now What?” on our website)
- D. Explain that English have different dating practices than Amish; you may have to explain to single guys how to ask a girl for a date, where to take a girl, meeting the parents, etc as this is foreign to their upbringing.
- E. Explain that English parents are involved in their children’s lives and want to know where they are going, what they’re doing, and who they date.
- F. Since Amish never hug or say “I love you” there’s a void and longing to be loved. Teach them appropriate ways to give and receive a hug.

7) Job hunt

- A. Assist them in looking for a job.
- B. Help them complete applications; they don’t know what “have you ever been convicted of a felony?” and many other questions mean. Spelling and punctuation help are needed.
- C. Rehearse a job interview so they’re more competent and confident in an interview situation.

8) Driving a car

- A. Help them get their permit packets.
- B. Model safe and appropriate driving practices.
- C. Teach about driving on ice and other dangerous road conditions.
- D. Help them study for the written drivers test, and practice for the license.

9) Governmental support

- A. Learn about and help them access local charities, Salvation Army, County Family Services, Medicaid & Food stamps, WIC for couples with young children, free health and dental services from the local Health Department, free developmental screenings and medical care for children.

10) Spiritual needs —deeply rooted in every heart is the restless fear, *I could end up in hell because I went against my parents and the Church.*

- A. Mentoring and discipleship are vital.
- B. Give constant affirmation and reminders that God loves them; it's especially critical that adult men model God's unconditional love to counter the Amish fear of God as harsh and unforgiving.

11) Emotional needs —be alert to signs of physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, and know where to access helpful resources.

- A. Since Amish allow inter-marriage between cousins, be alert to signs of possible genetic mental disorders, and know where to access professional help and Christian counselors.

Sample Pages

PART 8: Sample Ordinance Letter

- 1) Ordinance letter—Schwartzentruber Amish sect**

PART 9: Conclusion

1) Answer sheet