

**Third Sunday of Advent Liturgy****Preparation**

To have a meaningful celebration of Advent and the Human Rights Sunday, assign some young people to do the following for the preparation:

Playing of drums – just one beat at a time

A loud cry or wailing followed by loud drum rolls

While the drum roll is going on some young people will run/ walk towards the worship center and will do a tableau of the different human rights violations in and outside the country.

Let them remain at the center until after the opening sentences

**Prelude** (Flute if the flutist can play the song “How Can Our Song this Time Be Chanted)  
HFJ # 368)

**Opening Sentences**

Liturgist: For those who are suffering (sound of drum)

Church: God’s gift to the world shall come:

Liturgist: For those who feel despair (sound of bell)

Church: God’s gift of hope shall come!

Liturgist: For those who are oppressed (Sound of gunshots)

Church: God’s gift of freedom shall come!

Liturgist: For those who are lonely (sound of wind chime)

Church: God’s gift of joy shall come!

Liturgist: For those who are sick (sound of babies cry)

Church: God’s gift of healing shall come!

Liturgist: For those who are troubled (sound drum rolls)

Church: God’s gift of peace shall come!

Liturgist: For those who are unloved (sound of people shouting)

Church: God’s gift of Love shall come!

All: Christ, Lord of the world, shall come to bring us hope, love, peace!

**Song** “O Come, O Come Emmanuel”

Oh, come, O Key of David, come, and open wide our heav’nly home;

Make safe the way that leads on high, and close the path to misery.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel, shall come to you, O Israel!

Oh, come, our dayspring from on high, and cheer us by your drawing nigh,

Disperse the gloomy clouds of night, and death’s dark shadows put to flight.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel, shall come to you, O Israel!

**+Opening Prayer (Unison)**

O God, we pray for all those in our world, who are suffering from injustice: For those who are discriminated against because of their race, color or religion; For those imprisoned for working for the relief of oppression; For those who are hounded for speaking the inconvenient truth; For those tempted to violence as a cry against overwhelming hardship; For those deprived of reasonable health and education; For those suffering from hunger and famine; For those too weak to help themselves and who have no one else to help them; For the unemployed who cry out for work but do not find it. We pray for anyone of our acquaintance who is personally affected by injustice. Forgive us, Lord, if we unwittingly share in the conditions or in a system that perpetuates injustice. Show us how we can serve your children and make your love practical by washing their feet.

**+Lighting the Third Advent Candle-** The Candle of Joy

The third Sunday of Advent symbolizes Joy with the “Shepherd’s Candle” reminding that even in the midst of sufferings, oppressions and darkness, we can still experience joy and comfort, we can still experience because of Christ’s coming and birth.

**+Opening Song** “Comfort, Comfort You My People”

Translator: Catherine Winkworth; Author: Johann Olearius (1671)

Tune: GENEVAN 42

1. Comfort, comfort you my people; tell of peace, thus says our God;  
Comfort those who sit in darkness bowed beneath oppression’s load.  
Speak you to Jerusalem of the peace that waits for them;  
Tell them that their sins I cover, and their warfare now is over.
2. For the herald’s voice is calling in the desert far and near,  
Bidding us to make repentance since the kingdom now is here.  
Oh that warning cry obey! Now prepare for God a way;  
Let the valleys rise in meeting and the hills bow down in greeting.
3. Make you straight what long was crooked; make the rougher places plain;  
Let your hearts be true and humble, as befits God’s holy reign,  
For the glory of the Lord now o’er earth is shed abroad,  
And all flesh shall see the token that God’s word is never broken.

**Call to Confession** (Leader)

Our God is a God of justice, waiting to be gracious to us , yearning to have pity on us.  
Blessed are all who wait for the Lord (Isaiah 30:18) In faith, let us make our confession to God.

**Flute Music** (Kyrie Elieson HFJ# 90 or Lord Look into My Heart HFJ #89)**Prayer of Confession (Unison)**

We give thanks, O God, that you are unchanging, that your concern for justice and righteousness was so strong that you came in human form to share that concern with us in person. We confess that all too often we hesitate to speak or act when we see people being treated unjustly. Forgive us, O God, for the times when we have been happy to hear the gospel without truly living it. Forgive us for uncaring attitudes when we base our opinion of another person’s worth on what they own, or how they look; on what they say, or how they live, rather than accepting them for who they are—people made in your image. Forgive us when our longing to live simply and with humility is defeated by selfish desires—for pursuing profits before seeking your will. Forgive us for placing our hope in other than the Christ-child born in a poor stable. Our hope lies in the promise of your mercy, O God, extending to those who fear you from generation to generation. Heal, restore and bless us, we pray, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. Amen.

**Assurance of Pardon (Minister)**

May the God of peace cleanse you through and through. The promise is that our whole being—spirit, soul and body will be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Thess. 5:23) Rejoice, then, and give thanks as we receive forgiveness and healing in Christ’s name. Amen.

**Community Concerns**

**Intercessory Prayers**

(Assign from among the members -children to adults-parents to children to read these prayers below)

**Help us.**

Help us to uphold the values that are so central to whom we are: human beings created B'tzelem Elohim- in the image of God. Help us to recognize that the inherent dignity of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. The inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family are the foundations of freedom, justice and peace in the world. May we find the strength to protect and plead the cause of the stranger among us, to ensure just treatment for all who dwell in our land.

Response: "O Hear Our Prayer, Almighty God" HFJ #83

O hear our prayer, Almighty God, in faith and trust we make our plea!

O hear our pray"r o loving God. As is your will, so let it be. SO LET IT BE!

**Guide us.**

Guide us toward one law, one justice, one human standard of behavior toward all. Move us away from the equivocation that honors the divine image in some but not in others. Let us forever affirm that the justice we purport to hold dear is nothing but a sham if it does not uphold the value of human beings, the basic human dignity for all who dwell in our midst.

**Forgive us.**

Forgive us for the inhumane manner in which we too often treat the other. We know, or should, that when it comes to crimes against humanity, some of us may be guilty, but all of us are responsible. Grant us kapparrah - atonement for the misdeeds of exclusion we invariably commit against the most vulnerable members of society: the unwanted, the unhoused, the uninsured, the undocumented

Response: "O Hear Our Prayer, Almighty God" HFJ #83

O hear our prayer, Almighty God, in faith and trust we make our plea!

O hear our pray"r o Loving God. As is your will, so let it be. SO LET IT BE

**Strengthen us.**

Strengthen us to find the wherewithal to shine your light into the dark places of our world. Give us ability to uncover those who are hidden from view, locked away, forgotten. Let us never forget that nothing is hidden and no one lost from before you. Embolden us in the knowledge that neshamot - human souls are neither disposable nor replaceable; that we can never, try as we might, lock away the humanity of another.

Response : "Sweet Hour of Prayer"

Sweet hour of prayer! Sweet hour of prayer! That calls me from a world of care,

And bids me at my Father's throne make all my wants and wishes known.

In seasons of distress and grief, my soul has often found relief

And oft escaped the tempter's snare by thy return, sweet hour of prayer!

**Remind us.**

Remind us of our duty to create a just society right here, right now, in our day. Give us the vision of purpose to guard against the complacency of the comfortable - and the resolve in knowing that we cannot put off the cause of justice and freedom for another day. Remind us that the time is now. Now is the moment to create your kingdom here on earth. May it be your will. And may it be ours. Amen.

**Response:**

Hear our prayer O Lord

Hear our prayer, O Lord. Hear our prayer, O Lord;

Incline Thine ear to us, and grant us Thy peace. Amen.

**Scripture Readings**

Isaiah 40:1-5, Luke 1:14-17

**Anthem****Call to Offering** (Leader)

Do good and share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God. (Hebrew 13:16)

**Offertory Song**

"O Holy Night"

Women's Choir

**Doxology****Offertory Prayer** (Leader)**+Closing Hymn****+Closing Prayer** (Minister)**+Benediction**

(Minister): Let us go forth with eyes to see and ears to hear and voices to proclaim: In the work of justice: Christ! In the practice of mercy: Christ! In good news for the poor: Christ! In the vision of peace: Christ! *Amen! Thanks be to God!*

Response: "How Can our Song This Time be Chanted"

**How Can Our Song This Time be Chanted**  
(Mahimo ba ang Alawiton)

Music: Joel B. Tabada, 1971  
Grace R. Tabada, 1971  
Eng. Transl. Elena G. Maquiso

How can our song this time be chan-ted, liv - ing is yoked with heav - y bur - dens.  
Man - y are hun - gry, all a - round us, thirst - y as well for truth and jus - tice,  
O let our vi - sion for to - mor - row go forth be - yond the fier - y moun - tain,  
Some are not mind - ful of each o - ther, and life can be bought with mo - ney. How  
while all the rich have more the plen - ty. They wal - low in plea - sure al - ways. Their  
Up and a - bove the dark clouds hang - ing, and fac - ing the storm n bat - tle. O  
cheap it is! Can it be! O - pen wide, O God, the heav - ens, and let our  
lives are all so eas - y.  
Lord, our Lord, O our Lord.  
dreams come like the fall - ing rain. Let our hopes be ev - er bright - er, lov - ing Sa - viour, let not our  
faith for - sake nor fail us.

Let our hopes be ever brighter, loving Savior. Let not our faith forsake nor fail us.

**Postlude** (Flute)**Sources**

1. Words for Worship edited by Arlene M. Mark
2. Worship Resources 9<sup>th</sup> CCA Assembly
3. Resources and Reflections for Worship
4. Worship Together
5. Worship Elements and Symbols
6. Hymnal of Faith Journey
7. www.ucc.worship resources

Third Sunday in Advent/Human Rights Sunday

Lectionary Title 3: **Living under the Powers of Domination**

*Old Testament: Isaiah 9:2-5* (NRSV, 1989)

<sup>2</sup> The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined. <sup>3</sup> You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest as people exult when dividing plunder. <sup>4</sup> For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian. <sup>5</sup> For all the boots of the tramping warriors and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

*New Testament: Luke 2:1-3* (NRSV, 1989)

<sup>1</sup> In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. <sup>2</sup>This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. <sup>3</sup>All went to their own towns to be registered.

**General Concept: The family of Jesus lived under the dominating powers of the Roman Empire.**

*Key Concepts in the Different Age Levels in Sunday School*

N/K/YE: **Jesus' family is poor.**

ME/OE: **Jesus' family lives in a poor community.**

Y: **Jesus' family experience difficulties under the Roman Empire.**

A: **The family of Jesus lived under the dominating powers of the Roman Empire.**

*Exegesis of the Biblical References*

This prophetic message of Isaiah is another assurance that God's protective guidance and power will be present in the midst of the threat of foreign invasion of Assyria. This prophetic pronouncement also tells of the situation which happened to the Northern Kingdom as it referred to the land of Naphtali and Zebulun in verse 1 being in a state of desolation and exile. The people from the Northern Kingdom is believed to be walking in darkness especially those who were left behind in the exile of the ruling elite of the north as reflected by the prophetic voice in the Southern Kingdom yet there is hope through the son who will be named as a Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. This now reflects the chance of the remnants and even those who experienced exile from the northern kingdom to be liberated. This proclamation also shows the truth claim coming from the prophet that the southern kingdom will regain what once was lost; the united kingdom of Israel will be restored and its people will experience the liberation of all the people of Israel from both the north and the south against the oppression of the threatening foreign invaders and empire. This prophetic pronouncement is also present in the New Testament as it is again reaffirmed in the coming of the expected messiah in the person of Jesus who is born in a time of imperial domination, that of the Roman Empire.

The narrative of the Gospel tells us of the historical context where the expected liberator from the imperial power will emerge. It is the time of the Roman Empire, when Augustus was the emperor who is also referred to by many historians as Octavius, who ruled from 23 BCE to his death in 14 CE. The activity of having a census is an indication that there were people who were not in their own land or place of origin. In Luke's narrative, Joseph was presently situated in Galilee and had to go back to Bethlehem because his ancestry is

connected to David and in Bethlehem, they share the same birthplace. It was clearly a displacement due to the intervention of the imperial rule and the announced census was a royal policy imposition which reflects their subordination to the Roman Empire and this is one means of ensuring order in the perspective of the empire. This is Pax Romana or the peace seen in the Roman Empire's perspective but the displacement of Joseph to his hometown was not really the kind of peace or the kind of order that was needed by the Jewish people where Joseph belonged. The present context in the Roman Empire was just an echo of the past experience in exile and reflected in the necessary journey of Joseph from a displacement to his hometown because of a royal census. This really gives us a picture of the emerging need of the people of Judah for real freedom from colonial control and impositions. This will eventually be answered by the following narrative of the same chapter, in the birth of a Savior and Liberator from imperial control.

#### *Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users*

In Jesus' time, the shadow of the mighty Roman Empire was all-encompassing. It looms over the life and fate of every citizen and subject, including Jesus' family. The story of Jesus, from his birth in Bethlehem up to his execution outside the gates of Jerusalem, needs to be framed within the economic, social and political realities of the time for a historical understanding of his calling and ministry. The Jewish people were proud of their history. They were once a slave people who won their freedom from Egyptian slavery and carved out a new nation bound together by a new-found God named Yahweh. But for many generations they had only captivity and oppression. They had had short moments of liberation only to be ruled again and again by foreign aggressors. In Jesus' time, fresh hopes of liberation persisted.

Located at the periphery of the Roman Empire, Galilee was the specific geographical, social and political locus of Jesus' growing years. Many of the poor peasants from this area were recruited as workers for the Empire's building projects. It is likely that some of his friends and neighbors – and Joseph, Jesus' father who was known to be a carpenter – were among the labor recruits who worked under very harsh working conditions and were most of the time away from home. It was also known as a hotbed of Jewish resistance. At some points he might have flirted with the rebel cause. The fact that one of his disciples, named Simon was a Zealot indicates that he was acquainted with insurgents in the area.

The Gospel records are clear that Jesus didn't join the insurgency movement. But more importantly, the political realities around him made a deep imprint on his self-understanding as Israel's messiah. He incorporated into his ministry the economic, social and political agenda of those who resisted Rome. *He put them all under the rubric of the kingdom of God for which he was sent to proclaim.* Jesus preached about the near coming of the messianic era which would be a faithful reflection of the heavenly realm. The authorities in Rome and Jerusalem rightly regarded him as a security threat since God's kingdom comprehends all things including the political realm. But that was the understatement of all time. Jesus' idea of his calling and ministry was beyond their imagination, even by his closest associates.

---

## Nursery/Kindergarten/Younger Elementary Levels

### I. Objectives

At the end of the session and with the consistent example shown by parents and other significant adults, the children will be able to:

1. begin to describe the life of Jesus as a member of a poor family;
2. begin to compare lives of families with many challenges with that of Jesus; and
3. display using art work one's faith and trust in God with Jesus as the model who lives with many challenges .

### II. Concept: Jesus family is poor.

**Materials:** *The Holy Bible* (NRSV, 1989), song chart, enlarged picture of the house of a typical family in Nazareth during Jesus' time

### III. Learning Experiences

#### A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time: Welcome the children as they come. Follow up with the children if you encouraged them to do something during the week.
2. Please refer to the Advent liturgy.

#### B. Getting Ready

1. Teach the song "With Jesus in the Family"
2. Ask the children to share something about their homes. Expect different answers and make sure they do not feel any discrimination on houses that show poverty.

#### C. Learning Time

1. *Motivation.* Say: "In our picture story, we will find out how Jesus' family lived in their home.
2. Present the picture in the activity sheets and let the children describe them. Draw the attention of the learners to it by saying that, "According to biblical scholars, this is what you may see inside a typical house in Nazareth during the time of Jesus. Perhaps, Jesus and his family lived in a house like this one."

#### D. Deepening Activity/ Sharing Time

1. Ask the following questions:
  - a. What do you notice about this house? (Small and cramped)
  - b. What is it made of? (Wood and stone)
  - c. Where do you think Jesus slept? (Upstairs) What do you think the rolled sheets are for? (Sleeping mats) Would you like to sleep on them? (Perhaps, "No" because they look uncomfortable)
  - d. What do you think the stairs are for? (To get to the rooms upstairs) Why do you think the stairs looked hard to climb? (I might fall if I climb them.)
  - e. Where do you think Jesus' family had meals? (Room in the middle because the jars for water are there)
  - f. Why were there jars in the rooms? (They had to fetch water because the house did not have water supply.)
  - g. Do you think Jesus had a rich family or a poor family? Why did you say so? (Answers vary.)

#### Additional activity for YE

2. Say: "Jesus' family was poor. Their home had only few household necessities. But his family always trusted God for help. Like Jesus' family, our family also faces

challenges. Say these common challenges that most Filipino families face. If you think your family experiences it, jump once (or step forward):

- a. Food is not enough.
- b. Dad or mom is always away.
- c. I have no 'baon' when I go to school.
- d. Our house does not give us enough comfort.
- e. We have no money to buy clothes.
- f. There is fighting in the family.

**E. Discovering the Biblical Truth**

Ask: "What things show that Jesus' family is poor? What things show that some families are poor? What can we do to help them?"

**F. Applying the Biblical Truth**

**For N/K**

1. *Creative activity.* Distribute paper hats and tell the children that they are called TRUST hats. Provide materials such as pre-written line: "In God, we trust." pair of scissors, and paste. Explain: "The hat is a symbol that the one wearing a hat is in control. Let's paste on it the line, "In God, we trust." If there are children who are interested to make their own hats, refer to: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=OCJvzSuVT6Q](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OCJvzSuVT6Q) for instructions.

**For YE**

1. *Creative activity.* Tell the class that they will prepare a poster entitled "THUMB FAMILY Trusts God" Distribute these materials: stamp pad with ink or watercolor or food color, rag, pencil, and crayons. Instruct the class to do the following steps:
  - a. Give each child bond papers with the lines, "JUST TRUST. God provides."
  - b. Have each child press thumb on the stamp pad ink and press it again on the bond paper. Use the other finger pads to press more marks on the paper. Each mark represents a family member.
  - c. Outline each mark and make it the head of each family member.
  - d. Color the clothes.

**For N/K/YE**

2. *Talk time.* Ask: "How should our family show our trust in God just as Jesus' family trusted God?" Lead the learners to say: "Our family shows our trust in God when:
  - a. We pray together.
  - b. We say, "God is in control."
  - c. We say, "God helps us find a way."
  - d. We say, "God is bigger than all our troubles."

**G. Closing Worship**

1. Memory verse:

**NK:** "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light." (Isaiah 9:2a)

**YE:** "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness - on them light has shined." (Isaiah 9:2)

2. Offering
3. Closing song: "Joy to the World" (Hymnal of a Faith Journey # 127)
4. Closing prayer: "Father, You are bigger than anything that could trouble us. You are stronger than anything that could harm us. You are mightier than any powerful enemy. We trust you completely! Amen."

---

## Middle and Older Elementary Levels

### I. Objectives

At the end of the session, the learners are expected to:

1. describe the life of Jesus coming from the poor community;
2. compare the lives of families in poor communities with many challenges similar to that of Jesus; and
3. display one's faith and trust in God with Jesus as the model as one.

### II. Concept: Jesus' family lives in a poor community.

**Materials:** *The Holy Bible* (NRSV, 1989), song chart, pencil & paper, strips of bond paper (12"x2"), glue, cartolina

### III. Learning Experiences

#### A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time: Welcome the children as they come. Follow up with the children if you encouraged them to do something during the week. Invite a child to lead the opening prayer.
2. Please refer to the Advent Liturgy.

#### B. Getting Ready

1. Tell the class to look at the pictures of Jewish homes. Let them give their observations.
2. *Pair work.* Have the group work in dyads or pairs.
  - a. Tell each pair to choose one picture and to list down 3-5 questions that they want to ask so they would know more about how the child Jesus lived. Tell them to pay attention to the details in the pictures like the stairs, jars and the details that are not in the picture such as tables, chairs and washroom.
  - b. Have the pairs that worked on picture 1 exchange their list with a pair that worked on picture 2.
  - c. Tell the pairs to share their answers to the class.
3. Lead the group to conclude that:
  - a. Jesus lived in a home with few necessities.
  - b. The people in Jesus' neighborhood lived very much like how Jesus lived.

#### C. Learning Time

1. *Motivation.* Say: "Let's try to go back during Jesus time. This story is an attempt to infer how Jesus perhaps related to a neighbor close to Him.
2. Present the story. Tell the class to use the activity sheets.

#### Andrew, Why are you Sad?

Late one morning, as Jesus washes the dishes, he sees his friend Andrew from their window. Andrew seems sad as he sits on the doorstep of their house.

"Andrew," Jesus shouts. "Why are you sad?" he asks.

"We are hungry. Father hasn't come yet from fishing. I hope he is fine," Andrew answered.

"Is that so? Wait for a while." Jesus says.

Jesus runs towards his mother who is busily mending clothes. Jesus tells her mother about Andrew. Then, Mary asks Jesus to share their leftover bread in the cupboard and some bananas in the brown basket.

"Here! Take these," Jesus offers. "I'm sure your father will arrive soon for lunch. He will bring food for all you. Just wait and see. God is good. He will keep your father safe. Trust Him!," Jesus assures Andrew.

Andrew's face brightens. "Thank you Jesus. My mother and my siblings will be happy. Yes, We trust God. Father told me to pray every time," Andrew replies.

Then, Jesus returns home with a happy heart.

**D. Deepening Activity/ Sharing Time**

**For ME**

1. *Retelling.* Tell the class that all stories have parts such as the beginning, problem, solution, and ending. Call on four participants to retell these parts. These sentence cues may be used to prompt responses:

In the beginning, \_\_\_\_\_.

The problem was \_\_\_\_\_.

To solve this, \_\_\_\_\_.

In the end, \_\_\_\_\_.

**For OE**

2. *Making comparisons.* Write this table on a sheet of manila paper. Leave the second and third columns for the participants to complete. Identify the economic hardships experienced during Jesus' time and compare them with what we experience in our present time.

Challenges experienced	Poor communities in Jesus' times	Poor communities now
Food	(People experienced lack of food)	(There are people who experience hunger.)
Houses	(Houses were cramped. Some people lived in streets.)	(Poor people still live in slum areas where they have very little necessities.)
Health	(Sick people did not get treatment.)	(We have hospitals, but poor people cannot afford them.)

3. *Making interpretation.* Ask: How do you compare the two conditions in the table?

**E. Discovering the Biblical Truth**

Ask: "How do you think Jesus and his family feel as they lived in a poor community? How do you think poor families in our communities feel?"

**F. Applying the Biblical Truth**

1. Say: "In the story, Andrew trusted the Lord to provide for his family's immediate need. Jesus responded by sharing what his family had. At present, some people also have challenges similar to those experienced by Jesus."

2. Call on a participant to tell a story of how he or she has experienced trusting God in providing for his or her needs. Call on another participant whom God used to help someone in need.
3. Lead the class to realize that God provides for our needs. God is always with us. God uses us to help someone in need in the same way Jesus was used to help those in need.
4. Help the class to make a chain of words of trust. Say: "Trusting God whom we cannot see or hear is always challenging. However, we do know that God is always with us because God always delivers us from our difficulties. If it seems that God keeps us in challenging situations, God has a plan for us."
5. Form two groups. Give each group strips of paper on which to write other ways to say, "We trust God" such as:
  - God is in control.
  - God helps us find a way.
  - God is bigger than all our troubles.
  - Lead me, Lord!
  - God shows the way.
  - God has the perfect plan.
  - God has the most perfect timing.
6. Evaluate the chains that the class has prepared. The group that has the longest chain wins the game.

#### *G. Closing Worship*

1. Memory verse: The people who walked in darkness have seen the light; who live in a land of deep darkness - on them the light has lighted. Isaiah: 9:2
2. Reflective action: I will always trust God.
3. Offering
4. Closing song: "Sumabog ang Balita" (Hymnal of a Faith Journey # 141) and "Joy to the World" (Hymnal of a Faith Journey # 127)
5. Closing prayer: "Almighty Father, we surrender to you all that we have and all that we are. You are bigger than anything that could trouble us. You are stronger than anything that could harm us. You are mightier than any powerful enemy. We trust you completely! Amen."

---

## Youth Level

### I. Objectives

At the end of the session, the learners are expected to:

1. describe the prophecy of the coming of the light to shine on people;
2. explain the life of Jesus under the domination of the Roman Empire as a life lived in darkness;
3. become aware of the fulfillment of the coming of the light in Jesus; and
4. make resolutions on how life is lived in faith.

### II. Concept: Jesus' family experience difficulties under the Roman Empire.

**Materials:** *The Holy Bible* (NRSV, 1989), hymnal, activity sheet, tape, picture cut outs from old socio-political magazines, glue, poster paper, YouTube video, laptop/video player, candle/light bulb cut-outs

### III. Learning Experiences

#### A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time
2. Please refer to the Advent Liturgy.

#### B. Getting Ready

1. Beforehand the teacher cuts out from old magazines pictures of both positive and negative impacts of foreign influence. Group the learners into three. Let them discuss and share what they know of the experiences of Filipinos under the foreign invaders/colonizers in terms of (1) labor, (2) government, and (3) economy. Have them make a collage of what they think conditions were/are like.

*Group 1: Labor.* Think about the time the Spanish, Americans, and Japanese colonized the Philippines. What do you think were working conditions like under foreign rule?

*Group 2: Government.* Think about the time the Spanish, Americans, and Japanese colonized the Philippines. What do you think the government looked like under foreign rule? What laws/policies will be implemented? Who implements them? What is the impact on the Filipinos?

*Group 3: Rich and poor.* Think about our country's economic condition today. Who are considered poor? Who are considered rich? What do the rich have that the poor don't (materials, opportunities, etc.)?

2. After the grouping, ask the following questions:
  - a. How do these posters/collages make you feel?
  - b. Why do you think God allowed our people to survive in spite of great difficulties under three foreign invaders/colonizers?
3. Let them to share what they had discussed. Have the learners put up their posters/collages for the rest of the class to see.

#### C. Learning Time

1. Say: "Let us learn more about how did Jesus' family lived under the dominating powers of the Roman Empire. Read Isaiah 9:2 and Luke 2:1-3
2. Let the class complete the following paragraph by supplying the missing words. They can choose from the words inside the box.

Yahweh (5)	captives (6)	history (1)	nation (4)
oppression (3)	freedom (2)	foreign (7)	

The Jewish people take pride in their (1) \_\_\_\_\_. They have been slaves. But God cause them to win their (2) \_\_\_\_\_ from Egyptian (3) \_\_\_\_\_. They became a new (4) \_\_\_\_\_ bound together by a new found God named (5) \_\_\_\_\_.

But for many generations they were (6) \_\_\_\_\_. They were liberated for a few times only to be ruled again and again by (7) \_\_\_\_\_ aggressors. When Jesus came, their hope of liberation has persisted.

#### D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

1. Ask these questions.
  - a. What do you think was Jesus' family situation/condition like under Roman rule? What do you think were the labor, government, and economic conditions of the Jews under the Romans?
  - b. What does Isaiah 9:2 say about Jesus' role? What does it say about Jesus' impact on people?
2. Have the learners watch the video from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wN5SILxm55Q>. Ask: From the video we watched and the song we listened to, in what ways is our present-day land in darkness? In what ways is Jesus a "light" to this darkness?

#### E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: How can the difficulties experienced by Jesus and his family under the Roman Empire help us when we face difficulties in our lives?

#### F. Applying the Biblical Truth

Give each learner pieces of paper cut out as candles/light bulbs. Ask them to write at least two ways they, as followers of Jesus or as young people who profess faith in Jesus, can be a light to the world. Have them stick these on the posters/collages as a symbolic way of bringing light into a darkened world. Encourage learners to identify one or two things from their candles/light bulbs that the class can pursue as a Christmas outreach activity.

#### G. Closing Worship

1. Memory verse: "The people who walked in darkness have seen the light; who live in a land of deep darkness on them the light has lighted" (Isaiah: 9:2).
2. Offering
3. Closing songs: "Sumabog ang Balita" (Hymnal of a Faith Journey # 141) and "Joy to the World" (Hymnal of a Faith Journey # 127)
4. Closing prayer: *Merciful God, help us to repent with a penitent heart. This is our prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.*

## Adult Level

### I. Objectives

At the end of the session, the learners are expected to:

1. describe the prophecy of the coming of the light to shine on people;
2. explain the life of Jesus under the domination of the Roman Empire as a life lived in darkness;
3. become aware of the fulfillment of the coming of the light in Jesus; and
4. make resolutions on how life is lived in faith.

### II. Concept: The family of Jesus lived under the dominating powers of the Roman Empire.

**Materials:** *The Holy Bible* (NRSV, 1989), hymnal, activity sheets

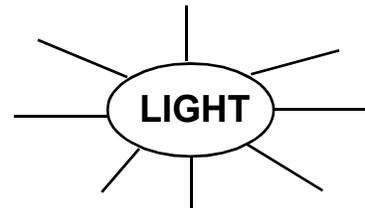
### III. Learning Experiences

#### A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time
2. Please refer to the Advent Liturgy.

#### B. Getting Ready

1. Write the word LIGHT on the board. Lead the class in making a concept web by describing what comes in mind as they read the word
2. After finishing the concept map, form dyads. Let each pair choose words from the map and let them exchange ideas about the choices they made.



#### C. Learning Time

1. Tell the class to read in unison the biblical texts.
2. Lead the class in discussing the texts.
 

Isaiah 9:2-5

  - a. Let the class relate the concept of light to the prophecy of Isaiah of the coming of a great light that will enlighten those who live in darkness.
  - b. Ask the class what this light will provide for the people.
    - 1) Increase their joy.
    - 2) Break the yoke of their burden.

Luke 2:1-3

  - a. The requirement of the law to subject the Jewish people to a census
  - b. The effect of this law on the life of the Jewish people
3. Discuss the effect on Jesus' family that lived under the dominating powers of the Roman Empire.

#### D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

*Tell the class to share their thoughts on the following:*

1. The difficulties experienced by Jesus and his family under the Roman Empire
2. The difficulties experienced by our people
3. Ways of helping us when we face difficulties in our lives

**E. Discovering the Biblical Truth**

Ask: "How did the family of Jesus live under the dominating powers of the Roman Empire? How do we face our life difficulties?"

**F. Applying the Biblical Truth**

1. Say: "The Lord gives us what we do not expect. For example, we do not want to be poor, but the Lord seems to keep us in that situation in order to teach us important lessons such as hard work and perseverance. It is also God's way to show us that He is in control of our life. We just have to TRUST IN GOD!"
2. Tell the class to make a poster. Here are lines that express one's trust in God. Tell the participants working in dyads (pairs) or triads (group of three) the need to complete each line with blank spaces. Have each group present output in a poster form.
  - a. I asked for **strength**... And God gave me **difficulties** to make me strong.
  - b. I asked for **wisdom**... And God gave me \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - c. I asked for **prosperity**... And God gave me \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - d. I asked for **courage**... And God gave me \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - e. I asked for **love**... And God gave me \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - f. I asked for **favours**... And God gave me \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.
  - g. I received **nothing** I wanted... I received **everything** I needed.
3. Encourage the class to make resolutions on how they can live in faith by choosing any one of the sentences previously given.

**G. Closing Worship**

1. Offering
2. Closing song: "Sumabog ang Balita" (Hymnal of a Faith Journey # 141) and "Joy to the World" (Hymnal of a Faith Journey # 127)
3. Closing prayer: *Merciful God, help us to repent with a penitent heart. This is our prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.*