

Second Sunday in Lent

Lectionary Title 13: **Jesus as the Suffering Messiah**

Old Testament: Isaiah 53:1-12 (NRSV, 1989)

¹Who has believed what we have heard? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? ²For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. ³He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering^z and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces^z he was despised, and we held him of no account. ⁴Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. ⁵But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. ⁶All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. ⁷He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. ⁸By a perversion of justice he was taken away. Who could have imagined his future? For he was cut off from the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people. ⁹They made his grave with the wicked and his tomb^z with the rich,^z although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. ¹⁰Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him with pain.^z When you make his life an offering for sin,^z he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days; through him the will of the LORD shall prosper. ¹¹Out of his anguish he shall see light;^z he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge. The righteous one,^z my servant, shall make many righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities. ¹²Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out himself to death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

New Testament: Matthew 16:21-23 (NRSV, 1989)

Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

²¹From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. ²²And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, 'God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.' ²³But he turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling-block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'

General Concept: Jesus embraced his destiny as a suffering Messiah.

Key Concepts in the Different Age Levels in Sunday School

N/K/YE: **Jesus is our helper.**

ME/OE: **Jesus, as a savior, is willing to experience difficulties.**

Y: **Jesus readily faced suffering as part of his being the Messiah.**

A: **Jesus embraced his destiny as a suffering Messiah.**

Exegesis of the Biblical References

Isaiah 53 is one of the four “Servant Songs” in which the prophet describes how God will redeem Israel through the suffering servant. It portrays the arrival of a kind of messiah who will challenge the existing powers that dominate, oppress and humiliate the Israelite people. Here, the suffering messiah though not identified by the writer is suffering and afflicted. But he will become God’s instrument to exalt and restore Israel’s glory. However, he will be the kind of messiah that confronts rejection and endure torment for a greater cause in a manner contrary to the usual ways of the world which is to conquer and impose change through military and political power and authority. The messiah however will carry on with his mission through silence and nonviolence, and even in his acceptance of suffering and death. This is the new image of messiah that will now define the mission and ministry of Jesus as the messiah sent by God.

After being affirmed by Peter as the Christ, Jesus now prepares for the next phase of his destiny, his eventual death. Here, Jesus not only anticipates his suffering in the hands of the worldly power, but also prepares his disciples by explaining and describing to them what will happen to him in the days to come. Peter’s reaction to Jesus’ attitude of embracing his forthcoming suffering symbolizes the typical reaction of the world, a reaction contrary to how God works. Jesus’ rebuking Peter suggests opposition and defiance of God’s unique redemptive plan through Jesus and his own adherence to the usual ways of the world. Jesus reveals the human’s incapability to understand this new mystery in God’s ways.

Jesus continued his ministry after he predicted his death and suffering proclaiming a sort of reversal theology which suggests opposition to the norms of the world. Jesus now use opposing illustrations in his teachings that signify contradictions in meaning with disorienting implications for one party but empowerment for the other such as the last becoming the first, adults becoming a child, and the rich not inheriting the kingdom but the poor among other examples.

The suffering servant described by Isaiah who underwent many forms of misery to bring redemption and restoration to the people in a way reflected how Jesus understood his destiny. Both the suffering servant in Isaiah and Jesus embraced their destinies as suffering messiahs prepared to undertake all the gruesome challenges for the good of the people. In addition, both intend to create a conflict highlighting the differences between the worldly ways and that of God’s ways. Furthermore, Jesus shares similar view with the suffering servant who disregard the option of conquering adversaries by force to fulfill his mission. Rather Jesus mirrored the suffering servant’s full reliance on God’s power despite the great physical, emotional and spiritual demands involved in the process of liberating the people. Jesus took upon himself the identity of a suffering messiah as his act of total obedience to God’s will and full dependence on God’s righteousness.

Early Christians point to Jesus as the fulfillment of the prophecy because of the manner he gave his life for the people. Though this has been debated, we cannot deny that Jesus reflects the description of Isaiah’s suffering servant. Moreover, whether Jesus is the expected messiah long waited by the Jews to restore their nation and redeem them from the Roman rule or not, Jesus has successfully overcome the ways of the world and proved that God’s ways is the ideal way even how seemingly contradictory, absurd and difficult it may appear to be.

Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users

In his time, the traditional image of God's anointed, that is, messiah is that of a conquering hero like King David. It was this kind of messiah that the disciples expected Jesus to be. But Jesus was not a populist political leader whose aim was to please the crowd in order to keep their loyalty. As they drew closer to Jerusalem he intimated to the disciples that he was going to suffer in the hands of wicked men, but even his most trusted disciple, Peter, didn't get it and rebuked him. At that point, the notion of a suffering messiah has not appeared on their horizon.

Jesus didn't invent the idea of a suffering messiah. He was acquainted with what may be considered a marginal concept of a suffering servant of Yahweh in the hind portion of the Book of Isaiah which scholars today refer to as Deutero- or II Isaiah. Here, it's not by fiat of conquest but by virtue of the affliction suffered by the Lord's servant that Israel may obtain redemption. Jesus rejected the dominant or mainstream view of a conquering messiah as he saw himself fulfilling the role of a sacrificial lamb being dramatically played out by an obscure and mysterious messiah.

In his mind, Jesus realized that his journey to Jerusalem was not an entrance of a king seeking to reclaim his crown but an act of total defiance and provocation to the powers of the authorities. In this, he wished to bring about the ultimate confrontation between the powers of Rome and Jerusalem and the righteousness of God. Either the authorities would respond by crucifying him or God would bring down the heavenly forces to scatter his enemies and right then and there establish God's reign throughout the world. He offered his life to set up the final crisis between heaven and earth. He was hoping for God's vindication but he also expected Rome to claim his body. From hindsight, the church believed that Jesus got both – God's vindication and Rome's pound of flesh. For Rome it was just a routine cleaning up of a minor commotion. But God elevated that piece of human history into the realm of the eternal.

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. tell that Jesus is willing to help us;
2. list the things that show that Jesus helps us; and
3. demonstrate one's thankfulness for the things Jesus helps us to do.

II. Concept: Jesus is our helper.

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV, 1989), offering plate, wooden cross or picture of a cross, coloring sheet (cross), crayon, water colored pen

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time: Greet the learners with your welcoming smile and your big warm hug.
2. Ask the children to sing these songs.
 - a. "Jesus Loves Me" (Words and Music by Rev. Goel B. Bagundol)
 - b. "Jesus Helps" (Words and Music by gbb)

Jesus helps the little children. He cares for those who are sad
He heals the sick and broken hearted. Jesus heals all those in need.
I must help as Jesus helped me, care for those who are sad.
Helping others gain their strength, loving each who needs my care.
We must help for we love Jesus, give to those who have none.
Loving others as God loves us, let us all together help.
3. Opening prayer: "Our God who loves us so, we thank you for this beautiful day You have given unto us. We ask you to be with us as we learn more about being a good child of yours, loyal and obedient to follow your will. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen."

B. Getting Ready

Tell the class to recall situations when their parents inform them that they are going away and they will be left at home. Let them share their reactions. Process the answers of the pupils and help them to accept what their parents tell them.

C. Learning Time

Tell the story.

Jesus Tells about His Mission

(Based on Matthew 16:21-13)

Jesus continues to do about doing good. His disciples go with him. Jesus heals the sick. He makes the blind see. He feeds hungry people. He blesses children everywhere.

One day, Jesus calls his disciples. He says, "I need to go to Jerusalem. I will do what my Father wants me to do. I will face the people who want to kill me. I will die but on the third day, I will raise from the dead."

The disciples do not want Jesus to go there. They feel unhappy. He is their Master.

Peter says, "Lord, please do not go there. This should not happen to you!"
Jesus answers, "Peter, do not keep me from obeying the will of my Father. I have to fulfill my mission to help all of you. Your mind is filled with things of men and not with things of God."

D. Deepening Activity/ Sharing Time

Discuss the story. Ask these questions.

1. What did Jesus do to the people? (He went about doing good.) Do you agree with what Jesus did to the people? (Yes)
2. Who went with Jesus when he did good to the people? (His disciples)
3. Where does Jesus want to go? (To Jerusalem to face his death and resurrection) Why? (It is his mission.)
4. Why did the disciples become unhappy about the plan of Jesus? (They do not want Jesus, their Master, to die.)
5. What did Peter say to convince Jesus not to go to Jerusalem? (Do not go to Jerusalem.)
6. Did Jesus like what Peter said? (No) What did he say to Peter? (Peter should think of things of God and not with things of men.)
7. Which of these words describe Jesus? (Ask why all these adjectives describe Jesus.)
 - a. brave
 - b. obedient
 - c. helpful
 - d. loving

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: "How can Jesus help us?"

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Teach the biblical verse found in Matthew 16:23b: "... for you (Peter) are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."
2. Encourage the class to talk about how they can help their friends and classmates because Jesus helped us first.
3. *Creative work.* Tell the class to decorate the artwork. Before that, let them read the sentence, "Jesus is our helper. I thank him."

G. Closing Worship

1. Ask the class to recite the memory verse.
2. Offering
3. Closing song: "My Lord Knows the Way"
My Lord knows the way through the wilderness, all I have to do is follow (twice).
Strength for today, is mine all the way
And all that I need for tomorrow.
My Lord knows the way through the wilderness, all I have to do is follow.
4. Closing prayer: "Thank you, God for giving us Jesus. You ask him to come and live with us to be our helper. May we always be obedient to you and willing to help others as Jesus is willing to help us. This we pray in Jesus' Name. Amen."
5. Let the children sing a goodbye song "Our Sunday School Is Over" by gbb

Middle and Older Elementary Levels

I. Objectives

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

1. enumerate the different things that Isaiah foretells the Messiah will suffer;
2. describe how Jesus foretells his suffering;
3. realize that suffering is part of our desire to follow Christ; and
4. resolve that in suffering with Christ, life becomes victorious.

II. Concept: Jesus, as a savior, is willing to experience difficulties.

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV, 1989), old magazines, pairs of scissors, paste, coloring sheet: cross, crayons or water colors, glue, pen

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time: Greet the learners with your welcoming smile and your big warm hug. Make a distinct hand-shake for your learners. Eg. Fist-bump
2. Opening prayer: Body Prayer
Be in your comfortable position and just close your eyes. Be aware of God's presence who is with us and for us. Breathe in God's love, joy and peace. Let this breath fills every cell and fiber of your being. Breathe out God's shalom that people and other creatures seen or unseen around you will experience such love, joy and peace. Place your palms down in front of you or on your lap, symbolizing your desire to release whatever you need to tiredness, boredom, worries and problems—hold in that position for 60 seconds. Turn your palms upward, symbolizing your desire to receive from God whatever you need. Pause in that position for 60 seconds. Bring your hands together in a folded prayer position. Be still. Be in the position for 60 seconds. Let all God's children say, "Amen." (Amen.)
3. Opening songs: "Jesus Loves Me" by gbb and "Jesus Helps" by gbb

B. Getting Ready

Tell the class to make a big circle. Hold up the cross. Ask: "Do any of you know what this is?" (A cross or a wooden cross) Pass the cross around and encourage them to feel the wood) Share: "During the time of Jesus, criminals were killed on crosses. The cross is a very horrible way to be punished. Criminals would be forced to carry their cross to the place the place where they would be hung. Everyone who saw them knew they had done something wrong. This would be very shameful for the criminals."

C. Learning Time

Tell the class to read the verses found in Matthew 16:21-23. Then let them say if the sentence below each verse is a correct paraphrasing of the verse. Let them explain their answers.

Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

²¹ From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.

Jesus tells his disciples that he will go to Jerusalem to do his mission. He will suffer from the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes. They will kill him by hanging on the cross. But on the third day, he will be aised from the dead.

²²And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, 'God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you.'

Peter tells him not to go. He does not want him to suffer and die.

²³But he turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling-block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.'

Jesus gets angry with Peter. He said that Peter prevents him in fulfilling his mission of God's plan of salvation. Peter thinks only of the things of men and not of the things of God. Jesus knew that the only way to fulfill his mission is by the way of the cross.

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

Discuss the lesson. Ask these questions.

1. What did Jesus tell his disciples? (He tells them that he will suffer, die, and rise from the dead.)
2. Where is Jesus going? (He is going to Jerusalem.)
3. What does Jesus need to undergo? (He must undergo great suffering.)
4. Why do you think Jesus did it? (Jesus did it to save us.)
5. Why is it important for Jesus to tell his disciples? (He wanted them to know ahead what will happen and to know God's plan of Salvation.)
6. What is a suffering Messiah as defined by Isaiah? Read Isaiah 53:3-7.

³ He was despised and rejected by others; a man of suffering² and acquainted with infirmity; and as one from whom others hide their faces² he was despised, and we held him of no account. ⁴ Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. ⁵ But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed. ⁶ All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way, and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. ⁷ He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth."

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Say: "Jesus was obedient to his Father, willing to suffer and even to the point of death. Ask: "What can we do to show our gratitude to Christ for his sufferings to save us?"

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Discuss the memory verse: "... for you (Peter) are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things." (Matthew 16:23b)

2. Teach the following song. After singing the song, ask the class the different ways by which they can serve others.

“Make Me a Servant”

Written by Kelly Willard

Performed by The Maranatha_Singers

http://lyrics.wikia.com/wiki/The_Maranatha!_Singers

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(ASCAP) (admin. by Music Services).

Make me a servant
Humble and meek
Lord let me lift up
Those who are weak
And may the prayer
Of my heart always be
Make me a servant
Make me a servant
Make me a servant today

3. Faith in Action. *Facebook Profile Picture*. Post pictures that the advocacies of the Church for information to other churches.

G. Closing Worship

1. Tell the class to recite the memory verse.
2. Offering
3. Closing song: “Make Me a Servant”
4. Closing prayer: “O God, you called us to follow Christ Jesus. God, grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, the courage to change the things we can, and the wisdom to know the difference. (Adapted from the Prayer of Reinhold Niebuhr)
5. *Goodbye song*: “Our Sunday School Is Over” by gbb

Youth Level

I. Objectives

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

1. define the meaning of suffering through a concept map;
2. enumerate the different things that Isaiah foretells the Messiah will suffer;
3. compare what Jesus describes about his death and resurrection with the prophecy of Isaiah;
4. realize that being the Messiah, Jesus is ready to face suffering; and
5. demonstrate willingness to suffer for Christ's sake.

II. Concept: Jesus readily faced suffering as part of his being the Messiah.

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV, 1989), hymnal, activity sheet, wooden cross or picture of a cross, coloring sheet: cross, crayons or water colors, glue, pen, pre-prepared concept map found in the activity sheet, cut-out emoticons

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

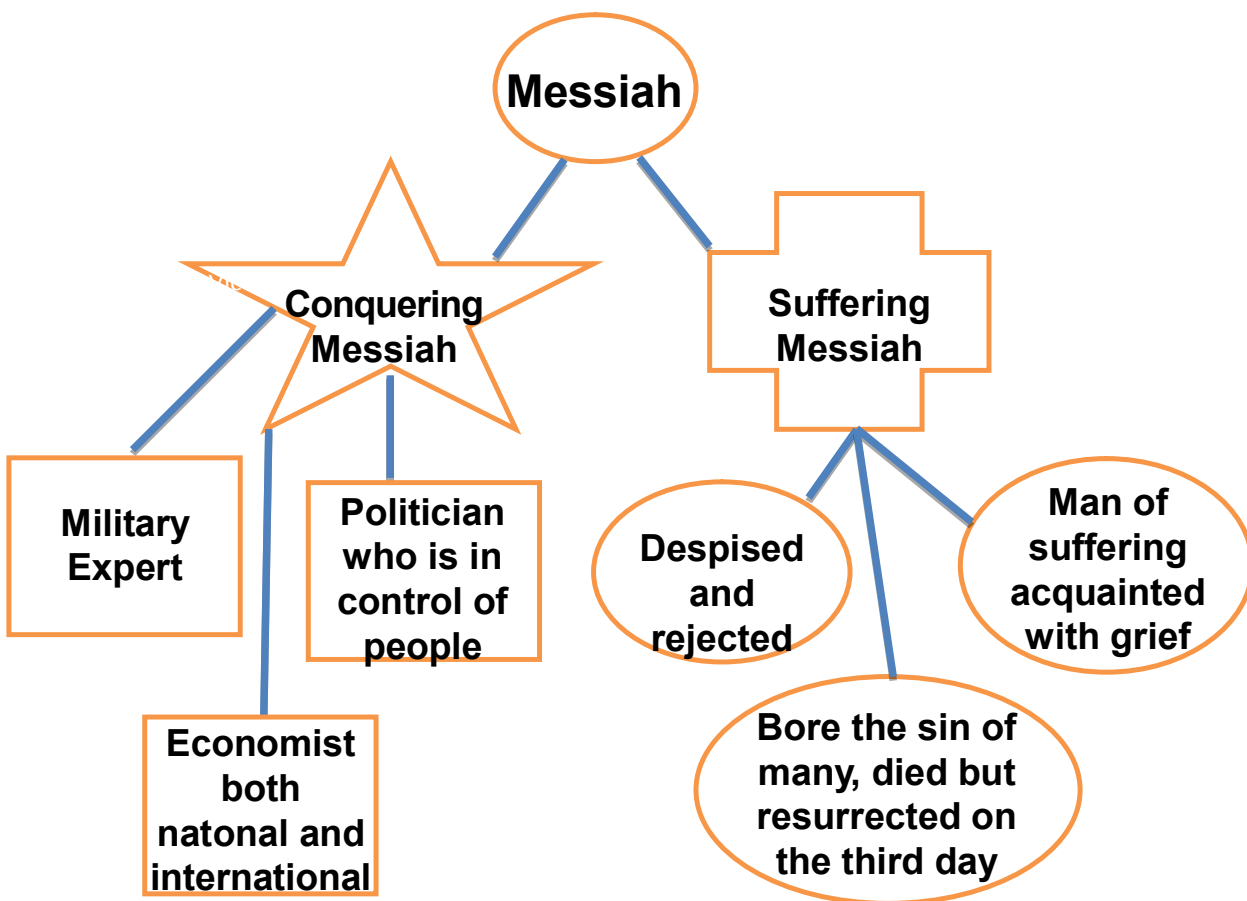
1. Welcome time: Greet the learners with your welcoming smile and your big warm hug. Make a distinct hand-shake for your learners. Eg. Fist-bump. Take time to converse with at least 2 students about their whereabouts and engagements this week.
2. Opening prayer: Body Prayer
Be in your comfortable position and just close your eyes. Be aware of God's presence who is with us and for us. Breathe in God's love, joy and peace. Let this breath fill every cell and fiber of your being. Breathe out God's shalom that people and other creatures seen or unseen around you will experience such love, joy and peace. Place your palms down in front of you or on your lap, symbolizing your desire to release whatever you need to tiredness, boredom, worries and problems, hold in that position for 60 seconds. Turn your palms upward, symbolizing your desire to receive from God whatever you need. Pause in that position for 60 seconds. Bring your hands together in a folded prayer position. Be still. Be in the position for 60 seconds. Let all God's children say, "Amen." (Amen.)
3. Opening song: "Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed" (Hymn of a Faith Journey # 149)

B. Getting Ready

Tell the class to compare and differentiate suffering and sacrifice. Record their answers and set them aside.

C. Learning Time

1. Tell the class to read the biblical texts found in Isaiah 53:1-12 and Matthew 16:21-23.
2. Ask the class to complete the concept map in the workbook. Let the class to look for the verses that explain each part of the map in relation with the verses in Isaiah 53:1-12 and Matthew 16:21-23. Use the following concept map (with suggested answers) as the answer key. Draw other answers from the class that are found in the OT and NT verses.



D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

1. How will you describe the Suffering Messiah referred to in Matthew 16:21-23 and Isaiah 53:1-12. Read the verses aloud.
2. Thinking about the kind of suffering the Messiah will go through as written in Matthew 16:21-23 and Isaiah 53:1-12, what emotions do you feel and what makes you feel this way? Have the learners get one of the emoticon cut outs and hold it up as they answer this question.
3. Why do you think the Messiah had to go through this kind of suffering? Form three groups and brainstorm the question. Then have the learners discuss their thoughts in the big group.
4. Why do you think Jesus told his disciples about his incoming suffering? Why do you think Jesus considered the way of the cross as the only way to fulfill his calling?
5. Is there still a need for the Messiah to suffer today? (As we are still awaiting the redemption of the whole of creation, we must accept the truth that there will still be suffering in our world today. But this doesn't mean that we are not able to do anything to bring transformation to our fallen world.)
6. Who are called to transform creation? (We are. The Church as stewards of God's whole creation is called to work towards transformation. The process of transformation is a slow and most of the time painful process. God challenges His people to be agents of transformation and be willing to suffer to say change happen.)

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: "How did Jesus face his suffering as part of his being the Messiah? How can we face our challenges today?"

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Teach the memory verse: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way. But the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 53:6)
2. Go back to the responses of the class related to the meaning of suffering and sacrifice and relate these answers with the Suffering Messiah.
3. Craft: Let the class design a paper or wooden cross. (Pre-assign materials needed for this activity.)
4. Faith in Action
 - a. Facebook Profile Picture: Post Picture that support the mission of the Church in your FB Account as Your Picture Profile. Eg. Stop Lumad killing, Stop Extra-judicial Killing, and others
 - b. Posting to one's Twitter, Instagram or Facebook account a statement from our UCCP Statements and Resolutions that needed to be known to our church and web wide community. Eg. A Statement of Concern on the Worsening State of our Natural Resources and its Effect on the Lives of the Filipino People. First Youth Congress Ellinwood Christian Youth Fellowship 27-30 December 1989. Pg. 185-186 of UCCP Statements and Resolutions (1948-1990)
 - c. As member organization of the Alliance for Christian Development Agencies (ACDA), pick a member organization with a focus on development work in Lumad and Muslim communities.

G. Closing Worship

1. Reflective action: Tell the class to complete the sentences:
 - a. "I will follow Jesus even it takes _____."
 - b. "I will be loyal and faithful to God by _____."
 - c. "I commit to raising _____ amount to contribute to the whole class' goal in order to help _____ (organization) in transforming God's creation."
 - d. " I will demonstrate my willingness to suffer for the sake of God's creation by giving up _____ in order to save enough money for our class' financial support to the _____ *organization)." (Each will offer their cross-art after saying these sentences.)
2. Offering: Put a basket offering at the center and instruct the learners to bring their offering, their commitments, and their art work-cross.
3. Closing songs: :Make Me a Servant" and "Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed" (Hymn of a Faith Journey # 149)
4. Closing prayer: God, grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, the courage to change the things we can, and the wisdom to know the difference. (Adapted from the Prayer of Reinhold Niebuhr)
5. Goodbye song: : "Our Sunday School Is Over" by gbb

Adult Level

I. Objectives

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

1. enumerate the different things that Isaiah foretells the Messiah will suffer;
2. compare what Jesus describes about his death and resurrection with the prophecy of Isaiah;
3. realize that being the Messiah, Jesus is ready to face suffering; and
4. share one's experiences involving suffering for Christ's sake.

II. Concept: Jesus embraced his destiny as a suffering Messiah.

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

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time: Greet the learners with your welcoming smile and a warm hug. Make a distinct hand-shake for your learners.
2. Opening prayer: Body Prayer
Be in your comfortable position and just close your eyes. Be aware of God's presence who is with us and for us. Breathe in God's love, joy and peace. Let this breath fill every cell and fiber of your being. Breathe out God's shalom that people and other creatures seen or unseen around you will experience such love, joy and peace. Place your palms down in front of you or on your lap, symbolizing your desire to release whatever you need to tiredness, boredom, worries and problems, hold in that position for 60 seconds. Turn your palms upward, symbolizing your desire to receive from God whatever you need. Pause in that position for 60 seconds. Bring your hands together in a folded prayer position. Be still. Be in the position for 60 seconds. Let all God's children say, "Amen." (Amen.)
3. Opening song: "Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed" (Hymn of a Faith Journey # 149)

B. Getting Ready

Teach the song "Won't You Let Me Be Your Servant?" (HFJ 286) and discuss the highlights.

Won't you let me be your servant, let me be as Christ to you?

Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant, too.

We are pilgrims on a journey, we are travelers on the road;

We are here to help each other go the mile and bear the load.

I will hold the Christ-light for you in the shadow of your fear;

I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long hear.

I will weep when you are weeping, when you laugh, I'll laugh with you

I will share your joy and sorrow 'til we've seen this journey through.

When we sing to God in heaven we shall find such harmony,

Born of all we've known together of Christ's love and agony.

Won't you let me be your servant, let me be as Christ to you?

Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant, too.

C. Learning Time

1. Tell the class to read the biblical texts and the explanation under each.
 - a. (Excerpt from the Exegesis) *Isaiah 53:1-12*. Isaiah 53 is one of the four “Servant Songs” in which the prophet describes how God will redeem Israel through the suffering servant. It portrays the arrival of a kind of messiah who will challenge the existing powers that dominate, oppress and humiliate the Israelite people. Here, the suffering messiah though not identified by the writer is suffering and afflicted. But he will become God’s instrument to exalt and restore Israel’s glory. However, he will be the kind of messiah that confronts rejection and endure torment for a greater cause in a manner contrary to the usual ways of the world which is to conquer and impose change through military and political power and authority. The messiah however will carry on with his mission through silence and nonviolence, and even in his acceptance of suffering and death. This is the new image of messiah that will now define the mission and ministry of Jesus as the messiah sent by God.
 - b. (Excerpt from the Companion Guide) Matthew 16:21-23. Jesus tells his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priest and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day will be raised. Peter rebuked Jesus for he did not know understand why Jesus must do this. But Jesus corrected Peter for his mind setting was not on divine things but on human things.

In his time, the traditional image of God's anointed, that is, messiah is that of a conquering hero like King David. It was this kind of messiah that the disciples expected Jesus to be. But Jesus was not a populist political leader whose aim was to please the crowd in order to keep their loyalty.

Jesus didn't invent the idea of a suffering messiah. He was acquainted with what may be considered a marginal concept of a suffering servant of Yahweh in the hind portion of the Book of Isaiah which scholars today refer to as Deutero- or II Isaiah. Here, it's not by fiat of conquest but by virtue of the affliction suffered by the Lord's servant that Israel may obtain redemption. Jesus rejected the dominant or mainstream view of a conquering messiah as he saw himself fulfilling the role of a sacrificial lamb being dramatically played out by an obscure and mysterious messiah.

2. Tell the class to enumerate the different things that the Messiah will suffer as foretold by Isaiah.
3. Let the class compare what Jesus describes about his death and resurrection in Matthew 16:21-23 with the prophecy of Isaiah. Tell the class to read the verses in the OT text and underline the verses in the NT text to describe the suffering Messiah.

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

Ask these questions.

1. How will you compare the suffering Messiah referred to in Matthew 16:21-23 and suffering Messiah foretold by Isaiah?
2. Why do you think Jesus told his disciples about his incoming suffering?
3. When was the time the disciples finally understood about Jesus' Messiahship?

4. When Peter prevented Jesus from fulfilling his mission of God's plan of salvation, was Jesus right in saying that Peter thinks only of the things of men and not of the things of God? Explain your answer.
5. Why do you think Jesus considered the way of the cross as the only way to fulfill his mission?

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: How did Jesus embrace his destiny as a suffering Messiah? How do we embrace our calling in fulfilling God's purpose for us?

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Discuss the memory verse: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have all turned to our own way. But the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 56:6)
2. Ask the class to list down ways by which they can fulfill their calling (the way of their cross). They can refer to the UCCP Statements and Resolutions (1948-1990) found in the UCCP website.
3. As member organization of the Alliance for Christian Development Agencies (ACDA), pick a member organization with a focus on development work in Lumad and Muslim communities.

G. Closing Worship

1. Reflective action: I will follow Jesus even it takes _____. I will be loyal and faithful to God by _____.
2. Offering
3. Closing songs: "Alas! And Did My Savior Bleed" (Hymn of a Faith Journey # 149) and "Won't You Let Me Be Your Servant?" (HFJ 286)
4. Closing prayer: "God, grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, the courage to change the things we can, and the wisdom to know the difference."
(Adapted from the Prayer of Reinhold Niebuhr)