

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost/Father's Day

The Transforming Presence of the Holy Spirit

Old Testament: Isaiah 65:17-25 (NRSV, 1989)

The Glorious New Creation

¹⁷ For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. ¹⁸ But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating; for I am about to create Jerusalem as a joy, and its people as a delight. ¹⁹ I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and delight in my people; no more shall the sound of weeping be heard in it, or the cry of distress. ²⁰ No more shall there be in it an infant that lives but a few days, or an old person who does not live out a lifetime; for one who dies at a hundred years will be considered a youth, and one who falls short of a hundred will be considered accursed. ²¹ They shall build houses and inhabit them; they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit. ²² They shall not build and another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat; for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. ²³ They shall not labour in vain, or bear children for calamity; for they shall be offspring blessed by the LORD—and their descendants as well. ²⁴ Before they call I will answer, while they are yet speaking I will hear. ²⁵ The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox; but the serpent—its food shall be dust! They shall not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain, says the LORD.

New Testament: Revelation 21:5 (NRSV, 1989)

⁵ And the one who was seated on the throne said, 'See, I am making all things new.' Also he said, 'Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.'

General Concept: Jesus grew up being nurtured in the teachings of the faith.

Key Concepts in the Different Age Levels in Sunday School

N/K/YE: **The Holy Spirit gives us new life.**

ME/OE: **The Holy Spirit gives us new life as we learn more about Jesus.**

Y: **The transforming power of the Spirit enables us to experience new life in Jesus.**

A: **The transforming power of the Spirit enables us to experience new life in Jesus.**

Exegesis of the Biblical References

The text tells of what it is like to have the presence of the Lord in a society, especially in the lives of the once captive people of Judah. This section of Isaiah tells of their context after being released from Babylonian captivity. This prophetic statement hopes for a new scene that will not be the same as what happened in the past. The people of Judah experienced captivity and they have experienced the opposite of the scenarios mentioned in verses 20 to 23 such as building houses not for them but for the foreigners and the privileged class, working so hard in the vineyards in order to meet the taxation requirements of the kingdom and at the same time, as a tribute to more powerful empires who had dominated and exploited the people of Judah. They have also experienced some premature deaths of their young people which could be caused by hunger and poverty. The physical rebuilding of Jerusalem is one step towards the realization of a new and transformed society. Verse 24 is an indication that they still adhere to the belief that their captivity and

their fall as a nation was God's silence and punishment because of their disobedience. This new opportunity for the people of Judah is a positive indication of building a completely and radically new society. This is illustrated in the harmonious living together between the lamb and the wolf, the cow and the lion, and the serpent to eat just dust in verse 25. This is where the old antagonisms between peoples, between the powerful conquerors and the powerless of the land, the rich of society and the poor. Between what used to be the predator and the helpless prey will be erased and will be replaced by genuine reconciliation and harmony. The prophetic vision for a truly transformed society with transformed relationships is itself an affirmation of the unwavering and unshakeable faith of the people as they confess the conviction that despite what they are going through at the present, their God continues to act in their history towards the very goal of the creator and redeemer of Israel and of the whole creation.

Revelation 21 is a vision of a Christian disciple in a time of great persecution. It articulates the conviction of how the sufferings caused by persecution will end and how Jesus Christ will end the reign of terror especially for the persecuted Christians caused by the imperial rule of the Roman emperor Domitian between the late 1st century and early 2nd Century CE. The edict against Christians has become the inspiration in writing the visions of a new heaven and new earth and their hopes for the end of much suffering caused by the oppressive acts and policies of the Roman empire. Thus, the book does not end in misery and hopelessness. Rather it gives a new insight on this new heaven and new earth as it is willed by Jesus Christ himself who had already declared that he will always be with those who keep the faith even in the face of trial and suffering.

Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users

In the end, God will realize the prophetic vision of a new creation wherein every creature would abide by God's rule. Christ founded the church to be a herald and preview of the new that is to come. However, the church exists in history where the Devil is holding sway to foil the victory of God's kingdom. The church is weighed down by its own participation in the sinfulness of the world. But at the same time, it shares in the power of the Spirit to overcome sin. Consequently, even though the church is constantly being hindered from completely enjoying Christ's victory over the Devil it continues to advance the cause of the kingdom and in the process achieves newness of life towards perfection. The newness that the church has received from the Spirit is not a state of perfection but a continuous process of cooperation between the transforming power of the Spirit and the church's participation in kingdom-building.

The church gains newness of life not just for its own sake but for the sake of the world. It represents the new life in the world-a first fruit of the new creation-and also serves as the Spirit's agent for the transformation of the world. The church accomplishes this task by demonstrating a way of life which is in opposition to the way the world lives. Jesus used the analogy of salt and light to illustrate the church's mission to subvert the world in order to overcome it. The parables are reminders to the church not to lose sight of its mission by accommodating itself to the world. The parable of the mustard seed gives a glimpse of the future in which the world will be transformed into the kingdom of God.

Nursery/Kindergarten/Younger Elementary Levels

I. Objectives

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

1. tell about God's new world as described in the biblical text;
2. express the hope that God will make everything new; and
3. promise to make this world a better place through their actions through the help of the Holy Spirit.

II. **Concept:** The Holy Spirit gives us new life.

Materials: The Holy Bible (preferably NRSV), offering plate or basket, flowers for the worship center, (see additional materials for each age level below)

III. Learning Experiences

A. *Opening Worship*

1. Welcome time: Warmly greet each child as they arrive. Ask them how their day is going and attentively listen to their answers.
2. Opening prayer: Dear God, thank you for today. Thank you for Sunday School where we can learn together about you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.
3. Sing familiar joyful songs and teach this action song (you may improvise the action):

“Shake a Friend's Hand”

Shake a friend's hand, shake a hand next to you
Shake a friend's hand and sing la-la!
Shake a friend's hand, shake a hand next to you
Shake a friend's hand and sing, sing a song.

La-la la-la, la-la la-leluia
La-la la-la, la-leluia
La-la la-la, la-la la-leluia
La-la la-la, la-leluia!

B. *Getting Ready*

As a way to review last Sunday's lesson, ask the children what they have done in the past week that were helpful and showed kindness. Have them share their experiences.

C. *Learning Time*

1. Prepare the class to listen to the story by teaching this song.

“God is Going to Make Things New”

(Tune: London Bridge Is Falling Down)

God is going to make things new, everything will be made new;
And wherever I may go, I'll see God's glory.
Everyone will be happy and good, healthy and safe, well-fed and blessed;
I'll see beauty everywhere; Praise the Creator!

2. Tell the story.

God's New World

(Based on Isaiah 65:17-25 and Revelation 21:5)

God is going to make this world new. Everything is going to be new. Everyone will be happy and everyone will be good. God will be very happy because everyone is good. There will be no more crying. All babies will be healthy and old people will live a long life. Everyone will have houses and enough to eat. People will have work and they will enjoy their work. God will bless them and their children.

Even the animals will eat together: the wolf and the lamb together, the lion and the cow together.

No one will be hurt or destroyed in God's new world.

We have hope for surely this is what God will do.

Would you like to live in this new world? Then let us help God make it. Through the help of the Holy Spirit we can do it.

D. Deepening Activity/ Sharing Time

Ask these questions.

1. How can we help God make this world new? What can we do to help God through the Holy Spirit? (Expect different answers like "I will be good", "I will not quarrel with my friends", etc.)
2. In the story, is everyone happy? (Yes.) What will everyone do? (Everyone will be good.)
3. Will God be happy? (Yes.) Why? (Because everyone will be good.)
4. Will there be crying? (No, there will be no more crying.)
5. What will happen to the babies? (They will be healthy.) What will happen to the old people? (They will live a long life.)
6. Will everyone have houses? (Yes.) Will everyone have enough to eat? (Yes.)
7. What about people's work? (People will have work and they will enjoy their work.)
8. What will God do to the people? (God will bless them.) Will God bless the children too? (Yes.)
9. What animals will eat together? (The wolf and the lamb will eat together. The lion and the cow will eat together.)
10. Will there be hurt, will things be destroyed in God's new world? (No.)

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: Why do we have hope? (We have hope for surely this is what God will do.)

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Lead the children to memorize the verse in Revelation 21: 5b: "See, I am making all things new."

2. Crafts/Artwork/Other creative activities:

Kindergarten

Materials: 1 whole sheet of Manila paper with the words "God's New World" written at the top; glue or paste; colored paper cut-outs of people young and old (including babies), houses, trees, fruits, animals, particularly wolves, lambs, lions, cows (other animals may be included)

Have the children collectively design a mural of "God's New World" by pasting onto Manila paper different cut-outs as depicted in the story. Hang the mural in a conspicuous place in the classroom for all to see.

Younger Elementary

Materials: 1 whole sheet of Manila paper; glue or paste; colored paper; colored pencils, crayons and/or colored markers; enough pairs of scissors for the class

Have the children collectively design a mural of "God's New World" by making cut-outs of people young and old (including babies), houses, trees, fruits, animals, particularly wolves, lambs, lions, cows (other animals may be included), and by pasting these onto Manila paper. Have them draw details like the background and facial expressions on the people as depicted in the story. Have them write the words "God's New World" at the top of the mural. Hang the mural in a conspicuous place in the classroom for all to see.

G. *Closing Worship*

1. Have the class to recite together the memory verse: "See, I am making all things new."
2. Sing the song, "God is Going to Make Things New"
3. Offertory: Have the children tell God and each other what they will do, through the help of the Holy Spirit, to make this world a better place. Then have them give their offering.
4. Closing prayer: Lead the children in a prayer together. "Dear God, help us to do what we promised to do to make this world a better place. We want your new world to happen now. Thank you. This we pray in Jesus Christ's name. Amen."
5. Goodbye Song
Goodbye, goodbye to you and you and you!
Goodbye, goodbye, may God watch over you!

Middle and Older Elementary Levels

I. Objectives

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

1. tell about God's new heaven and earth as described in the biblical text;
2. express the hope that God's will to make everything new will come true;
3. demonstrate actions that show what followers of Christ can do to make this world a better place; and
4. make a commitment towards helping make God's new heaven and new earth a reality as followers of Christ.

II. Concept: The Holy Spirit gives us new life as we learn more about Jesus.

Materials: The Holy Bible (preferably NRSV), offering plate or basket, flowers for the worship center, poster paper; glue or paste; old magazines; colored paper; colored pencils, crayons and/or colored markers; enough pairs of scissors for the class

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time: Warmly greet each child as they arrive. Ask them how their day is going and attentively listen to their answers. Have them silently read today's biblical references.
2. Opening prayer: Dear God, thank you for this beautiful day. Thank you for bringing us to Sunday School where we can learn more about Jesus. Thank you for the church as we help each other, through the Holy Spirit, to bring about new life for everyone. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.
3. Sing familiar joyful songs and teach new songs like these.

Shake a Friend's Hand

(you may improvise the action)

Shake a friend's hand, shake a hand next to you
 Shake a friend's hand and sing la-la!
 Shake a friend's hand, shake a hand next to you
 Shake a friend's hand and sing, sing a song.

La-la la-la, la-la la-leluia
 La-la la-la, la-leluia
 La-la la-la, la-la la-leluia
 La-la la-la, la-leluia!

We are the Church

The church is not a steeple, the church is not a building,
 The church is not a resting place
 The church is people.
 I am the church, you are the church, we are the church together
 All who follow Jesus all around the world
 Yes, we're the church together!

B. Getting Ready

As a way to review last Sunday's lesson, ask the children what they have done in the past week to show God's care towards their loved ones and friends. Have them share their experiences.

C. Learning Time

1. Ask the class what they think of our present society.
 - a. Do they think there are many poor people? Do they think there are many unhealthy people?
 - b. Do they know of babies that die? Do they think all old people are cared for well?
 - c. Do they see many people who do not have decent homes? Do they see many hungry people?
 - d. Do they see many people who don't have decent work?
 - e. If they think our present reality is not that wonderful, what do they think would be a wonderful reality?
Expect answers like:
 - People will not be poor. People will be healthy.
 - Babies will grow to be strong. Old people will have a good life.
 - People will have good homes. People will have enough to eat.
 - People will have decent work enough to provide for their families.
2. Ask: Would you like to live in a world/society/reality like this? Tell them that this is what God wants for God's people. Ask them what they understood from the biblical references they read when they arrived. Draw out from your discussion that this new and wonderful world is what the Bible is talking about.
3. In order to better understand the biblical references, have the class read the following paraphrase. They may read it one student per sentence.

God's New Heaven and Earth

(Based on Isaiah 65:17-25 and Revelation 21:5)

God is going to make this world new. Everything is going to be new; the old reality will be no more. Everyone will be happy with this new reality. Everyone will be good. God will be very happy because everyone is good. There will be no more crying and sadness. All babies will be healthy and old people will live a long life. Everyone will have houses and enough to eat. Everyone will have a good and long life. People will have work and they will enjoy their work and be paid well. God will bless them and their children. Their children will be born into this new reality. All their needs will be met even before they ask.

Even the animals will live together harmoniously: the wolf and the lamb together, the lion and the cow together.

No one will be hurt or destroyed in God's new world.

This is what God wills for God's people and because of this we have hope.

Would you like to live in this new world? Then let us help God make it. Through the help of the Holy Spirit we can do it.

4. Teach this song:

God is Going to Make Things New

(Tune: London Bridge Is Falling Down)

God is going to make things new, everything will be made new;

And wherever I may go, I'll see God's glory.

Everyone will be happy and good, healthy and safe, well-fed and blessed;

I'll see beauty everywhere; Praise the Creator!

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

1. Ask: How can we help God make this world new? Being followers of Christ, what can we do to help God through the Holy Spirit? You may have them discuss then role play their answers.
2. Say, as a church and as followers of Christ, it is our responsibility to make sure that God's will for a better world for all becomes a reality.
3. Teach this song:

"It Could Be a Wonderful World"

If each little child could have fresh milk each day,
If each working folk had enough time to play,
If each homeless soul had a good place to stay,
It could be a wonderful world.

Chorus: If we could consider each other
A neighbor, friend, sister, or brother
It could be a wonderful, wonderful world.
It could be a wonderful world.

If there were no poor and the rich were content,
If strangers were welcome wherever they went,
If each of us knew what equality meant,
It could be a wonderful world. (repeat chorus)

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: Why do we have hope? (We have hope for surely God's will for God's people will become a reality.)

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Lead the class to memorize the verse in Isaiah 65:17: "For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind."
2. Crafts/Artwork/Other creative activities: Have each student make a poster of "God's New Heaven and Earth". Let them interpret through art what this means in the present-day based on your earlier discussions. They can cut pictures from old magazines, make cut-outs from colored paper, draw illustrations and write slogans. Have them offer their artwork during closing worship.

G. Closing Worship

- Tell the class to recite together the memory verse: "For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind."
2. Sing the song, "God is Going to Make Things New"
 3. Offertory: Have each one offer her/his artwork. They may want to say a sentence or two about it, then have them give their offering.
 4. Closing prayer: Have each one tell God in prayer what they will do, through the help of the Holy Spirit, to make God's new heaven and new earth a reality. End this circle prayer with this: "Dear God, help us to do what we promised to do to make this world a better place. We want your new heaven and new earth to happen now. Thank you for helping us through the Holy Spirit. This we pray in Jesus Christ's name. Amen."
 5. Closing song: It Could Be a Wonderful World

Youth Level

I. Objectives

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

1. retell in their own words what the biblical text is saying;
2. explain the context of the biblical text;
3. analyze in what way our present context is similar to the biblical context;
4. describe that the Holy Spirit helps believers transform themselves and their context or situation to manifest new life in Christ;
5. demonstrate actions that show what followers of Christ can do to make this world a better place; and
6. make a commitment towards helping make God's new heaven and new earth a reality as followers of Christ.

II. Concept: The transforming power of the Spirit enables us to experience new life in Jesus.

Materials: The Holy Bible (preferably NRSV), offering plate or basket, flowers for the worship center, worksheets, individual notebooks and pens

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time: Warmly greet each student as they arrive. Ask them how their day is going and attentively listen to their answers. Have them silently read today's biblical references.
2. Opening prayer: Dear God, thank you for your wonderful world. Thank you for the opportunity of helping make it even more wonderful with the kind deeds we do every day. Thank you for this time to learn more about how we can be of service in building your reign here on earth. Bless the church as we help each other, through the Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.
3. Sing familiar joyful songs and teach new songs like these.

We are the Church

The church is not a steeple, the church is not a building,

The church is not a resting place

The church is people.

I am the church, you are the church, we are the church together

All who follow Jesus all around the world

Yes, we're the church together!

It Could Be a Wonderful World

If each little child could have fresh milk each day,

If each working folk had enough time to play,

If each homeless soul had a good place to stay,

It could be a wonderful world.

Chorus: If we could consider each other

A neighbor, friend, sister, or brother

It could be a wonderful, wonderful world.

It could be a wonderful world.

If there were no poor and the rich were content,

If strangers were welcome wherever they went,

If each of us knew what equality meant,

It could be a wonderful world. (repeat chorus)

B. Getting Ready

As a way to review last Sunday's lesson, ask the class what they have done in the past week to show that they take part in doing God's will. Have them share their experiences.

C. Learning Time

1. Have the class look at the biblical references again.
2. Distribute copies of the table below. Have them write down in the second column of the table what each verse means for them. The first verse, Isaiah 65:17 has already been partially answered to serve as an example.
3. Ask: Why do you think the authors of these verses wrote these down? What do you think was happening during their time? Have them write down their answers in the table's third column.
4. Ask: What do you see is happening in our present society? Have them write down their answers in the table's fourth column.
5. Ask: Do you think our present reality/society needs changing? In what specific ways? Have the class write down their answers in the table's fifth column

Verses	Possible meaning	Possible context at the time of writing	Context today	Change needed for today
Isaiah 65:17	<i>God will change the present reality and will renew society</i>	<i>Times were difficult</i>	<i>Times are...</i>	
Isaiah 65:18				
Isaiah 65:19				
Isaiah 65:20				
Isaiah 65:21				
Isaiah 65:22				
Isaiah 65:23				
Isaiah 65:24				
Isaiah 65:25				
Revelation 21:5				

6. For the third column, expect answers like:
 - Many were poor.
 - Many did not have good health.
 - Infant mortality was high (many babies died).
 - People did not reach a ripe old age.
 - Many did not have decent homes.
 - Many were hungry.
 - Many did not have decent work.
 - Children were born in times of calamity or hardship.
7. Expect the answers in the fourth column to be pretty much the same, except that the answers are in the present tense. For the fifth column, expect answers like:
 - People will not be poor and will have enough to live by (not rich either, just enough to live a decent life).
 - People will be healthy.
 - Babies will grow to be strong.

- Old people will have a good life.
- People will have good homes.
- People will have enough to eat.
- People will have decent work enough to provide for their families.
- Children will be born into a decent life.

D. Deepening Activity/ Sharing Time

Facilitate a lively discussion with these following guidelines:

1. Ask: Would you like to live in a world/society/reality like what is depicted in today's biblical texts?
2. Find out if the students see a congruence or similarity between what they have written in the second column and the fifth column. If so, how so?
3. Say that there is a similarity between their hoped-for reality (fifth column) and what is written in the Bible because this is what God wants for God's people.

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: Why do we have hope? (Expect different answers. Synthesize by saying: We have hope because God's people and the church will surely strive towards what God wills and wants for all of us.)

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Have the students read the Exegesis for today's biblical references. Ask them if they think the society of Isaiah's and John's time is similar to our present society. Ask: What is today's parallel of the Babylonian and Roman captivity? What nations have colonized the Philippines? What relationships do you see between the rich and the poor in our society? Lead the class to say together Isaiah 65:17: "For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind." Ask: As followers of Christ, how can we help in ushering in God's new heaven and new earth today?
2. Crafts/Artwork/Other creative activities: Have each student write in their notebooks a creative "Now Testament" based on what they answered in the fifth column and the ensuing discussions. Their creative writing can be entitled

God's New Heaven and Earth Today

(Based on Isaiah 65:17-25 and Revelation 21:5)

They may read their "Now Testament" during closing worship. Teach this song:

God is Going to Make Things New

(Tune: London Bridge Is Falling Down)

God is going to make things new, everything will be made new;
And wherever I may go, I'll see God's glory.
Everyone will be happy and good, healthy and safe, well-fed and blessed;
We'll see beauty everywhere; Praise the Creator!

G. Closing Worship

1. Sing, "It Could Be a Wonderful World"
2. Offertory: Have each one read her/his "Now Testament". They may then give their offering.
3. Closing prayer: Have each one tell God in prayer what they will do, through the help of the Holy Spirit, to make God's new heaven and new earth a reality. End this circle prayer with this: "Dear God, help us to do what we promised to do to help bring about your new heaven and new earth now. Thank you for helping us through the Holy Spirit. This we pray in Jesus Christ's name, our Savior and Companion. Amen."
4. Closing song: "Come, Holy Spirit, Come" HFJ 175

Adult Level**I. Objectives**

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

1. retell in their own words what the biblical text is saying;
2. explain the context of the biblical text;
3. analyze in what way our present context is similar to the biblical context;
4. describe that the Holy Spirit helps believers transform themselves and their context or situation to manifest new life in Christ;
5. demonstrate actions that show what followers of Christ can do to make this world a better place; and
6. make a commitment towards helping make God's new heaven and new earth a reality as followers of Christ.

II. Concept: The transforming power of the Spirit enables us to experience new life in Jesus.

Materials: The Holy Bible (preferably NRSV), offering plate or basket, flowers for the worship center, hymnals, worksheets, individual journals or notebooks and pens

III. Learning Experiences**A. Opening Worship**

1. Welcome time: Warmly greet each one as they arrive. Ask them how their day is going so far and attentively listen to their answers. Have them silently read today's biblical references.
2. Opening prayer: Dear God, Creator of heaven and earth, thank you for this opportunity to learn together about how we can be of service in building your reign here on earth. Help us to continue to become true and effective followers of your Son, Jesus. Bless us, the church as we work together, through the Holy Spirit. Through Christ's name we pray. Amen.
3. Sing "Sweet, Sweet Spirit"
There's a sweet, sweet Spirit in this place,
And I know that it's the Spirit of the Lord;
There are sweet expressions on each face,
And I know they feel the presence of the Lord.

Chorus: Sweet Holy Spirit, Sweet heavenly Dove,
Stay right here with us, filling us with Your love.
And for these blessings we lift our hearts in praise;
Without a doubt we'll know that we have been revived,
When we shall leave this place.

There are blessings you cannot receive
Till you know Him in His fullness and believe;
You're the one to profit when you say,
"I am going to walk with Jesus all the way."

B. Getting Ready

Have the class read the biblical references responsively (women and men, left side and right side, or whatever suits your fancy).

C. Learning Time

Ask the learners to read the biblical references. Discuss these verses using the given highlights.

1. Have each one open their Bibles to the texts to be studied.
2. Distribute copies of the table below. Have them write down in the second column of the table what each verse means for them. The first verse, Isaiah 65:17 has already been partially answered to serve as an example.
3. Ask: Why do you think the authors of these verses wrote these down? What do you think was happening during their time? Have them write down their answers in the table's third column.
4. Ask: What do you see is happening in our present society? Have them write down their answers in the table's fourth column.
5. Ask: Do you think our present reality/society needs changing? In what specific ways? Have them write down their answers in the table's fifth column.

Verses	Possible meaning	Possible context at the time of writing	Context today	Change needed for today
Isaiah 65:17	<i>There will be a transformation of society and the present reality will be renewed.</i>	<i>Times were difficult, there was colonization and oppression.</i>	<i>Times are...</i>	
Isaiah 65:18				
Isaiah 65:19				
Isaiah 65:20				
Isaiah 65:21				
Isaiah 65:22				
Isaiah 65:23				
Isaiah 65:24				
Isaiah 65:25				
Revelation 21:5				

6. For the third column, expect answers like:
 - Many were in despair
 - Many were poor and oppressed
 - Many were sick
 - Infant mortality was high (many babies died)
 - People did not reach a ripe old age
 - There will be no powerful lording it over the people.
 - Many did not have decent homes; they did not have land to build homes
 - Many were hungry; they did not have land to till
 - Many did not have decent work
 - Children were born in times of calamity or hardship
 - There was strife between the powerful and the powerless
7. Expect the answers in the fourth column to be pretty much the same, except that the answers are in the present tense. For the fifth column, expect answers like:
 - People will not be poor and will have enough to live by (not rich either, just enough to live a decent life).

- People will be healthy.
- Babies will not die of common diseases.
- Old people will have a good and secure life.
- People will have land to build good homes.
- People will have enough to eat. They will have land to till/
- People will have decent work enough to provide for their families.
- Children will be born into a time of peace and fullness of life.

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

Facilitate a lively discussion with these following guidelines:

1. Ask: Would you like to live in a world/society/reality like what is depicted in today's biblical texts?
2. Find out if the learners see a congruence or similarity between what they have written in the second column and the fifth column. If so, how so?
3. Say that there is a similarity between their hoped-for reality (fifth column) and what is written in the Bible because this is what God wants for God's people.

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: Why do we have hope? (Expect different answers. Synthesize by saying: We have hope because God's people and the church will surely strive towards what God wills and wants for all of us.)

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Have the learners read the Exegesis for today's biblical references. Ask them if they think the society of Isaiah's and John's time is similar to our present society.
2. Ask: What is today's parallel of the Babylonian and Roman captivity? What nations have colonized the Philippines? What relationships do you see between the rich and the poor in our society?
3. Lead the class to say together Isaiah 65:17: "For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind."
Ask: As followers of Christ, how can we help in ushering in God's new heaven and new earth today?
4. Crafts/Artwork/Other creative activities: Have each student write in their notebooks a creative "Now Testament" based on what they answered in the fifth column and the ensuing discussions. Their creative writing can be entitled

God's New Heaven and Earth Today

(Based on Isaiah 65:17-25 and Revelation 21:5)

They may read their "Now Testament" during closing worship

G. Closing Worship

1. Sing, "It Could Be a Wonderful World"
If each little child could have fresh milk each day,
If each working folk had enough time to play,
If each homeless soul had a good place to stay,
It could be a wonderful world.

Chorus:

If we could consider each other
A neighbor, friend, sister, or brother
It could be a wonderful, wonderful world.
It could be a wonderful world.

If there were no poor and the rich were content,
If strangers were welcome wherever they went,
If each of us knew what equality meant,
It could be a wonderful world. (repeat chorus)

2. Offertory: Have each one read her/his "Now Testament". They may then give their offering.
3. Closing prayer: Have each one tell God in prayer what they will do, through the help of the Holy Spirit, to make God's new heaven and new earth a reality. End this circle prayer with this: "Dear God, be with us as a church so we may fulfill your mission of bringing about your new heaven and new earth now. Thank you for helping us through the Holy Spirit. This we pray in Jesus Christ's name, our Redeemer and Companion. Amen."
4. Closing song: "Come, Holy Spirit, Come" HFJ 175

