

## **Kingdomtide Season (Nature/Mission of the Church)**

The Church is the community of God's people with a mission. As such, we do not exist merely to cultivate a warm spiritual glow among ourselves. We have a message to proclaim, a task to accomplish. We, however, have to be nurtured, equipped, and strengthened for our task and mission. As God nurtures us, we, in turn, are to nurture one another.

Our community and responsibility go beyond the confines of our locality. We belong to a worldwide community of faith. We are stewards not only of our possessions but of the larger society and whole physical world as well. Thus, our life and mission as a church should be both ecumenical and holistic.

First Sunday in Kingdomtide/Mission Sunday

**Love as a Kingdom Value**

*Old Testament: Deuteronomy 6:5* (NRSV)

<sup>5</sup>You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.

*New Testament: 1 Corinthians 13:13* (NRSV)

<sup>13</sup>And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

*General Concept: Underlying everything, what the church does is love, without which, her works are nothing. It is the sacrificial love lived out by Jesus.*

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

*N/K/YE: The church is a loving community.*

*ME/OE: The church, as a loving community, is a caring community.*

*Y: The church, as a loving community, is a welcoming community.*

*A: The church, as a loving community, is a serving community.*

*Exegesis of the Biblical References*

Deuteronomy tracks down Moses and the Israelites in the territory of Moab in the area where the Jordan flows into the Dead Sea. As his final act at this time of transmitting leadership to Joshua, Moses conveyed his farewell addresses to prepare the people for their entry to Canaan. In them, Moses highlighted the laws that were specifically needed at such a time, and he presented them in a way applicable to the situation. Here, the words of Moses come to us from the heart as this servant of the Lord presses God's claim on God's people Israel.

Deuteronomy 6:5 - Love the Lord. Primarily in view here is the love shown by a subject to a king. To love King Yahweh is to be his loyal and obedient servant (Israel was the Lord's kingdom people). Love for God and neighbor is based on and constructed upon the love that the Lord has for His people, and on His identification with them. Such love is to be total, involving one's whole being. "With all your heart" points toward total involvement and commitment. The phrase is applied not only to "how the Lord's people should seek God but also to how they should fear (revere) God, live in obedience with God, love and serve God."

The letter (1 Corinthians) revolves around the theme of problems in Christian conduct in the church. It has to do with progressive sanctification, the continuing development of a holy character among those who have become followers of Christ. Obviously, Paul was personally concerned with the Corinthians' problems, revealing a true pastor's (shepherd's) heart.

This last and final verse (1 Corinthians 13:13) in Paul's exposition of love acts as the conclusion telling the people that without it all of the traits and gifts mentioned above is down to nothing.

The triad of faith, hope and love is found often in the New Testament. Faith produces action. Hope, is not unfounded wishful thinking, but firm confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ and His return. But the greatest of these is love because God is love and has communicated His love to us and now commands us to love one another. Love therefore,

supersedes all the gifts because it outlasts them all, whether they are wonderful gifts of prophecy and speaking in tongues, or that of wisdom and knowledge, or that of teaching and healing (1 Cor. 12:4-10). Long after these sought-after gifts are no longer necessary, love will still be the governing principle that controls all that God and God redeemed people are to manifest and carry out.

Here, in these passages, we can see the importance of love as a virtue in building up the kingdom of God. The church therefore, being God's representative here on earth has the accountability to make known that love of God embodied in and exemplified by Jesus the Christ.

*Companion Guide for the Teachers and other End-users*

Mission is essentially an extension of God's love in history as concretely demonstrated in the life and work of Jesus. And the church is the historical extension of the risen Lord. Hence, God's mission was Jesus' mission which is none other than the mission of the church. Spreading God's love throughout the world in myriad ways is the essential content of the mission of the church.

There are several core tasks for the realization of the church's mission which are integrally linked to each other. The whole gospel unfolds as these tasks are accomplished. There is no actual order of priority but the task of proclaiming the gospel logically comes first. Then comes the educational task consisting of the passing on of church traditions representing the historical elucidation of the gospel and its implications for current issues faced by the church.

The other tasks serve as signs of the reality and efficacy of the gospel in concrete life: social advocacy and action that serve the cause of justice and equity, people's welfare, relief from distress and others. An emerging but urgent task is the recovery and defense of ecological integrity. Although these tasks sound contemporary, for the church they are derived from the ministry of Jesus. Every time Jesus brought benefits to people, such as healing, liberation from demonic powers, restoration to community and others, he conveyed to them the gospel of God's love in the most personal and concrete ways.

Part of the mission thrust of the church is the establishment of local congregations. Church growth (in terms of new congregations added) is an evidence of the kingdom unfolding. This task aims at broadening the sphere of God's grace through the church for others' sake, not for the church's glory. Otherwise, it's not church mission but human pride, not about the kingdom of God but empire-building

## Nursery/Kindergarten/Younger Elementary Levels

### I. Objectives

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

1. sing songs and recite biblical verses of love;
2. give examples of situations/illustrations that show love in different ways; and
3. say a sincere "I love you" to each other.

### II. Concept: The church is a loving community.

**Materials:** The Holy Bible (preferably NRSV), song/verse chart, big drawing of a church, materials needed in the application activity

### III. Learning Experiences

#### A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time: Greet the children warmly as they arrive.
2. Opening prayer: "Loving God, we are gathered today to offer to you our thanksgiving and praises. We ask you to be with us as we learn more about you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen."
3. Opening song: "It's Love that Makes the World Go Round"

#### B. Getting Ready

1. Teach the song: "I Love My Jesus"  
I love my Jesus, deep down in my heart. (2X)  
Let's talk about deep, deep, down, down  
Deep, down in my heart. (2X)
2. Ask the children why they think Jesus loves them. Lead the class to realize that everything that is done in the church is motivated by love because God is love. Tell the children to say in unison and individually "God is love."

#### C. Learning Time

1. Show the children pictures showing different expressions of love: a group of people hugging, kissing on cheeks, shaking hands, talking, laughing, smiling, etc. Ask: "What do you see in the pictures? What are they doing? What do you think are they saying to each other?" Then show the sentence: "I love you" and let them read and repeat it.
2. Tell the story.

#### I Love to Go to Church

(by Karis and Ethel Ronquillo-Burgos)

One early Sunday morning, little girl Thea woke up at 5:00 o'clock. She went to the kitchen and saw her mother cooking breakfast. She then approached her with a kiss.

Thea: Good morning Mama! How much time do you need to finish cooking? Her mother wondered. Then she asked her.

Mother: Why are you asking about the time? Are you hungry?

Thea: Actually, I'm not. I am just wondering if we can go to church early today.

Mother: Honey, it's still early. Church will still be at 9:00 o'clock. And why do you want to go to church early? She asked her with a smile.

Thea: I already miss my friends, my teachers and all of them. I love them because I can play with them, pray and sing with them. And... we even share our food together. I love them and I know they all love me too!

Mother: Sounds good, honey! It seems that you are very excited.

Thea: Yes, I am! I always love to go to church, don't you Mama?

Mother: Of course, honey! Mama is so happy for you.

Mother felt so proud and thankful as she hugged her daughter very tight.

*D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time*

Ask these questions:

1. Why did Thea wake up early? (She was excited to go to church early.)
2. Why was she excited to go to church? (She already missed her friends, teachers and everyone else in the church.)
3. What else did she miss from them? (She missed playing with them, praying and singing with them. and even sharing food together.)
4. Why does she always love to go to church? (She always loves to go to church because they all love her and she loves them too.)
5. Say: We said earlier that God is love. Ask: Who first love us? (God) Why do we love others? (We love others because God loved us first.)

*E. Discovering the Biblical Truth*

Ask: Why is the church a loving community? (The church is a loving community because people there love one another as God loved us first.)

*F. Applying the Biblical Truth*

1. Teach the biblical verse: "And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love." (1 Corinthians 13:13)
2. Display a picture of the local church on the board. Prepare heart-shape cutouts enough for all the children. Cut them so that each heart will have a definite partner. On one half, write the words faith, hope, and love. Give the other half to each child. Hide the other halves around the room.
  - a. Tell the class to decorate their cutouts. Let children decorate the second heart any way they desire, using available materials. Let the **YE** class choose someone he or she would like to show his or her love and write a short note to him or her.
  - b. Point to a heart cutout and say, "God loves us first because God is love (Put up a Bible and say, "The Bible tells us so."). God wants us to love others, too. Your decorated halves and your love notes is like Gods' heart and love note to us."
  - c. Ask the class to look for their matching heart. When they find the missing half, let them write their names on the missing half. Let them glue the whole heart on the picture of the local church. After pasting it, let them say, "This heart is my love design/letter for God. I will show my love for God by helping the church."

*G. Closing Worship*

1. Tell the class to recite the memory verse.
2. Pledge, commitment, action:
3. Offering
4. Closing song: "Yes I Love You with the Love of the Lord" and goodbye songs
5. Closing prayer: Loving God, thank you for loving us always. Teach us to love one another like the way you have loved us. Help us to love by sharing what we have to the people who need it most. This is our prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.

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## Middle and Older Elementary Levels

### I. Objectives

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

1. acknowledge that love is the reason why the church is a caring church
2. explain how caring for others is an important part in the church's mission;
3. list and discuss different ways to love and care and show appreciation in doing caring activities; and
4. express how they can begin to practice good work in love through caring for others.

### II. Concept: The church, as a loving community, is a caring community.

**Materials:** The Holy Bible (preferably NRSV), song charts

### III. Learning Experiences

#### A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time: Smile and greet the children as they come. Check the attendance.
2. Opening prayer: "Dear God, we thank you for this day. Thank you for allowing us to go to church with our families and friends. We pray that you will enlighten us today with your wisdom teaching us ways on how to love you and others. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen."
3. Opening song: "Oh I Love You with the Love of the Lord"  
Oh I love you with the love of the Lord. (2X)  
I can see in you the glory of his name  
Yes, I love you with the love of the Lord.

#### B. Getting Ready

1. Tell the class to do the game "Disappearing words" by replacing the blanks. Have them use their Bibles as their reference.
  - a. "You shall \_\_\_\_\_ (love) the Lord your \_\_\_\_\_ (God) with all your \_\_\_\_\_ (heart), and with all your \_\_\_\_\_ (soul), and with all your \_\_\_\_\_ (might)." (Deuteronomy 6:5"
  - b. "And now \_\_\_\_\_ (faith), \_\_\_\_\_ (hope), and \_\_\_\_\_ (love) abide, these three; and the greatest of these is \_\_\_\_\_ (love)." (1 Corinthians 13:13)
2. Ask the class which word appeared the most. (love)

#### C. Learning Time

Divide the class into three groups. Assign each group to read the following verses written in index cards.

1. Group 1. 1 Corinthians 13:1-3

<sup>1</sup>If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup>And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup>If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

2. Group 2: 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

<sup>4</sup>Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant <sup>5</sup>or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; <sup>6</sup>it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. <sup>7</sup>It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all

things, endures all things. <sup>8</sup>Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end.

3. Group 3: 1 Corinthians 13:9-13

<sup>9</sup>For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; <sup>10</sup>but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. <sup>11</sup>When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. <sup>12</sup>For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. <sup>13</sup>And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

*D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time*

1. Let each group do the following:

a. Group 1. Retell the verses 1 to 3 in your own words. (Expect the class to mention that while the ability of a person to tell about the Gospel is acceptable to God but if the reason behind doing this is not love but recognition of one's ability, then it will be useless and not acceptable to God. If people profess to have faith in God but doing it only as a lip service and without love, their faith is questionable. If people will be generous in giving their riches but do not have love, those persons do not gain anything from God.)

b. Group 2: Tell the group to list all the attributes of love. (Love is patient, kind, not envious or boastful, not arrogant, not rude, not irritable, not rejoicing in wrongdoing, but rejoicing in the truth, and bearing, believing, enduring all things. Love does not end unlike prophecies, tongues, and knowledge that will come to an end.)

c. Group 3: Explain the mystery that will happen when we come face to face with God and why love is the greatest. (Life on earth is temporal. At the Second Coming of Christ, all that we see or know in part will be completed. Jesus will make us understand the mystery in full. By then, we need not prophesy, we need not show our faith anymore, but love will prevail.)

2. Discuss the role of love in the mission of the church. Emphasize that without love, mission cannot be realized because the love of God permeates all mission work. The caring ministry of the church is anchored on love.

*E. Discovering the Biblical Truth*

Ask: How can our church as a loving community express a caring attitude?

*F. Applying the Biblical Truth*

1. Ask the class about the ways of caring for others.

2. **For ME:** Let the children complete these sentences.

a. I learned that I can show my love and care for the members of our church by

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b. I discovered that being caring to the members of our church means

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3. **For OE:** Let the class look at the ministries of their local church and show support for ministries that show care for others.

G. *Closing Worship*

1. Memory verse: "And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love." (1 Corinthians 13:13)
2. Commitment: "As a member of a caring church, I will respond to the needs of others."
3. Offering
4. Closing song: "Jesus Was A Loving Teacher"  
Jesus was a loving teacher helping people day by day;  
Know the love of God Creator, teaching them to love and pray.  
  
Jesus was a patient teacher, waiting all to learn God's will,  
Telling stories they'd remember, stories that we're reading still.  
  
God we thank you for this teacher, and our praise to you we give,  
For his love and for his patience, showing people how to live.
5. Closing prayer: "Dear God, thank you for letting us know the ways on how to care for our church and for others. Help us to think more of others than of ourselves. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."



## Youth Level

### I. Objectives

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

1. describe that love is the basis of a welcoming church;
2. appreciate and respect the differences of people in the church;
3. realize and accept that the church is made up of people of different backgrounds/ orientation; and
4. list down ways on how the church can be a welcoming community as part of the church's mission.

### II. Concept: The church, as a loving community, is a welcoming community.

**Materials:** The Holy Bible (preferably NRSV), song charts

### III. Learning Experiences

#### A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time
2. Opening prayer: "Loving God, we thank you for bringing us to church today. We come together today because we want to trust in you and believe in you because that is what it means to love you. Please help us to grow in love with you. This is our prayer in Jesus' name. Amen."
3. Opening song: "They'll Know We are Christians by Our Love"  
We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord (twice)  
And we pray that all unity may one day be restored.  
Refrain: And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,  
Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.  
We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand (twice)  
And together we'll spread the news that God is in our land.

#### B. Getting Ready

1. Tell the class to do the game "Disappearing words" by replacing the blanks. Have them use their Bibles as their reference.
  - a. "You shall \_\_\_\_\_ (love) the Lord your \_\_\_\_\_ (God) with all your \_\_\_\_\_ (heart), and with all your \_\_\_\_\_ (soul), and with all your \_\_\_\_\_ (might)." (Deuteronomy 6:5)
  - b. "And now \_\_\_\_\_ (faith), \_\_\_\_\_ (hope), and \_\_\_\_\_ (love) abide, these three; and the greatest of these is \_\_\_\_\_ (love)." (1 Corinthians 13:13)
2. Ask the class which word appeared the most. (love). Tell the class that Jesus came to us because of God's love for God's people.
3. Share with the students that the Hebrews called this verse as the "shema" which means "hear". The Hebrew people wanted everyone to hear about their confession of faith, describing who God is, and what their duty is to God. On the other hand, the NT text is also called the gift of God to God's people.

#### C. Learning Time

1. Tell the class to read Deuteronomy 6:5 and discuss it using the given key sentences:
  - a. Love God completely because God first loved us completely (1 John 4:19).
  - b. Love God with all your heart. Our relationship with God must come from within

- us. The heart is the source of springs of life (Proverbs 4:23). Our heart's will, desires, and thoughts must be aligned with God's will.
- c. Love God with all your soul. When God breathed in us the breath of life, we became living souls (Genesis 2:7).
  - d. Love God with all your might. The word "might" is translated in Greek as "power" and in the Aramaic language "wealth". So when we love God, we offer to God our whole power and wealth.
2. Tell the class to read 1 Corinthians 13:13. Then let them read first the whole chapter and look for the answers to the following questions.
    - a. Why are the gifts of prophecy, knowledge, talents, power, and faith become nothing when done without love? (Refer to 1 Corinthians 13:1-3.)
    - b. What is love? (Refer to 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.)
    - c. When Jesus comes back, what will be realized for God's people? Why do you think love will prevail until the end as compared to faith and hope?

*D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time*

Ask these questions:

1. What are some of the challenges of our youth today which hinder them (you) not to go to church?
2. How does our church respond to these problems? How could the church welcome everyone even if they differ in many ways?
3. As members of the church, what are the evidences that our church is really a 'welcoming church?'
4. In what ways can our church be a 'welcoming' community to everyone?

*E. Discovering the Biblical Truth*

Ask: How can the church, as a loving community, welcome everyone as part of the church's mission?

*F. Applying the Biblical Truth*

1. Tell the class to recite the two biblical texts.
2. Ask the class to write ways of welcoming people who are not members of the church, who belong to a different tribe, who look different from them, and who live in the streets.

*G. Closing Worship*

1. Offering
2. Closing song: "Welcome to the Family"  
 Welcome to the family, we're glad that you have come  
 To share your life with us; as we grow in love and  
 May we always be to you, what God would have us be  
 A family always there to be strong and to lean on.  
 May we learn to love each other more with each new day  
 May words of love be on our lips in everything we say  
 May your spirit fill our hearts and teach us how to pray  
 That we might be a true family.
3. Closing prayer: We have many questions O God about what it is to be a church. We have so many questions because we want to understand and do what is right and do your will. But we will continue to listen to you so we may understand and do what is right, true, and pleasing to you. Amen.

## Adult Level

### I. Objectives

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

1. list down activities by which we can help serve others through the church;
2. see and realize that expressions of love can be shown through serving others; and
3. accept that one of the mission of the church is to serve others.

### II. Concept: The church, as a loving community, is a serving community.

**Materials:** The Holy Bible (preferably NRSV), song chart, worksheets

### III. Learning Experiences

#### A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time
2. Opening prayer: "We are drawn together today O God as one family. We call on you knowing that you are our Parent and we are your children. Grant unto us wisdom as we learn and understand your Word – a fuller sense of what is right and good. Enable us to love and live that which is best. This is our prayer in Jesus' name. Amen."
3. Opening song: "They'll Know We are Christians by Our Love"  
We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord (twice)  
And we pray that all unity may one day be restored.  
Refrain: And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,  
Yes, they'll know we are Christians by our love.  
We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand (twice)  
And together we'll spread the news that God is in our land.

#### B. Getting Ready

Write the word Love on the board and ask the class to give its meaning according to their experience. Discuss the answers of the class. Emphasize that love is more than a feeling. It is an action word. Draw from the class the many ways of caring for others because of love.

#### C. Learning Time

1. Tell the class to read Deuteronomy 6:5 and discuss it using the given key sentences:
  - a. Love God completely because God first loved us completely (1 John 4:19).
  - b. Love God with all your heart. Our relationship with God must come from within us. The heart is the source of springs of life (Proverbs 4:23). Our heart's will, desires, and thoughts must be aligned with God's will.
  - c. Love God with all your soul. When God breathed in us the breath of life, we became living souls (Genesis 2:7).
  - d. Love God with all your might. The word "might" is translated in Greek as "power" and in the Aramaic language "wealth". So when we love God, we offer to God our whole power and wealth.
2. Tell the class to read 1 Corinthians 13:13. Then let them read first the whole chapter and look for the answers to the following questions.

- a. Why are the gifts of prophecy, knowledge, talents, power, and faith become nothing when done without love? (Refer to 1 Corinthians 13:1-3.)
- b. What is love? (Refer to 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.)
- c. When Jesus comes back, what will be realized for God's people? Why do you think love will prevail until the end as compared to faith and hope?

**D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time**

1. Relate the discussion about love with the mission of the church. Present the following songs

- a. "Service"

We are made for service to care for all people  
 We are made for love both time and again  
 A love that will live through sorrow and pain  
 A love that will never die with strain.

God sent us his son to show us the way  
 One who shared his life every minute of the day  
 One shared his life that we might live  
 And his spirit who lead us through the years.

Life could be so lonely when nobody cares  
 Life could be so empty when nobody shares  
 But if one gives oneself to help other folks  
 The happiness of Christ will live within

- b. "Faith in the Service of the People" (Hymnal of a Faith Journey 306)
2. Ask these questions.
  - a. What could be the underlying theme of the first song? (service or serving others)
  - b. What about the second song? What are the needs of the different sectors mentioned in the second song and how can we as a church respond?
  - c. Look at your local church. What services are being done to serve others? (Expect the class to describe the activities/programs of their local church.)
  - d. What program of the church are you involved with? Why did you make that choice? (Expect varied answers.)
  - e. Among the services/programs of the church, what is it that doesn't interest you? Why?

**E. Discovering the Biblical Truth**

Ask: How can the church be a serving community?

**F. Applying the Biblical Truth**

Tell the class to do the following:

1. Identify existing church programs that involve extending assistance to the needy. (Example: soup kitchen/feeding program)
2. Devise a plan by which the class could participate either in the planning or actual program or both. The goal is to act in order to show concern for the needy and weary just like what Jesus did.
3. Guide the class by providing a planner which includes the following: project title, goal, target place, people involved, timeframe, and a breakdown of the tasks and point persons assigned for each task.

**G. Closing Worship**

1. Offering

2. Closing song: "Pananagutan"

Walang sinuman ang nabubuhay para sa sarili lamang

Walang sinuman ang namamatay para sa sarili lamang.

Koro: Tayong lahat ay may pananagutan sa isa't-isa  
Tayong lahat ay tinipon ng Dyos na kapiling N'ya.

Sa ating pagmamahalan at paglilingkod sa kanino man

Tayo ay nagdadala ng balita ng kaligtasan.

3. Closing prayer: "For the continuous mission of the church to serve the community and especially people in need, we ask you dear God to lead us. Teach us to love by serving others willingly and humbly. We ask and pray in the name of Jesus who came to serve and not to be served. Amen."