

Fourth Sunday in Kingdomtide

Patience as a Kingdom Value

Old Testament: Isaiah 40:28-31 (NRSV)

²⁸Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. ²⁹He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. ³⁰Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; ³¹but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

Lamentations 3:26 (NRSV)

²⁶It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.

New Testament: Luke 8:15 (NRSV)

¹⁵But as for that in the good soil, these are the ones who, when they hear the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patient endurance.

General Concept: Patience means not falling into despair, nor giving up hope in the coming of salvation.

N/K/YE: The church waits patiently for the coming of Jesus.

ME/OE: The church waits patiently for the coming of Jesus.

Y: The hope of the church comes from waiting patiently for the coming of Jesus.

A: Through faith, the church waits patiently for Jesus' coming.

Exegesis of the Biblical References

Isaiah 40:28-31 signifies the power and concern of God towards the people of Israelites. Unfortunately, they failed to recognize and rely on His power and on what God can do for His people especially in the time when they were thrown into exile in Babylon. In this situation of being uprooted from their homeland, they felt so confused, disoriented were beginning to lose hope and even their faith in Yahweh as they began to be tempted to think of the Babylonian god Marduk as probably a more powerful deity, than their Lord. This has become a time of real crisis that could mean the survival or extinction of their own faith and identity as a people in a foreign land. It is easy to understand how their faith seems to be fainting in these times of trouble. And now thIsaiah 40:28-31 signifies the power and concern of God towards the people of Israelites. Unfortunately, they failed to recognize and rely on God's power and on what God can do for God's people especially in the time when they were thrown into exile in Babylon. In this situation of being uprooted from their homeland, they felt so confused, disoriented were beginning to lose hope and lose faith in Yahweh as they began to be tempted to think of the Babylonian god Marduk as probably a more powerful deity, than their Lord. This has become a time of real crisis that could mean the survival or extinction of their own faith and identity as a people in a foreign land. It is easy to understand how their faith seems to be fainting in these times of trouble. And now they seem to be forgetting all about the saving grace of God that has been demonstrated already in the past in the event of the Exodus in Egypt when they were rescued and liberated from the oppressive, enslaving hands of slavery of king Pharaoh. The text

however tries to reiterate the undiminished power and commitment of God to God's own people even in such times of great crisis. The prophet reassures the people of God's never ending mercy and everlasting love and that God has never forgotten God's chosen Israel. It is this love and gracious power of God that will sustain those who wait on the Lord with constant and persistent patience with a faith that never gives up, who walk according to the will of God. God's promises never fail to those who trust in God, but God gives strength to those who wait patiently on God's saving grace.

The book of Luke chapter 8 verse 15, is part of the parable of the sower, and talks about the seeds that fall on good soil. The good soil can mean the good heart which absolutely trusts and waits patiently on the Lord. Those hearts that patiently wait for the Lord's salvation will receive of God's promises at the perfect time.

Everything we do will never be in vain, if we do God's ministry and serve others with cheerful hearts. If we will never surrender whatever the circumstances and difficulties but trust in the Lord's power and saving grace, God will never fail us nor forsake us. Just like good soil, all seeds planted in our hearts will bring good fruits and we will never faint in times of trouble for we know completely that God who brings justice and peace to the world will never forget God's promises.

Companion Guide for the Teachers and other End-users

Waiting for the coming of salvation from God is the quintessence of the biblical faith. In anticipation of the Lord's return upon which the kingdom will reach its fullness, the church exists "in the meantime," a period of waiting. In this regard, the greatest of kingdom virtues is patience.

But what does patience in waiting for the fulfillment of the kingdom of God mean? First, patience that is grounded on faith exists in a tension between doubt and certainty. There is certainly an element of doubt present in faith. Doubt indicates serious concern for holding on to the faith in the face of uncertainties. In other words, doubt prevents waiting from being overtaken by apathy and cynicism. Doubt was a familiar visitor to prophets like Jeremiah who in some moments questioned God's justice.

Second, patience is fueled by eagerness enabling it to continue. Sooner or later, patience will run out when the energizing power of eagerness is gone. Rather than passive, waiting in the faith is an active stance that keeps one always on the edge, scanning the horizons for signs of the kingdom's arrival and getting ready for its arrival. The active nature of waiting in the faith is demonstrated by the early Christians who went about the vast expanse of the Empire in anticipation of the Lord's return. This was also shown by the early Protestant converts who founded one church after another preaching the good news of the coming kingdom of Christ.

And third, patience in waiting for the kingdom to arrive is constantly being replenished by hope. The horizon seems to recede at every forward step and nothing seems to appear above it. But patience in the faith is not merely a subjective commitment to an unknown quantity. There's a reality more vivid than the eye can see that looms transparent behind the events of history. The Old Testament prophets project this reality against the backdrop of Israel's colonial history. Jesus paints it in the frame of the experience of the poor of his time. This reality continues in the present to reveal new images to inspire patience among those who hope in the coming of God's kingdom.

Nursery/Kindergarten/Younger Elementary Levels

I. Objectives

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

1. explain the meaning of patience with consideration of God's word, will, and timing;
2. describe ways of showing patience;
3. demonstrate patience; and
4. tell that the church teaches patience when waiting for the coming again of Jesus.

II. Concept: The church waits patiently for the coming again of Jesus.

Materials: The Holy Bible (preferably NRSV), pictures, fruits with seeds, worksheets

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time: Warmly greet the children and usher them to their seats.
2. Opening prayer: "Great and mighty God, we are thankful for your presence here with us today. We pray that you will teach us new lessons that will inspire us to know more about your values. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."
3. Opening songs:
 - a. "Read Your Bible, Pray Every Day"
Read your Bible, pray every day, pray every day, pray every day
And you'll grow, grow, grow (twice).
Read your Bible, pray every day and you'll grow, grow, grow.
 - b. "With Christ as My Vessel"
With Christ as my vessel, I can smile at the storm,
Smile at the storm, smile at the storm.
With Christ as my vessel, I can smile at the storm until He guides me home.
Chorus: Sailing, I am sailing home (twice). With Christ as my vessel,
I can smile at the storm, until He guides me home.

B. Getting Ready

1. Prepare the class to play the games.
 - a. **For N/K:** *Can You Rush It?* Prepare ice cubes, preferably of the same size. Put them in a platter and provide each child a platter and an ice cube. Record the time that each child received the materials. Let them say something about their set of materials. Tell them that the game is a race to see which ice cube will melt the fastest. They can blow or breathe on them, but they cannot touch the ice cube. They can cheer on their ice cubes. Lead them to agree to set aside their materials and continue with the lesson. Go back to the materials every now and then to check if the ice cube melted and record the time.
 - b. **For YE:** *How Patient Are You?* Prepare slices of unripe bananas. Make available other green bananas enough for each child. Tell the children to get a slice and taste it. Let them describe their observation. Expect the children to dislike the taste. Give each child an unripe banana. Tell them to bring it home and wait for the banana to ripen. Let them eat it as it ripens. Let them compare the taste of the unripe banana and ripe banana. Instruct the children to report about their experience during the next session.

2. Discuss the activity.
 - a. **For N/K:** Lead the class to realize that there are things that cannot be rushed because they take time to complete them.
 - b. **For YE:** Use the previous experience of the children to imagine the difference between unripe fruits and ripe fruits. Remind them that there are things in life that require waiting time. Ask the children if it is worth waiting for things to be ready.

C. Learning Time

1. Prepare fruits with seeds (watermelon, guavas, guyabano, jackfruit, etc.) that are available in your locality. Slice the fruit into smaller pieces and distribute to the children. Let them describe the fruit before tasting them. As they eat the fruit, tell the children to put the seeds in a container and have them guess how many seeds they have collected.
2. Say: Imagine that this fruit started with one seed planted into the soil. Why do you think the seed grew into a plant and produced fruits like this? Draw from the class possible responses like: The rain helped the seed to grow. The soil is good so the plant grew. The sunshine made the plant grow. The air is clean and it helped the plant to grow. The weeds near the plant were removed to help the plant grow. Lead them to say that God caused the plant to grow because God gave us the sun, the rain, the air, and the soil. These are the combined forces that made the seed grow.
3. Tell the class that they will learn about the seed that fell on good soil. Read Luke 8:15 "But as for that in the good soil, these are the ones who, when they hear the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patient endurance."
4. Relate the seed of the fruit that they ate by telling them that the **seed is like the word of God**. The **good soil is like a person who heard the word of God**. The **fruit is like the person who does good things for others** because it is God's will. We are like the good soil. As Christians, we study God's word patiently to know God's will. We trust in God's timing as we patiently pray and wait for God's blessings. Like the seed that grew into a plant and produced fruits, we, too, can **do good deeds for others in God's name**.

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

Discuss the lesson.

1. What does the seed represent? (The word of God)
2. Where did the seed fall? (Good soil)
3. What does the good soil represent? (The hearers of God's word)
4. What did the hearers of the word of God do? (The hearers told everyone about the Good News of God's love and God's plan of salvation for God's believers.)
5. What does the fruit represent? (The good deeds of the hearer of God's word)
6. How does the falling of the seed on good soil compare to us being Christians? (As Christians, we patiently study God's word, we patiently do things in accordance to God's will, and we patiently wait for God to do God's will in God's time.)
7. What good deeds do you think you can do? (Live a life pleasing to God. Study God's word and share it with your family, friends, and neighbors. Attend Sunday School. Trust in God's timing when asking for blessings. Pray for all your plans and wait patiently for God's answer.)

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: As children of God and members of the church, how do we show our patience in waiting for the coming again of Jesus Christ, the Son? (We are patient when we study God's word. when we do God's will, and when we patiently trust God and wait for God's blessings.)

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. To test the patience level of the children, let them play this interrupting game. Tell the children that they will learn how to interrupt politely. Have four role plays showing two parents talking and a child who wants to interrupt the conversation. Ask the children to choose which situation is the best and discuss their choice after watching the role plays.
 - a. Situation 1: The child keeps on asking the parents about something while they are conversing.
 - b. Situation 2: The child stands near the parents to show that he or she wants to interrupt.
 - c. Situation 3: A child taps the shoulder of one parent and says, "I want to say something." Then the child stands still waiting for a response.
 - d. Situation 4: A child touches the shoulder of one parent and does not remove his or her hand and stands still waiting for a response.
2. **For N/K:** Prepare pictures of the four situations and let the children choose who among the children showed patience in doing the action.
 - a. Waiting for the green light to cross the street
 - b. Learning how to tie one's shoes
 - c. Covering one's ears when a parent is talking
 - c. Doing one's homework cheerfully
3. **For Y/E:** Let the class read each statement. Let them show a smile when the children show patience and a frown when the children do not show patience in doing the actions.
 - a. I can wait for my turn to buy my snacks in the canteen.
 - b. I get tired listening to my parent's instructions.
 - c. I am always having a hard time to be silent inside the library.
 - d. I calmly ask for assistance when I find my task difficult to do.
 - e. I love to help my younger siblings in their school assignments.
 - f. I keep praying for the things I want and I wait for their answers.

G. Closing Worship

1. Memory verse: "It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD." (Lamentations 3:26)
2. Offering
3. Closing song: "Walking with Jesus"
Walking with Jesus, walking every day, walking all the way.
Walking with Jesus, walking with Jesus alone.
Note: Replace the phrase *walking with Jesus* with *walking in the sunshine* and *walking in the shadow*.
4. Closing prayer: "Gracious and loving God, thank you for teaching us the value of patience. Please help us always to remember that it is good to wait patiently. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen."

Middle and Older Elementary Levels

I. Objectives

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

1. explain the meaning of patience with consideration of God's word, will, and timing;
2. describe ways of showing patience;
3. demonstrate patience; and
4. tell that the church teaches patience when waiting for the coming again of Jesus.

II. Concept: The church waits patiently for the coming of Jesus.

Materials: The Holy Bible (preferably NRSV), worksheets, cartolina/manila paper, coloring materials, 5 kinds of plants

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time: Smile and greet the children as they come. Check the attendance.
2. Opening prayer: "Great and mighty God, we are thankful for your presence here with us today. We pray that you will teach us new lessons that will inspire us to know more about your kingdom values. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."
3. Opening song: "The Hands of God" (HFJ # 295)

B. Getting Ready

Prepare the class to play the game. Tell the children that the game is to be done for 5 days. Remind them to report their observations during the next session.

1. **For ME:** *A test on flexibility.* Tell the class to do the following:
 - a. Every morning, touch your toes with both hands once on the first day, twice on the second day, thrice on the third day, four times on the fourth day, and five times on the fifth day.
 - b. After each day, observe how you felt. On the fifth day, observe any changes in your body. Include the pain and the renewed strength brought about by stretching your body.
 - c. Mediate on this: When you pray to God, you do not always get what you have prayed for. God has a way of teaching us to wait patiently and to be flexible. It takes time before we feel that God has answered our prayer because we need to understand God's word, God's will, and God's timing.
2. **For OE.** *Getting curious with nature's way.* Ask the class to choose which of the following activities they would like to do and have them make their own time frame. Remind them to make a record of changes of the things they have decided to be curious about.
 - a. Watching the changes in the moon every night
 - b. Watching plants grow
 - c. Watching how chicks grow
 - d. Watching how flowers bloom
 - e. Watching a newly born sibling grow

After your watching period, mediate on this: Nature has its own way of changing things and these changes cannot be rushed. They need time to change. God wants us to wait on God's timing because it gives us time to understand the process of waiting on God patiently and joyfully.

C. Learning Time

1. Choose five kinds of plants—2 days old, 5 days old, and 10 days old. Present this to the class. Let them describe each plant and deduce the changes in size, color, and shape that happened. Let them explain why these plants grew and changed. Draw from the class the combined forces God has given to these plants to grow: good soil, clean air, enough sunshine, adequate rain, and hands that care.
2. If possible, tell the class to prepare a set-up at home where they can actually sow seeds. Tell them to record their observations.
3. Let the class read in unison the parable of the sower, the seed, and the soil. Lead the class to paraphrase the verses.
 - a. Luke 8:4-8. The sower scattered seeds in four kinds of soil—roadside soil, shallow, rocky soil, thorn-infested soil, and fertile soil.
 - b. Luke 8:11-14. The seeds that fell on the roadside soil were eaten by the birds. The seeds that fell on the shallow, rocky soil grew roots but the plants were weak and eventually died. The seeds that fell on the thorn-infested soil grew roots but the plants were choked by the weeds.
 - c. Luke 8:15: “But as for that in the good soil, these are the ones who, when they hear the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patient endurance.” The seeds that fell on fertile soil grew and bore fruits.

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

Discuss the lesson further.

1. Who do you think is the sower in the parable? Refer to Matthew 13:37. (The sower is God who scattered the seeds of faith to enlighten the people.)
2. What does the seed represent? (The seed is the word of God.) Since God is the sower, can we confidently say that the seed is good?
3. Why is the seed important? (We have to believe in the word of God to be saved. We have to prepare our hearts to receive God’s word.)
4. What does the kind of soil represent? Why is it important? (The soil represents our hearts. The condition of our hearts will make us keep or throw away God’s word. Our hearts attuned with God can sincerely and patiently wait for God’s blessings.)
5. Why do you think the seeds that fell on the roadside did not grow? (They were eaten by the birds. Somebody hinders the growth of the seed and that is the enemy of God’s people.)
6. Why do you think the plants did not survive in the shallow, rocky soil? (The plants were not strong enough to survive. People find it hard to sustain their trust in God’s providence because they cannot endure life’s challenges. Their hearts are not rooted in faith in God. They are unproductive. They are unable to support Christian life.)
7. Why do you think the plants that grew in the thorn-infested soil died? (The plants were choked by the weeds. Without full trust and confidence in God’s word, God’s will, and God’s timing, people are choked by the cares of the world. The challenges become destructive to them. Their hearts are not ready to obey God.)
8. Why do you think the seeds that fell on good soil grew and produce plenty of fruit? (God’s word was received by good hearts, kept and used to serve others. Good hearts follow Jesus for the right reasons. The fruits that were produced are products of patience and perseverance in our lives.)

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: As children of God and members of the church, how do we show our patience in waiting for the coming again of Jesus Christ, the Son? (We are patient when we study God's word, when we do God's will, and when we patiently trust God and wait for God's blessings.)

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Present the four kinds of hearts. Ask the class what kind of heart they want to have. Expect that the choice of the class is that of the good heart.
 - a. The hardened heart where Satan and other distractions keep a person from knowing God's word.
 - b. The shallow heart where life's cares and challenges keep a person from trusting God for God's providence
 - c. The thorny heart that allows life's pressures to choke a person from claiming God's blessings
 - d. The good heart that makes our hearts ready to know God's word, to do things pleasing to God's will, and to wait patiently for God's timing so that our goodness will produce character and service for others
2. **For ME:** Divide the class into four groups. Tell the children that to be able to use their good heart, let them react to the following situations where they can patiently spread God's word and obey God's will and timing.
 - a. Group 1: Your teacher made a mistake in giving your score in a test.
 - b. Group 2: You are hungry but the line in the canteen is too long.
 - c. Group 3: Your father is asking you and your brother to help him fix the car but your brother had agreed with his friends to play basketball that same time.
 - d. Group 4: You are playing volleyball with friends and your team is losing.
3. **For OE:** Divide the class into four groups. Tell the children that to be able to use their good heart, let them think of situations in any of the following places where they can patiently spread God's word.
 - a. Group 1: At home
 - b. Group 2: In school
 - c. Group 3: In church
 - d. Group 4: In the playground

After the activity, ask each group to present their work creatively.

G. Closing Worship

1. Memory verse: "It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD." (Lamentations 3:26)
2. Offering
3. Closing song: "Walking with Jesus"
Walking with Jesus, walking every day, walking all the way.
Walking with Jesus, walking with Jesus alone.
Note: Replace the phrase *walking with Jesus* with *walking in the sunshine* and *walking in the shadow*.
4. Closing prayer: "Gracious and loving God, thank you for teaching us the value of patience. Please help us always to remember that it is good to wait patiently. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen."

Youth Level

I. Objectives

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

1. explain the hope of all believers in the Lord's promise of salvation;
2. emphasize the need for patience and perseverance in understanding God's word, will, and timing;
3. realize that the church is called to sustain the hope of salvation of God's believers by patiently waiting for Jesus' coming again; and
4. participate actively in the ministry and program of the church in disseminating God's word, will, and timing as the church patiently waits for the Lord's salvation.

II. Concept: The hope of the church comes from waiting patiently for the coming of Jesus.

Materials: The Holy Bible (preferably NRSV), worksheets

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time
2. Opening prayer: "Mighty and loving God, we put our hope and trust in you in all the days of our lives. Live in us every day so we may always have the patience to follow you as our Way, Truth, and Life. Amen."
3. Opening song: "The Hands of God" (HFJ # 295)

B. Getting Ready

1. Present this information taken from the Philippine Eagle Foundation website about the Philippine eagle, formerly called the Monkey-eating Eagle.
Philippine eagles are one of the rarest eagle species in the world and as one of the most endangered animals (estimated that there are fewer than 250 eagles as of January 2015). Their height is one meter and their wingspan is 2 meters wide, the broadest in the world. Their sight is eight times the distance than that of humans. They live on the islands of Mindanao, Leyte, Samar and Luzon. They can live to be 60 years old. Philippine eagles keep one mate for life. Parent eagles wait for their offspring to make it on their own (usually within two years) before producing another.
2. Lead the class to realize the strength and freedom of eagles.

C. Learning Time

Divide the class into three groups and assign each group a particular biblical text.

1. Isaiah 40:28-31: "28Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. 29He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. 30Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; 31but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."

Tell the first group to do the following:

- a. Underline the words that describe God. (Everlasting God, Creator of the ends of the earth, Does not faint or grow weary, Unsearchable understanding, Gives power to the faint and wary, Strengthens the powerless)

- b. Describe what God will do to those who wait upon God. (God will renew their strength. God will enable them to mount with wings like eagles. God will enable them to run and not get weary. God will enable them to walk and not faint.)
2. Lamentations 3:26. Tell the group to paraphrase the verse.
²⁶"It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD."

(Expected answers: The Lord is good to those who wait quietly for him. It is good for the soul to patiently seek and wait for the Lord.)

3. Luke 8:15. "But as for that in the good soil, these are the ones who, when they hear the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patient endurance." Let the third group say the phrases in their own words.
- a. *but as for that in the good soil, these are the ones who, when they hear the word*

(These are the hearers of God's word.)

- b. *hold it fast in an honest and good heart*

(They believe in and keep God's word because their hearts are honest and good.)

- c. *bear fruit with patient endurance*

(These believers do good things according to God's will while patiently waiting for God's promise of salvation.)

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

Discuss the lesson.

1. What is common to the three biblical texts? (The three texts talk about **God's promise of salvation** to God's people. Believers must sustain their hope in this promise of salvation by waiting patiently for it.)
2. Why do you think God used an eagle to illustrate strength and freedom that God promised to give all God's children? (God promises the strength and freedom of eagles to those who wait upon God, and trust God to provide all of their needs. While believers wait patiently for this promise, God promises **strength** like that of an eagle to those who are tired to go on, **freedom** like the eagle, that has the longest wingspan, to continue facing life's challenges (grief, pain, hunger, sickness, and failure), **encouragement** to serve God and God's people without worrying about anything but continue to trust in God's providence.)
3. At the time Jeremiah wrote the lament (Lamentations 3:26), the people were discouraged and felt abandoned by God. What is the formula offered by Jeremiah to God's people during this critical and dreadful time of being subdued by foreign powers? (Jeremiah offered that the best option for the Hebrew people is to humble themselves before God, restore their repentant hearts, and wait quietly for God's providence and salvation. For God is their help and guide to survive.)

4. Luke mentioned the presence of honest and good hearts by the hearers of God's word. What makes an honest and good heart? (An honest and good heart **hears** God's word, **keeps** God's word in his/her heart and soul, patiently **waits** for God's word and perseveres in the word, and **uses** God's word, will, and timing in serving others and thereby producing a good fruit.)
5. How can the church encourage good hearts to persevere in producing good crops for God? (The church must be proactive in her ministries to sustain the good hearts in producing good crops for the Lord by strengthening the faith of the believers in their understanding of God's word, will, and timing.)

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Say: As church members, we are likened to those in 'good soil' and with 'good hearts'. Ask: As church members, how can we sustain the hope of God's believers that comes from waiting patiently for the coming of Jesus? (The church must focus on the word of God, strengthen her members by building up their capabilities, and reorient mission consciousness among her members.)

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Say: Patience is a kingdom value that believers must possess while waiting for God's providence and deliverance. Let the class answer these questions to assess one's patience in preparing oneself to participate in the church programs. (A **Yes** answer is an indicator of patience. A **No** answer means patience is to be developed further.)
 - a. Am I ready to accept God's will and timing?
 - b. Am I ready to endure challenges along the way?
 - c. Am I ready to accept personal weaknesses and faults and humble myself before God?
 - d. Am I ready to be flexible in my decisions if the results are counterproductive to my aim?
 - e. Am I contented to be an instrument of God and patiently follow God's leading?
2. Ask the class to choose any program (teaching, preaching, ushering, mentoring, outreaching) that they can get involved.

G. Closing Worship

1. Offering
2. Closing song: "Work In Your Kingdom" (HFJ # 302)
3. Closing prayer: "As we continue to work in your kingdom, we ask you O God to give us a patient heart to stand through hard times. Use us to be living witnesses for others to walk in good soil. Amen."

Adult Level

I. Objectives

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

1. explain the hope of all believers in the Lord's promise of salvation;
2. emphasize the need for patience and perseverance in understanding God's word, will, and timing
3. realize that the church is called to sustain the hope of salvation by patiently waiting for God's salvation
4. participate actively in the church's ministry and program of evangelization, capability build up and mission consciousness to strengthen the faith community.

II. Concept: Through faith, the church waits patiently for Jesus' coming.

Materials: The Holy Bible (preferably NRSV), worksheets

III. Learning Experiences

A. *Opening Worship*

1. Welcome time
2. Opening prayer: "Mighty and loving God, we put our hope and trust in you in all the days of our lives. Live in us every day so we may always have the patience to follow you as our Way, Truth, and Life. Amen."
3. Opening song: "The Hands of God" (HFJ # 295)

B. *Getting Ready*

1. Present this information taken from the Philippine Eagle Foundation website about the Philippine eagle, formerly called the Monkey-eating Eagle.
Philippine eagles are one of the rarest eagle species in the world and as one of the most endangered animals (estimated that there are fewer than 250 eagles as of January 2015). Their height is one meter and their wingspan is 2 meters wide, the broadest in the world. Their sight is eight times the distance than that of humans. They live on the islands of Mindanao, Leyte, Samar and Luzon. They can live to be 60 years old. Philippine eagles keep one mate for life. Parent eagles wait for their offspring to make it on their own (usually within two years) before producing another.
2. Lead the class to realize the strength and freedom of eagles.

C. *Learning Time*

Divide the class into three groups and assign each group a particular biblical text.

1. Isaiah 40:28-31: "28Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. 29He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. 30Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; 31but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."

Tell the first group to answer the following:

- a. What words describe God? (Everlasting God, Creator of the ends of the earth, Does not faint or grow weary, Unsearchable understanding, Gives power to the faint and wary, Strengthens the powerless)

- b. How will God reward those who wait upon God? (God will renew their strength. God will enable them to mount with wings like eagles. God will enable them to run and not get weary. God will enable them to walk and not faint.)
2. Lamentations 3:26. Tell the group to paraphrase the verse.
²⁶"It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD."

(Expected answers: The Lord is good to those who wait quietly for him. It is good for the soul to patiently seek and wait for the Lord.)

3. Luke 8:15. "But as for that in the good soil, these are the ones who, when they hear the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patient endurance." Let the third group say the phrases in their own words.
 - a. *but as for that in the good soil, these are the ones who, when they hear the word*

(These are the hearers of God's word.)

- b. *hold it fast in an honest and good heart*

(They believe in and keep God's word because their hearts are honest and good.)

- c. *bear fruit with patient endurance*

(These believers do good things according to God's will while patiently waiting for God's promise of salvation.)

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

Discuss the lesson.

1. What is common to the three biblical texts? (The three texts talk about **God's promise of salvation** to God's people. Believers must sustain their hope in this promise of salvation by waiting patiently for it.)
2. Why do you think God used an eagle to illustrate strength and freedom that God promised to give all God's children? (God promises the strength and freedom of eagles to those who wait upon God, and trust God to provide all of their needs. While believers wait patiently for this promise, God promises **strength** like that of an eagle to those who are tired to go on, **freedom** like the eagle, that has the longest wingspan, to continue facing life's challenges (grief, pain, hunger, sickness, and failure), **encouragement** to serve God and God's people without worrying about anything but continue to trust in God's providence.)
3. At the time Jeremiah wrote the lament (Lamentations 3:26), the people were discouraged and felt abandoned by God. What is the formula offered by Jeremiah to God's people during this critical and dreadful time of being subdued by foreign powers? (Jeremiah offered that the best option for the Hebrew people is to humble themselves before God, restore their repentant hearts, and wait quietly for God's providence and salvation. For God is their help and guide to survive.)

4. Luke mentioned the presence of honest and good hearts by the hearers of God’s word. When is the heart honest and good? (An honest and good heart **hears** God’s word, **keeps** God’s word in his/her heart and soul, patiently **waits** for God’s word and perseveres in the word, and **uses** God’s word, will, and timing in serving others and thereby producing a good fruit.)
5. How can the church strengthen the faith of her members in order to produce good fruit for God in patient perseverance? (The church must be proactive in the strengthening of the faith community for the ministry of preaching, teaching and evangelizing, shepherding and outreach, mission reorientation, stewardship of life, time, talents, and treasures.)

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: As church members, how can we inspire God’s believers to patiently wait for the coming of Jesus? (Be role models in living one’s life based on the word of God, in strengthening the faith of oneself and others, by helping in the building up of capabilities, and in reorienting mission and stewardship consciousness.)

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Say: Patience is a kingdom value that believers must possess while waiting for God’s providence and deliverance.
2. Ask the class to assess themselves as to their level of patience as they study and react to the different church concerns and their corresponding plan of action. Expect these answers: **I can participate in this concern and patiently wait for God’s leading.** or **I cannot participate in any of these concerns but I pray patiently that God will enable me to participate in any of these concerns.**

Church Concerns	Plan to strengthen the faith community
1. Preaching	Get trained in interpreting biblical texts and speaking about them in contemporary language
2. Teaching/Evangelizing	Be a teacher or facilitator in Sunday School, Vacation Church School, Cell groups, Campus ministry
3. Shepherding	Intercession prayers, visitations, comforting activities
4. Outreach service	Get involved in disaster response, medical/dental missions, reaching out to indigenous/tribal groups/street children
5. Stewardship	Offering life, time, talents, and treasures
6. Mission reorientation	Get involved in mission work in the community on environmental and other concerns

G. Closing Worship

1. Offering
2. Closing song: “Work in Your Kingdom” (HFJ # 302)
3. Closing prayer: “As we continue to work in your kingdom, we ask you O God to give us a patient heart to stand through hard times. Use us to be living witnesses for others to walk in good soil. Amen.”