

Human Degradation and Spirituality for a New Humanity

Calendar of Lessons

For Liturgical Year 2016-2017, the lessons are subdivided into these four scopes and strands:

- **Scope 1: Rootedness**
Strand 1: ***Jesus' Encounters with Human Degradation and its Transformations***
 - Advent and Christmastide (27 November 2016 – 1 January 2017)
 - Epiphany (8 January – 26 February 2017)

- **Scope 2: Identity: On Being and Becoming**
Strand 2: ***Jesus' Choice of the Kind of Messiah***
 - Lent (5 March – 9 April 2017)
 - Eastertide (16 April – 28 May 2017)

- **Scope 3: Unity and Solidarity**
Strand 3: ***The Church United to Respond to Human Degradation***
 - ***Pentecost (4 June – 20 August 2017)***

- **Scope 4: Fruitful Lifeworks**
Strand 4: ***The Church Manifesting the Marks of a Christ-like Life***
 - Kingdomtide (27 August – 26 November 2017)



Quadrennial Theme: Spirituality for These Critical TimesYear 3 Theme: **Human Degradation and Spirituality for a New Humanity 2016-2017**Scope 1: **Rootedness**Strand 1: ***Jesus' Encounters with Human Degradation and its Transformations***

Included Sundays for Advent and Christmastide Season (6 lessons)	Celebration	Lectionary Title	Scriptural References	General Concept
(1) November 27, 2016	First Sunday of Advent	Liberating Cultural Breakthroughs	1 Samuel 25:13-34 Matthew 1:18-24	There are cultural practices and beliefs that cause human suffering and degradation, thus, the church should make a cultural breakthrough in the transformation towards a new humanity.
(2) December 4, 2016	Second Sunday of Advent/Family Sunday	Seeds of New Humanity	Isaiah. 7:14 Luke 1:26-35	Like the enslaved people in Egypt, the new humanity emerges from among the victims who long for freedom and wholeness.
(3) December 11, 2016	Third Sunday of Advent/Human Rights Sunday	Challenging Oppressive State Powers	1 Kings 12:1-16 Luke 2:1-6	The church has the duty to expose and challenge state policies that violate human rights.
(4) December 18, 2016	Fourth Sunday of Advent	Jesus as God's Love Incarnate	Isaiah 49:1-3 John 3:11-17	In the midst of a broken humanity, God came in Jesus

				to mend it and make it whole.
(5) December 25, 2016	First Sunday after Christmas	The Birth of Jesus	Psalms 91:11 Luke 2:7-18 John 1:14	We joyfully celebrate the birth of Jesus in a world that longs for fullness.
(6) January 1, 2017	First Sunday after Christmas	Defending Children, Symbols of a New Beginning	Isaiah 43:18-19 Matthew 2:1-16	Upholding the rights and welfare of children makes a just and compassionate society now and in the future.
Included Sundays for Epiphany Season (8 lessons)	Celebration	Lectionary Title	Scriptural References	General Concept
(7) January 8, 2017	Epiphany Sunday	Channels of God's Healing	2 Kings 7:1-16 John 9:1-41	We are all healers to one another.
(8) January 15, 2017	First Sunday after Epiphany/Christi an Unity	The Inclusive Healing Ministry of the Church	2 Kings 5:1-19 Mark 1:29-31	"The kingdom of God is present...where healing is given to the sick." (UCCP Statement of Faith)
(9) January 22, 2017	Second Sunday after Epiphany/Nation al Bible Sunday	Healing of Animosities	Isaiah 11:1-9 Galatians 3:28	Respecting and appreciating differences is a condition for creative unity and harmony.
(10) January 29, 2017	Third Sunday after Epiphany	Healing as a Message of Salvation	2 Kings 4:8-37 Luke 8:41-56	Salvation comes whenever healing happens.
(11) February 5, 2017	Fourth Sunday after Epiphany	Healing of Social Divides	Ruth 1:1-21 Luke 13:10-17	Social division is eradicated when human fellowship, care, respect,

				and dignity are restored.
(12) February 12, 2017	Fifth Sunday after Epiphany	Healing of Broken Relationships	Genesis 32:1-32, 33:1-4 Matthew 5:24	Where there are broken relationships, it is the duty of the church to bring about reconciliation through forgiveness and repentance.
(13) February 19, 2017	Sixth Sunday after Epiphany	Healing from Demon Possession	1 Samuel 16:14-23 Mark 5:1-20	The Spirit of God drives away the demons of envy, fear, and greed for the Spirit to dwell in.
(14) February 26, 2017	Seventh Sunday after Epiphany/Transfiguration Sunday	Healing towards Transformation	Exodus 34:29-35 Mark 9:2-8	The transfiguration of Jesus is a preview of his resurrection which is our hope and destiny.

Scope 2: **Identity: On Being and Becoming**
Strand 2: ***Jesus' Choice of the Kind of Messiah***

Included Sundays for Lent (6 lessons)	Celebration	Lectionary Title	Scriptural References	General Concept
(15) March 5, 2017	First Sunday in Lent	Choosing our Destiny	Jeremiah 1:4-10 Matthew 16:21-23	Jesus chose to obey God's will and it became his destiny. When we make a choice to follow Jesus, it becomes our destiny.

(16) March 12, 2017	Second Sunday in Lent	Servant Messiah	Isaiah 53:4-6 Mark 10:42-45	As a servant messiah, Jesus served the suffering ones. As a result, he suffered with them. When we serve the suffering ones, we also suffer with them.
(17) March 19, 2017	Third Sunday in Lent	Loyalty to God	Ruth 1:16-17 Luke 7:1-10	The love for God is the basis of our unwavering loyalty to God.
(18) March 26, 2017	Fourth Sunday in Lent	Peace-building	Jeremiah 1:9-10 Matthew 10:34	Building peace, as a messianic mission, requires forcible removal of obstacles to peace— inequitable distribution of resources, abusive relationships, and injustice.
(19) April 2, 2017	Fifth Sunday in Lent	Marks of the True Messiah	Isaiah 42:1-7 Matthew 11:2-6	The true messiah is known through his healing, liberating, and restoring deeds.
(20) April 9, 2017	Sixth Sunday in Lent/Palm Sunday	Jesus Encountering the Powers	Zechariah 9:9-10 John 12:12-19	Jesus enters Jerusalem to challenge the powers-that-be that cause human misery.

Included Sundays for Eastertide (7 lessons)	Celebration	Lectionary Title	Scriptural References	General Concept
(21) April 16, 2017	Resurrection Sunday	Resurrection of the Righteous	Daniel 12:1-3 John 11:25-27 Romans 6:5	Those who remain faithful to the end will not perish but have eternal life.
(22) April 23, 2017	First Sunday after Resurrection	Suppressing the Truth of the Resurrection	Jeremiah 28:15-17 Matthew 28:11-15	The response of the powers-that-be to the resurrection was to cover up the truth with a lie and criminalize those who believe.
(23) April 30, 2017	Second Sunday after Resurrection	Moment of Human Frailties	2 Samuel 21:10 Mark 16:1-8	After Jesus died, the disciples experienced a lacuna moment of mourning, confusion, fear, depression, and disbelief. This experience is not sin but needs to be accepted and brought to the Lord.
(24) May 7, 2017	Third Sunday after Resurrection	Appearance of Jesus to Mary Magdalene	2 Kings 7:7-20 Mark 16:9-11	The testimony of those who speak the truth are often discredited on account of their status in society.
(25) May 14, 2017	Fourth Sunday after Resurrection	Failure to Recognize the Appearance of Jesus	Genesis 18:1-15 Mark 16:12-13	Due to their extreme grief, the disciples were not able

				to apprehend the risen Lord. But Jesus overcomes our failure to discern and communes with us.
(26) May 21, 2017	Fifth Sunday after Resurrection/UC CP Sunday	Celebrating the Resurrection	Exodus 16:1-26 Luke 24:36-46	Jesus comes to commune with us in ordinary, basic, and common activities and struggles.
(27) May 28, 2017	Sixth Sunday after Resurrection/Ascension Sunday	Anticipating the Fullness of God's Reign on Earth	Daniel 12:13 Mark 16:15-20	Jesus ascends to heaven to receive God's authority to realize God's reign in its fullness.

Scope 3: **Unity and Solidarity**Strand 3: ***The Church United to Respond to Human Degradation***

Included Sundays for Pentecost Season (12 lessons)	Celebration	Lectionary Title	Scriptural References	General Concept
(28) June 4, 2017	Pentecost Sunday	The Spirit Breaking through Cultural Captivity	Joel 2:28-29 Acts 2:1-12	The Spirit enables the Gospel to be communicated in the languages and cultures of the people.
(29) June 11, 2017	First Sunday after Pentecost/Trinity Sunday	The Holy Trinity in the Faith of the Church	Genesis 1:26-27 Jude vv. 19:21	God is a community of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This is the source and basis of the

				church as community.
(30) June 18, 2017	Second Sunday after Pentecost	The Holy Spirit Sustaining the Church	Jeremiah 7:1-11 Matthew 23:13-28	The Holy Spirit bids the church to unite with the people to confront the oppressive powers.
(31) June 25, 2017	Third Sunday after Pentecost	Defending the Powerless	Psalms 82:3-4; 146:5-9 Proverbs 31:8-9 James 1:27	The Holy Spirit sustains the church in its ministry of protecting the oppressed and the helpless and upholding their rights.
(32) July 2, 2017	Fourth Sunday after Pentecost	Breaking Down Walls that Divide	Isaiah 56:3-8 Amos 9:7 Luke 14:12-14	The church, by nature, is inclusive. It embraces differences and does not harbor animosities.
(33) July 9, 2017	Fifth Sunday after Pentecost	Confronting Human Greed	Deuteronomy 5:21 Acts 2:44-47; 4:33-35	The church confronts the issue of human greed which is the root of many evils and broken relationships.
(34) July 16, 2017	Sixth Sunday after Pentecost	Casting Out Demonic Powers	Psalms 103:2-5 Mark 1:23-27; 7:24-30	The church's ministry of healing requires the driving out of demonic powers that hold people in their sway.
(35) July 23, 2017	Seventh Sunday after Pentecost	Being Present	Deuteronomy 31:8 Psalm 40:1-3 Revelation 21:3-4	The church embraces the ministry of presence to embody God who is Immanuel.

(36) July 30, 2017	Eighth Sunday after Pentecost	Nurturing Hope	Job 5:15-16 Psalm 34:17-20 Matthew 11:28-30	The church journeys with people in the darkness of despair, reviving the hope and keeping it alive.
(37) August 6, 2017	Ninth Sunday after Pentecost	Reaching Out to Victims of Abuse and Social Evils	Isaiah 25:4 Matthew 18:21-35	The church is a community that provides comfort, assistance, shelter, and intervention to victims in their needs.
(38) August 13, 2017	Tenth Sunday after Pentecost	Pursuing and Building Peace	Psalm 34:11-14 1Peter 3:8-12	The church plants peace in a world rocked by conflict, violence, and wars.
(39) August 20, 2017	Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost	The Church Awakened to Do Mission	Isaiah 59:17 Ephesians 6:14	An awakened church girds up and equips itself for mission.

Scope 4: **Fruitful Lifeworks**Strand 4: ***The Church Manifesting the Marks of a Christ-like Life***

Included Sundays for Kingdomtide Season (14 lessons)	Celebration	Lectionary Title	Scriptural References	General Concept
(40) August 27, 2017	First Sunday in Kingdomtide/ Mission Sunday	Leaving Everything to Follow Christ	Isaiah 6:1-8 Luke 5:1-11	Obedience to Jesus means letting go of those cares that keep us from following him.
(41) September 3, 2017	Second Sunday in Kingdomtide/ CEN Sunday	Mission to the Periphery	1 Samuel 18:1-5 Philippians 2:5-8 2 Corinthians 8:9	Removing our self from the center of our life so that we can put others in its place.
(42) September 10, 2017	Third Sunday in Kingdomtide/ Children' Sunday	Humility-Powered Mission	Proverbs 15:33, 11:2 Luke 18:9-14	Behind genuine mission is a humble heart that seeks the well-being of others.
(43) September 17, 2017	Fourth Sunday in Kingdomtide/ Youth Sunday	Accountability in the Kingdom	2 Samuel 12:1-13 Luke 15:11-24	Being created in the image of God, we are responsible and accountable to each other.
(44) September 24, 2017	Fifth Sunday in Kingdomtide/ Fellowship of the Least Coin Sunday	The Kingdom as a Forgiving Community	Genesis 45:1-5 Acts 7:59-60	Being forgiving is a quality of those who belong to the Kingdom of God.
(45) October 1, 2017	Sixth Sunday in Kingdomtide/ Worldwide Communion Sunday/ CYAP Sunday	Towards a Reconciled Community	Genesis 45:9-15 Philemon 1:10-20	True reconciliation moves relationships to a higher plane.
(46) October 8, 2017	Seventh Sunday in Kingdomtide/ Peace Sunday	Living the Faith	Esther 4:13-16 James 1:27	Forgiven and reconciled, we

				are freed to do good.
(47) October 15, 2017	Eighth Sunday in Kingdomtide/ UCM Sunday	Being Accepted in the Kingdom of God	Hosea 1: 1-3, 3:1 John 4:7-15	The Christian community is accepting of others unmindful of any advantage.
(48) October 22, 2017	Ninth Sunday in Kingdomtide/ Solidarity with Indigenous People Sunday	Reverence for Life	Exodus 2:1-10 Luke 7:1-10	Life is respected beyond social class, ethnicity, and religion.
(49) October 29, 2017	Tenth Sunday in Kingdomtide/ Reformation Sunday	Discerning God's Ways through Jesus	Job 42:1-6 John 14:5-11	To know Jesus is to know God. The gospel makes faith simple to everyone.
November 5, 2017 (50)	Eleventh Sunday in Kingdomtide/ Church Workers Sunday	Prayerful Life	Daniel 6:6-23 Mark 14:32-38	Communing with God through prayers encompasses all of life.
(51) November 12, 2017	Twelfth Sunday in Kingdomtide/ Theological Education Sunday	Audacious Compassion	1 Kings 17:8-16 Luke 10:25-37	Those who have less in life or regarded low are the most compassionate.
(52) November 19, 2017	Thirteenth Sunday in Kingdomtide/ Migrant Workers Sunday	Learning from the Faith and Witness of Migrants	Psalms 137:1-6 1 Peter 1:1 James 1:1-4	Being steadfast in the faith makes us complete and whole.
(53) November 26, 2017	Fourteenth Sunday in Kingdomtide/ Stewardship Sunday	Service Motivated by Love	Judges 5:6-13 Mark 2:1-12	Stewardship is manifested through the collective response of the faith community.

Year 3 Theme: **Human Degradation and Spirituality for a New Humanity CC 2016-2017**

Scope 1: ***Rootedness in the Faith***

Strand 1: ***Jesus' Encounters with Human Degradation and its Transformation***

Season: ***Epiphany***

Age Level: ***Nursery, Kindergarten, Younger Elementary***

January 8, 2017

Epiphany Sunday: **Channels of God's Healing**

Old Testament: 2 Kings 7:1-16

1But Elisha said, "Hear the word of the Lord: thus says the Lord, Tomorrow about this time a measure of choice meal shall be sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, at the gate of Samaria." 2Then the captain on whose hand the king leaned said to the man of God, "Even if the Lord were to make windows in the sky, could such a thing happen?" But he said, "You shall see it with your own eyes, but you shall not eat from it."

3 Now there were four leprous men outside the city gate, who said to one another, "Why should we sit here until we die? 4If we say, 'Let us enter the city', the famine is in the city, and we shall die there; but if we sit here, we shall also die. Therefore, let us desert to the Aramean camp; if they spare our lives, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die." 5So they arose at twilight to go to the Aramean camp; but when they came to the edge of the Aramean camp, there was no one there at all. 6For the Lord had caused the Aramean army to hear the sound of chariots and of horses, the sound of a great army, so that they said to one another, "The king of Israel has hired the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Egypt to fight against us." 7So they fled away in the twilight and abandoned their tents, their horses, and their donkeys, leaving the camp just as it was, and fled for their lives. 8When these leprous men had come to the edge of the camp, they went into a tent, ate and drank, carried off silver, gold, and clothing, and went and hid them. Then they came back, entered another tent, carried off things from it, and went and hid them.

9 Then they said to one another, "What we are doing is wrong. This is a day of good news; if we are silent and wait until the morning light, we will be found guilty; therefore let us go and tell the king's household." 10So they came and called to the gatekeepers of the city, and told them, "We went to the Aramean camp, but there was no one to be seen or heard there, nothing but the horses tied, the donkeys tied, and the tents as they were." 11Then the gatekeepers called out and proclaimed it to the king's household. 12The king got up in the night, and said to his servants, "I will tell you what the Arameans have prepared against us. They know that we are starving; so they have left the camp to hide themselves in the open country, thinking, 'When they come out of the city, we shall take them alive and get into the city.'" 13One of his servants said, "Let some men take five of the remaining horses, since those left here will suffer the fate of the whole multitude of Israel that have perished already; let us send and find out." 14So they took two mounted men, and the king sent them after the Aramean army, saying, "Go and find out." 15So they went after them as far as the Jordan; the whole way was littered with garments and equipment that the Arameans had thrown away in their haste. So the messengers returned, and told the king.

16 Then the people went out, and plundered the camp of the Arameans. So a measure of choice meal was sold for a shekel, and two measures of barley for a shekel, according to the word of the Lord.

New Testament: John 9:1-41

9As he walked along, he saw a man blind from birth. 2His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" 3Jesus answered, "Neither this man nor his parents sinned; he was born blind so that God's works might be revealed in him. 4We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming when no one can work. 5As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." 6When he had said this, he spat on the ground and made mud with the saliva and spread the mud on the man's eyes, 7saying to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). Then he went and washed and came back able to see. 8The neighbors and those who had seen him before as a beggar began to ask, "Is this not the man who used to sit and beg?" 9Some were saying, "It is he." Others were saying, "No, but it is someone like him." He kept saying, "I am the man." 10But they kept asking him, "Then how were your eyes opened?" 11He answered, "The man called Jesus made mud, spread it on my eyes, and said to me, 'Go to Siloam and wash.' Then I went and washed and received my sight." 12They said to him, "Where is he?" He said, "I do not know."

13 They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. 14Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. 15Then the Pharisees also began to ask him how he had received his sight. He said to them, "He put mud on my eyes. Then I washed, and now I see." 16Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not observe the Sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?" And they were divided. 17So they said again to the blind man, "What do you say about him? It was your eyes he opened." He said, "He is a prophet." 18 The Jews did not believe that he had been blind and had received his sight until they called the parents of the man who had received his sight 19and asked them, "Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then does he now see?" 20His parents answered, "We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; 21but we do not know how it is that now he sees, nor do we know who opened his eyes. Ask him; he is of age. He will speak for himself." 22His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that anyone who confessed Jesus to be the Messiah would be put out of the synagogue. 23Therefore his parents said, "He is of age; ask him."

24 So for the second time they called the man who had been blind, and they said to him, "Give glory to God! We know that this man is a sinner." 25He answered, "I do not know whether he is a sinner. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." 26They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" 27He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" 28Then they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. 29We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." 30The man answered, "Here is an astonishing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. 31We know that God does not listen to sinners, but he does listen to one who worships him and obeys his will. 32Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a person born blind. 33If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." 34They answered him, "You were born entirely in sins, and are you trying to teach us?" And they drove him out.

35 Jesus heard that they had driven him out, and when he found him, he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" 36He answered, "And who is he, sir? Tell me, so that I may believe in him." 37Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and the one speaking with you is he." 38He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshipped him. 39Jesus said, "I came into this world for

judgment so that those who do not see may see, and those who do see may become blind.” 40Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, “Surely we are not blind, are we?” 41Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would not have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see’, your sin remains.”

General Concept: We are all healers to one another.

Key Concept:

N/K/YE: God uses even young children to bring about healing.

Exegesis of the Biblical References

There are eight books in the Prophetic Literature of the Hebrew Bible (or the Old Testament). 1 and 2 Kings is part of this tradition. Elijah and Elisha, who exemplify the epitome of God’s prophet, are the primary protagonists of this two-volume work. But in this particular passage, four lepers serve as the bearers of good news. Samaria is under siege from the armies of Aram (now Syria) and the siege has brought the city to the point of starvation. The situation was so bad the city had only a few horses left (the rest have been eaten).

Being a leper was worse than being cursed in Ancient Israel. Lepers were outcasts; they were feared and loathed. The four were sitting outside the city gates when they realized that if they stayed where they were, they would die. If they went inside the city where they were not welcome, they would die since the whole city was starving already. So they decide to surrender to the Arameans. If the Arameans kill them, then it was a quicker death. If they did not get killed, then maybe they will get fed. They went to the Arameans and found the camp deserted, because God caused the Arameans to flee. The lepers ate and drank and carried off silver, gold, and clothing. Then they realized they needed to share the good news with the king’s household. And they did. In this passage, those who needed healing brought healing to their people.

Most historians agree that the Gospel of John is the last among the canonical gospels to be composed. Compared to the Synoptic Gospels (Mark, Matthew, and Luke), John has a high Christology. In John, Jesus is God Incarnate. The Gospel is filled with “I am” discourses. The Gospel has also been celebrated as the one that celebrates the selfless discipleship of the unnamed. The mother of Jesus is unnamed. The Samaritan woman is unnamed. The child who offers five loaves and two fish is unnamed. The beloved disciple is also unnamed.

The man born blind is also unnamed.

In Ancient Palestine, suffering was attributed to sin. Thus, in the passage the disciples ask if it was his parents’ sin or the man’s (prenatally) that caused his blindness. Making mud, a breach of Sabbath, was a sin. In this passage, two “sinners” bring about, or reveal, God’s healing love.

Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users

Healing and restoration of wholeness are the most apt theological analogy for salvation. Conversely, illness is often associated with sin in pre-modern times. Advances in medicine and healthcare, however, have brought changes in the theological view towards the relationship of sin and illness without diminishing the value of healing as an analogy of salvation. The church today continues to pray for the healing and relief of those suffering from physical and mental infirmities. Many churches have also established hospitals, conduct clinics and promote alternative healthcare practices in line with the church’s healing ministry. In the UCCP, healing is not merely a theological example of salvation but is a concrete form of ministry and pastoral care.

Why is healing a primary analogy of salvation? It points to the most basic of human struggles for life, peace, harmony, restoration to community and happiness under God. It is all summed up in the Hebrew word “shalom”. It is a state of being that is not simply a human and social achievement but is received as a blessing from God. The removal of God from this most fundamental human good tends to blunt the sense of gratefulness and creates the conditions for hubris to rear its ugly head. Hubris breeds greed, arrogance of power and other proclivities that make a perfect recipe for a poisoned and broken world.

Upon this world of bodies and communities that lack wholeness, God appeared in the person of Jesus, which is the Christian understanding of epiphany. God’s epiphany in Jesus is the good news that the church is called upon to proclaim to every person, to human communities and the whole world. God’s epiphany, however, is neither self-evident nor self-fulfilling. It takes an eye of faith to discern the good news for which reason Jesus’ faithful are sent out that the world may believe.

I. Objectives:

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

1. Tell stories about children who bring about healing of others
2. Describe God’s healing love
3. Resolve to be an instrument of healing at home, in school, and in the church

II. Concept: God uses even young children to bring about healing.

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV), a big picture of Jesus healing the blind beggar (to be used during the story telling), pictures of situations that show unhealthiness (to be displayed at the beginning and shown during “Getting Ready,” examples: a sick person, a messy room or a place littered with garbage, persons who are quarreling, a field or trees destroyed by landslide or flood), pictures that show healthiness (to be displayed at the beginning and shown during “Discovering the Biblical Truth,” examples: a healthy person, a clean room or surroundings, persons being nice to each other, a beautiful field)

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time: Let the children explore the pictures that are displayed. Let them choose where to sit. Sing a welcome song.
2. Opening Prayer: Dear Jesus, thank you for loving us. Thank you for bringing us here today. Thank you for Sunday School. Thank you for making me healthy and strong. Amen.
3. Opening Songs

“Jesus Loved Each Little Child” (*Children Praise God*)

“I Want to Live in Friendly World” (first 2 lines, *Children Praise God*, 166)

I want to live in a friendly world, a friendly world, a friendly world

I want to live in friendly world that’s kind to a child like me. (repeat)

Teach the song, “Help Somebody Today” (*Children Praise God*, 190)

Look all around you, look for someone in need, help somebody today

Help somebody today, somebody along life’s way

Let sadness be ended, the friendless be friended

O help somebody today

B. Getting Ready

1. Ask:

- Who among you have been sick?
- How do you feel when you are sick?
- What did you do to get better?
- Who helped you get better?

2. Picture Study

Show the children the first set of pictures. Have them describe each picture. Ask them if they like what they see. Ask them what they can do to help in each of the situations depicted in the pictures.

Say: If something or somebody is not healthy, that thing or person needs healing. In our stories today, we will hear about a blind man who was healed by Jesus and how children can help when others are sick.

C. Learning Time

Tell the stories

Jesus Heals a Blind Person
(Use the big picture of Jesus healing a blind person)

One day, Jesus and the disciples saw a blind beggar. The disciples said, "Why is he blind?"

Jesus answered, "We need to help him. Let us work to show God's love."

Jesus made mud and spread it in the man's eyes. He told the man to wash in the pool. The blind man believed Jesus. He was healed. He was able to see. His neighbors were surprised. They asked him, "Who made you well?"

"A man called Jesus", he answered. "He made me well. Now I can see. Now I am happy."

Arwen Helps Lira Get Well

Arwen, Lira and the other children are playing in front of the church. Teacher was there too. They are playing "I Roll the Ball to..."

Just then, Lira suddenly fainted. "Quick, help!" Teacher carried Lira. Arwen ran to her mom who is a nurse. Arwen's mom immediately brought Lira to the hospital. She has heart disease. The doctor helped Lira on time. Arwen too, helped Lira.

D. Deepening Activity/ Sharing Time

Ask these questions:

1. In our first story, who needed healing? (The blind man)
2. Did Jesus heal him?
3. What did the blind man do? (He praised God and told the people that Jesus healed him.)
4. In our other story, what happened to Lira?
5. Who helped her? (Teacher and Arwen)

6. How did Arwen help Lira?
7. Can children help people who are sick? How?

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Show the second set of pictures. Have them describe each picture. Ask them if they like what they see.

Ask the children who helped them when they were sick?

Tell the children that those who helped them showed them God's healing love.

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

Ask the children how they can show others God's healing love at home, in school and in church. (Children can help in making people happy. Children can help heal our sick sister or brother by helping mom take care of them. Children can help protect our environment. Children can also help quarreling persons become friends again.)

G. Closing Worship

1. Read from the Bible the memory verse (John 9:38a), then simplify it: "The blind man said, 'Lord, I believe'".
2. Give the Offering while singing:
Giving, giving, gladly giving day by day, giving, giving, gladly day by day!
3. Closing song: "Help Somebody Today"
4. Closing prayer: Dear God thank you for sending Jesus who loves us. Thank you for healing us when we are sick. Help us to be kind to others too so we can show your love. Amen.

January 15, 2017First Sunday after Epiphany/Christian Unity: **The Inclusive Healing Ministry of the Church***Old Testament: 2 Kings 5:1-19b*

1 Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Aram, was a great man and in high favor with his master, because by him the Lord had given victory to Aram. The man, though a mighty warrior, suffered from leprosy. 2 Now the Arameans on one of their raids had taken a young girl captive from the land of Israel, and she served Naaman's wife. 3 She said to her mistress, 'If only my lord were with the prophet who is in Samaria! He would cure him of his leprosy.' 4 So Naaman went in and told his lord just what the girl from the land of Israel had said. 5 And the king of Aram said, 'Go then, and I will send along a letter to the king of Israel.' He went, taking with him ten talents of silver, six thousand shekels of gold, and ten sets of garments. 6 He brought the letter to the king of Israel, which read, 'When this letter reaches you, know that I have sent to you my servant Naaman, that you may cure him of his leprosy.' 7 When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, 'Am I God, to give death or life, that this man sends word to me to cure a man of his leprosy? Just look and see how he is trying to pick a quarrel with me.'

8 But when Elisha the man of God heard that the king of Israel had torn his clothes, he sent a message to the king, 'Why have you torn your clothes? Let him come to me, that he may learn that there is a prophet in Israel.' 9 So Naaman came with his horses and chariots, and halted at the entrance of Elisha's house. 10 Elisha sent a messenger to him, saying, 'Go, wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored and you shall be clean.' 11 But Naaman became angry and went away, saying, 'I thought that for me he would surely come out, and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, and would wave his hand over the spot, and cure the leprosy! 12 Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them, and be clean?' He turned and went away in a rage. 13 But his servants approached and said to him, 'Father, if the prophet had commanded you to do something difficult, would you not have done it? How much more, when all he said to you was, "Wash, and be clean"?' 14 So he went down and immersed himself seven times in the Jordan, according to the word of the man of God; his flesh was restored like the flesh of a young boy, and he was clean.

15 Then he returned to the man of God, he and all his company; he came and stood before him and said, 'Now I know that there is no God in all the earth except in Israel; please accept a present from your servant.' 16 But he said, 'As the Lord lives, whom I serve, I will accept nothing!' He urged him to accept, but he refused. 17 Then Naaman said, 'If not, please let two mule-loads of earth be given to your servant; for your servant will no longer offer burnt-offering or sacrifice to any god except the Lord. 18 But may the Lord pardon your servant on one count: when my master goes into the house of Rimmon to worship there, leaning on my arm, and I bow down in the house of Rimmon, when I do bow down in the house of Rimmon, may the Lord pardon your servant on this one count.' 19 He said to him, 'Go in peace.'

New Testament: Mark 1:29-31

29 As soon as they left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. 30 Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. 31 He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

General Concept: In the midst of a broken humanity, God came in Jesus to mend it and make it whole.

Key Concept:

N/K/YE: God's healing love can be shared by children to others.

Exegesis of the Biblical References

In this particular passage from 2 Kings (which Jesus alludes to in Luke 4:16ff), An Aramean (Syrian) Army Commander, Naaman, and Elisha, the Prophet based in Samaria, are brought together by a young girl captive from Israel. In other words, two mighty men meet through the efforts of a young slave girl.

Naaman is healed of his leprosy. God's healing love is revealed as transgressing borders. God, through his prophet, heals the "enemy." And the "enemy" brings home two mule-loads of earth from Israel. In Antiquity, a god could not be worshipped apart from that god's own land. Thus, Naaman thenceforth could worship the LORD on the LORD's land even in Aram.

Mark begins with a powerful revelation: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" thus setting the stage for the alternative, the reversal to "The beginning of the gospel of Augustus Caesar, the Son of God." This gospel is good news to the poor, the complete opposite of Caesar's good news to the rich. And Mark begins with healing stories, including two among the most marginalized in society: a leper and a widow (Simon's mother-in-law).

Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users

Just as God offers salvation to all, it is God's intention that healing extends to every person and to all communities. In the Philippines, the fact that many people get sick and die without getting medical attention is a testimony that this country is sick not only socially but also spiritually. A society cannot be spiritually healthy if and when on the one hand, it is a medical tourism destination and on the other hand, millions of its people don't even have minimal access to primary healthcare. When hospital care is obtained on a fee-for-service basis, there is in effect a state policy that effectively discriminates a good many people from enjoying curative services. Without explicitly saying it, healthcare is implicitly and intentionally meant to be exclusive.

Exclusiveness and discrimination appears to be the "normal" human way in societies where there is widespread incidence of poverty like the Philippines. Health policy makers throw their hands up in seeming exasperation for failing to find solutions given the country's economic condition. But, of course, economists don't even try to find answers to it because their business is to find ways to make enterprises more profitable. Making healthcare universal and comprehensive is not an economic concern because it's considered not a moral and theological problem. But a moral problem becomes a political problem the moment people realize that they deserve better from their leaders. For the church, the intentional and systematic deprivation of people from basic healthcare is not only morally and theologically unacceptable; it is a sign of a deep spiritual malaise afflicting the nation's entire body-politic.

The church ought to be seriously concerned about the health situation of the people regardless of religious affiliation or non-affiliation. It is a scandal that reaches right to heaven's doorsteps. God's epiphany in Jesus is an unequivocal message from heaven that caring for the sick is a political, moral and spiritual mandate. Governments are created by God to serve this purpose. It

is an essential part of the church's evangelical calling to call upon the government to have the political will to find solutions.

I. Objectives:

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

1. Begin to explain the meaning of God's healing love
2. Talk about the role of a young slave girl in the healing of Naaman
3. Share ways by which God's healing love is shared

II. Concept: God's healing love can be shared by children to others

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV), picture of a Hebrew girl talking to Commander Naaman (to be used during the story-telling; reproduce this picture in outline form for the children to color later), crayons

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time: Let the children choose where to sit. Teach a new welcome song:
"Welcome" (*Children Praise God: Song Book for Children*, compiled by Esther Ferido Camino, UCCP, p. 68)
Welcome, welcome all of you, Glad you are with us
Shake hands no need to be blue, welcome to you!
2. Opening Prayer: We praise you, dear Jesus. We thank you for loving us. Be with us today in our Sunday School. Make us kind and helpful. Amen.
3. Review the song:
"Help Somebody Today" (*Children Praise God*, 190)
Look all around you, look for someone in need, help somebody today
Help somebody today, somebody along life's way
Let sadness be ended, the friendless be friended
O help somebody today
4. Teach: "How Can We Show Our Love Today" (*Children Praise God*, p. 108)
How can we show our love today, how can we show our love today
We can be kind in our work and play, that's how we show our love today.

B. Getting Ready

1. Ask:
 - How did you feel when someone took care of you when you were sick?
 - Did you feel happy and thankful when you felt better?
2. Say:
 - When someone helped you get better and you felt happy and thankful, that is because God's healing love was shared with you.
 - Let us listen to a story about a girl who helped someone get healed.

C. Learning Time

Tell the story

A Young Girl Helps Bring Healing
(Use the picture of a Hebrew girl)

A long time ago, there lived a Hebrew girl who was a helper of Commander Naaman and his wife. Naaman was sick so the Hebrew girl told them that Naaman must visit a Hebrew prophet named Elisha who can help heal him. Naaman went to Elisha's house. Naaman became well. God healed Naaman through Elisha with the help of the young Hebrew girl. Naaman wanted to go home and thank God. Elisha said, "Go in peace."

D. Deepening Activity/ Sharing Time

Ask these questions:

1. Who was the helper of Commander Naaman and his wife? (A Hebrew girl)
2. Why did the Hebrew girl tell Naaman to visit a Hebrew prophet? (Because Naaman was sick)
3. What was the name of the prophet?
4. What happened to Naaman when he went to see Elisha? (He got well.)
5. What did Naaman want to do next? (He wanted to go home and thank God.)

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask these questions:

1. Did the Hebrew girl help Naaman?
2. Do you think Naaman was happy and thankful?

Say: Naaman was happy and thankful because he felt God's healing love. Like the young Hebrew girl, you can also help share God's healing love.

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Ask the children the different ways by which they can share God's healing love with others.
2. Have the children color the reproduced picture of the Hebrew girl talking to Naaman.

G. Closing Worship

1. Read from the Bible the memory verse (2 Kings 5:15b), then simplify it: "There is only one God."
2. Give the Offering while singing:
I'm giving, I'm giving because I love Jesus
I'm giving, I'm giving because I love him.
3. Closing song: "How Can We Show Our Love Today"
4. Closing prayer: Dear God, thank you for your healing love. Help us to show your love to others. Make us your children of love. Amen.

January 22, 2017Second Sunday after Epiphany/National Bible Sunday: **Healing of Animositities****Old Testament: Isaiah 11:1-9**

A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

² The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might,

the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD.

³ His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear;

⁴ but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

⁵ Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

⁶ The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together,
and a little child shall lead them.

⁷ The cow and the bear shall graze, their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

⁸ The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den.

⁹ They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

New Testament: Galatians 3:28

²⁸ There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

General Concept: Respecting and appreciating differences is a condition for creative unity and harmony.

Key Concept:

N/K/YE: Being one in Christ is a commonality that can help children understand each other.

Exegesis of the Biblical References

Isaiah is part of the Prophetic Tradition and most scholars argue that it is a compilation of three strands, commonly referred to as First Isaiah, Second Isaiah, and Third Isaiah. First Isaiah, chapters 1-39, is usually dated early 8th century BCE when the Northern Kingdom was annexed to the Assyrian Empire. Second Isaiah, Chapters 40-55 is accepted as coming from the time of Cyrus of Persia (ca 539 BCE) while Third Isaiah, Chapters 56-66, suggests a date a generation after Cyrus, around 510 BCE.

Isaiah 11:1-9 is about the Messianic King from the line of David. Compare this with Isaiah 9:2-7. Wisdom and justice were traditionally attributed to the ideal king. The reign of God revealed or disclosed through God's Anointed (Messiah in Hebrew, Christ in Greek) will reorder the world's current disorder and bring abundant life to everyone.

Scholars call Galatians the Magna Carta of Christian liberty and, next to Romans, celebrates the depth and the breadth of God's grace, revealed through Christ crucified and risen. Nothing can separate us from the love of God. People—Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female—are

put right with God because of God's grace, not by performance of good works, ritual observances or fulfillment of rites related to chosen-ness (like circumcision).

Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users

Differences make or break life and life-relationships. It makes because it is a key to the survival of species on the planet. It breaks because different living entities could consume each other towards mutual extinction, especially with the advent of the human species on earth.

The Genesis account of creation reveals God's intention and design to create different kinds of life forms. It shows not only differences but also polarities that make existing together contentious. At one end, polarities create burning animosities; at the other, polarities excite the most exquisite pleasure. It seems that differences and polarities are meant to be resolved by means of one more gift from the Creator – freedom.

All forms of life are endowed by the Creator with freedom – instinctual and intellectual. Instinctual freedom exercised by birds and fish, for example, is beyond scientific comprehension. Human intellectual freedom, on the other hand, appears to be limitless and defiant to any kind of restraint. It is the whole creation's vocation to bring the individual freedoms of all creatures to fruition and there fulfil the Creator's purpose. At the human plane, motives and actions are not equal or of the same value. Some of these tend to ignite conflicts while others induce cooperation. In order to realize creation's goals, there is a need to overcome the former and at the same time develop the latter. In the moral sense, those conflicts that in the end create animosities are to be exposed as bad, while those that generate goodwill are to be regarded good. Theologically, the distinction is between sin and righteousness.

This way of making distinctions may be tedious and misleading. For Christians the surest way to know what is sinful and righteous is by learning from Jesus. As testified to by the apostolic witnesses as recorded in the Bible, Jesus life and work provides the church and every Christian the norms for what is good or bad, just and sinful. Jesus drew the line without equivocation. The ultimate realization of the kingdom/reign of God happens when individual, ethnic, anatomical and other inborn differences and preferences are recognized, accepted, and celebrated as God's design for creation.

I. Objectives:

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

1. Describe one's physical characteristics and those of others
2. Tell that being one in Christ makes it easy to understand each other
3. List ways by which one's actions reflect being one in Christ

II. Concept: Being one in Christ is a commonality that can help children understand each other.

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV), one piece of cartolina or Manila paper where a big circle is drawn and the name JESUS written at the top, cut-out pictures from magazines and newspapers of different people (preferably of different nationalities), glue

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time: Warmly greet each child as they arrive. Let them choose where to sit.
2. Teach this song (to the tune of "Are You Sleeping")
Where is Mary (mention a name of a child), where is Mary?

Here I am (teach the child to sing this while the child stands), here I am!

How are you this morning? (teacher asks)

Very well, I thank you. (child answers)

Please sit down, please sit down. (teacher sings)

[Sing the song repeatedly until all the children's names have been mentioned.

Encourage the other children to sing with you the teacher part.]

3. Opening Prayer: We praise you, dear God. We thank you for your love. Be with us today in our Sunday School. Help us to understand one another. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

B. Getting Ready

1. Teach the song: "In and Out the Dancing Bluebird"

In and out the dancing bluebird (3x), who will be my partner?

2. Teach the game "In and Out the Dancing Bluebird": Two children hold both hands held up high. While singing the song, the other children pass continuously under their hands in a line. When the song is finished, they close the circle of their hands over whoever is passing and "catch" her/him. This child who is caught becomes the partner of one of the pair who are holding hands. Sing a descriptive phrase for this child who has just been "caught" and is now the new partner while the other children continue to pass under the partners' hands, for example:

"Curly-haired Mary is my partner (3x), we are one in Christ."

Or

"Brown-skinned Lukas is my partner (3x), we are one in Christ."

Play this game until all have been partners to each other. Sing with love and acceptance of whatever the physical attributes or characteristics of each of the children are. As the game goes on, they will become conscious as to how they look with acceptance and love for each other. The teacher must show this in her attitude which has the best effect towards the children. (*Children Praise God*, 170)

3. After the game, have the children sit down. Say: We are made by God. God loves us all. Even if we all look different, God accepts us as we are. We must accept each other and understand each other.

C. Learning Time

Tell the story

Isaiah's Dream

One night Isaiah had a dream. God was with him. He saw a wolf playing with a lamb, a leopard lying down with a baby goat, and a calf and a lion together. A little child was there with them. The cow and the bear were eating together and their babies were playing together. Everyone was safe. The poor were taken care of.

Isaiah said, "I can't believe this."

God answered, "It is true. Time will come when all my creatures will live together. They will love one another. They will share food with one another. There will be enough for everyone. All people will become friends."

(Adapted from "Life in God's Home", Younger Elementary Teacher's Manual, *Building the World: A Home for All Children*, VCS Manual 2005, p.77)

D. Deepening Activity/ Sharing Time

Ask these questions:

1. Who had a dream? (Isaiah)
2. What animals were in his dream? What were they doing?
3. Were they safe together?
4. What happened to the poor?
5. Will Isaiah's dream come true?

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Say:

1. Isaiah's dream will come true when everyone will love one another, share food, and there will be enough for everyone. Everyone will become friends.
2. God made all of us different, but God loves all people and creation. We must love and understand each other too.

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

Let the children paste the cut-out pictures of different people inside the big circle on the cartolina or Manila paper. Display it on the wall and describe how happy it is to be in Jesus Christ.

G. Closing Worship

1. Read from the Bible the memory verse (Galatians 3:28), then simplify it: "All people are one in Christ."
2. Give the Offering while singing:
Giving, giving, gladly giving day by day, giving, giving, gladly day by day.
3. Closing song: "I Want to Live in Friendly World"
4. Closing prayer: Dear God, thank you for making each one different. Thank you for loving us. Help us accept one another. May your love guide us to love one another. Amen.

January 29, 2017Third Sunday after Epiphany: **Healing as a Message of Salvation***Old Testament: 2 Kings 4:8-37*

One day Elisha was passing through Shunem, where a wealthy woman lived, who urged him to have a meal. So whenever he passed that way, he would stop there for a meal. ⁹She said to her husband, 'Look, I am sure that this man who regularly passes our way is a holy man of God.'¹⁰Let us make a small roof chamber with walls, and put there for him a bed, a table, a chair, and a lamp, so that he can stay there whenever he comes to us.'

¹¹ One day when he came there, he went up to the chamber and lay down there. ¹²He said to his servant Gehazi, 'Call the Shunammite woman.' When he had called her, she stood before him. ¹³He said to him, 'Say to her, Since you have taken all this trouble for us, what may be done for you? Would you have a word spoken on your behalf to the king or to the commander of the army?' She answered, 'I live among my own people.'¹⁴He said, 'What then may be done for her?' Gehazi answered, 'Well, she has no son, and her husband is old.'¹⁵He said, 'Call her.' When he had called her, she stood at the door. ¹⁶He said, 'At this season, in due time, you shall embrace a son.' She replied, 'No, my lord, O man of God; do not deceive your servant.'

¹⁷ The woman conceived and bore a son at that season, in due time, as Elisha had declared to her.

¹⁸ When the child was older, he went out one day to his father among the reapers. ¹⁹He complained to his father, 'Oh, my head, my head!' The father said to his servant, 'Carry him to his mother.'²⁰He carried him and brought him to his mother; the child sat on her lap until noon, and he died. ²¹She went up and laid him on the bed of the man of God, closed the door on him, and left. ²²Then she called to her husband, and said, 'Send me one of the servants and one of the donkeys, so that I may quickly go to the man of God and come back again.'²³He said, 'Why go to him today? It is neither new moon nor Sabbath.' She said, 'It will be all right.'²⁴Then she saddled the donkey and said to her servant, 'Urge the animal on; do not hold back for me unless I tell you.'²⁵So she set out, and came to the man of God at Mount Carmel.

When the man of God saw her coming, he said to Gehazi his servant, 'Look, there is the Shunammite woman; ²⁶run at once to meet her, and say to her, Are you all right? Is your husband all right? Is the child all right?' She answered, 'It is all right.'²⁷When she came to the man of God at the mountain, she caught hold of his feet. Gehazi approached to push her away. But the man of God said, 'Let her alone, for she is in bitter distress; the LORD has hidden it from me and has not told me.'²⁸Then she said, 'Did I ask my lord for a son? Did I not say, Do not mislead me?'²⁹He said to Gehazi, 'Gird up your loins, and take my staff in your hand, and go. If you meet anyone, give no greeting, and if anyone greets you, do not answer; and lay my staff on the face of the child.'³⁰Then the mother of the child said, 'As the LORD lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave without you.' So he rose up and followed her. ³¹Gehazi went on ahead and laid the staff on the face of the child, but there was no sound or sign of life. He came back to meet him and told him, 'The child has not awakened.'

³² When Elisha came into the house, he saw the child lying dead on his bed. ³³So he went in and closed the door on the two of them, and prayed to the LORD. ³⁴Then he got up on the bed and lay upon the child, putting his mouth upon his mouth, his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands; and while he lay bent over him, the flesh of the child became warm. ³⁵He got down, walked once to and fro in the room, then got up again and bent over him; the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. ³⁶Elisha summoned Gehazi and said, 'Call

the Shunammite woman.’ So he called her. When she came to him, he said, ‘Take your son.’³⁷ She came and fell at his feet, bowing to the ground; then she took her son and left.

New Testament: Luke 8:41-56

⁴¹Just then there came a man named Jairus, a leader of the synagogue. He fell at Jesus’ feet and begged him to come to his house, ⁴²for he had an only daughter, about twelve years old, who was dying.

As he went, the crowds pressed in on him. ⁴³Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years; and though she had spent all she had on physicians, no one could cure her. ⁴⁴She came up behind him and touched the fringe of his clothes, and immediately her hemorrhage stopped. ⁴⁵Then Jesus asked, ‘Who touched me?’ When all denied it, Peter said, ‘Master, the crowds surround you and press in on you.’ ⁴⁶But Jesus said, ‘Someone touched me; for I noticed that power had gone out from me.’ ⁴⁷When the woman saw that she could not remain hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before him, she declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed. ⁴⁸He said to her, ‘Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace.’ ⁴⁹While he was still speaking, someone came from the leader’s house to say, ‘Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the teacher any longer.’ ⁵⁰When Jesus heard this, he replied, ‘Do not fear. Only believe, and she will be saved.’ ⁵¹When he came to the house, he did not allow anyone to enter with him, except Peter, John, and James, and the child’s father and mother. ⁵²They were all weeping and wailing for her; but he said, ‘Do not weep; for she is not dead but sleeping.’ ⁵³And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. ⁵⁴But he took her by the hand and called out, ‘Child, get up!’ ⁵⁵Her spirit returned, and she got up at once. Then he directed them to give her something to eat. ⁵⁶Her parents were astounded; but he ordered them to tell no one what had happened.

General Concept: Salvation comes whenever healing happens.

Key Concept:

N/K/YE: All healing comes from God.

Exegesis of the Biblical References

The first part of the passage from 2 Kings resonates with a recurrent theme in the Bible: a hitherto barren woman, late in her life, gives birth to a child. The second part resonates with 1 Kings 17:17ff where Elijah resuscitates the child of the widow from Zarephath in Sidon (which Jesus alludes to in Luke 4). This narrative continues the past week’s lessons on the inclusivity of God’s revelations. God’s healing does not recognize borders. The birth of her child healed the Shunammite woman from the curse of barrenness that many women experienced and still do. The re-birth of her child, whom Elisha resuscitated, echoes God’s care for children. (Read Jonah. The primary reason Nineveh is not destroyed is the presence of children, 120,000 of them!)

The Gospel of Luke is the gospel that, over and over, reveals Jesus’ mission: proclaim good news to the poor, liberation to captives, sight to the blind, the day of the Lord’s favor (or the Jubilee Year). Luke is part one of a two-volume work. Acts of the Apostles is part two. It is best to read both one after another.

In today’s passage, two women are restored: a 12-year-old child and a woman who has been

bleeding for 12 years. Children, especially girls, were considered nobodies during Jesus' time. Bleeding women were considered just a rung or two higher than lepers. Both were at the margins of society where God and God's liberating acts are most active.

Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users

All healing comes from God through whatever means under God's disposal. When it happens the good news of God's salvation has been proclaimed. The overcoming of illness is a sign of God at work to save people. It is an occasion to celebrate God's saving work and for the healed person to grow in faith. People of faith should not miss a healing event to recognize and thank God for it. In pastoral care practice, the pastor recognizes that being sick is a moment when a person finds himself most receptive to God's love and care. It is a moment when a person's faith is challenged to grow and mature or fail and get weakened. Through pastoral care, a believer may be guided to face the challenge of faith more creatively.

One of the challenges faced by UCCP regarding the ministry of healing is the claim that only "charismatic" healing is from God while others are merely secular and may even be the work of the devil. While there may remain practices of charismatic healing, that is, without the benefit of modern curative services, and should not be denigrated it should not be used as a norm for recognizing God's saving work. Pentecostal-oriented churches are able to draw believers from out of the UCCP and other mainstream churches claiming that charismatic healing is a mark of the true church without which God's Spirit is not at work. All healing is from God, therefore, the UCCP secular healing programs is a point where God's saving power is at work.

I. Objectives:

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

1. Show appreciation for God's healing
2. Describe how the son of the Shunamite woman was healed
3. Share one's experience of being healed
4. Demonstrate one's thankfulness for God's healing

II. Concept: All healing comes from God.

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV), picture of Elisha healing the boy from Shunem, toy medical props, if available (for the Applying the Biblical Truth roleplay)

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time: Greet the children "how are you" as they find their seats.
2. Sing this welcome song:
Welcome, welcome all of you, glad you are with us
Shake hands no need to be blue, welcome to you. (*Children Praise God*, 67)
3. Review the song: "How Can We Show Our Love Today" (*Children Praise God*, 108)

Teach the Song: "Jesus Went About Doing Good" (*Children Praise God*, 67)

Jesus went about doing good, the Bible tells me so
He helped the sick and healed the blind, to little children he was kind
He gave some hungry people food, He said to all 'Be kind and good'
Jesus went about doing good, the Bible tells me so!

Si Jesus ay nagpagaling, Bibliya ang may saysay
Bulag ay nakakakita, mga bata pinasaya

Binusog ang nagugutom, Siya ay nagbigay lugod,
Si Jesus ay nagpagaling, Bibliya ang may saysay!

4. Opening Prayer: Dear Jesus, we are happy because you love us. Thank you for loving us. We are happy to be here today. Thank you for being with us. Amen.

B. Getting Ready

Show the picture of Elisha healing the boy from Shunem. Ask the children what they see in the picture. After the children volunteer answers, say: "There are many ways of healing. In our story today, we listen to how people are healed by God."

C. Learning Time

Tell the story

Elisha Brings Back a Boy to Life

A long, long time ago, there lived a prophet named Elisha. Every time he went to a place called Shunem, he would stay in the house of a woman and her husband. So, they made a small room for Elisha. Elisha was thankful. Elisha asked God to give the woman and her husband a son. The son grew up.

But one day, he got sick and died.

The woman went to Elisha and said, "Prophet Elisha, help me. It is my son."

Elisha went to see the boy. He bent over the boy and put his mouth upon his mouth, his eyes upon his eyes and his hands upon the boy's hands. Just then, the boy became warm.

Then he bent over him again and the boy sneezed. Elisha went to his mother, "Take your son."

The boy was alive!

D. Deepening Activity/ Sharing Time

Ask these questions:

1. What is the name of the prophet?
2. What did Elisha ask from God for the woman and her husband?
3. What happened to their son?
4. How was he healed?

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask more questions:

1. Do you remember when you got sick?

2. How did you feel when you got better?

As a conclusion to the sharing, say:

All healing is done by God through different ways. We thank God for healing us.

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Ask the children who wants to become a healer: doctor, nurse, midwife, physical therapist, etc.
2. Let them roleplay a healing scene, each child playing the role of what she or he wants to become. The other children can be the patients. Use the prepared props, if you have any. If not, the children can improvise.
3. Ask the “healers” how it feels to help heal, and ask the “patients” how it feels to be healed.
4. Let them demonstrate thankfulness for God’s healing.

G. Closing Worship

1. Read from the Bible the memory verse (Luke 8:48), then simplify it: Jesus said, “Your faith has healed you.”
2. Give the Offering while singing:
Giving, giving, gladly giving day by day, giving, giving, gladly day by day!
3. Closing song: “Jesus Went About Doing Good”
4. Closing prayer: Thank you, dear Jesus, for your love for us. Thank you for healing us when we are sick. Help us to be healers too. Teach us to show your love to others. Thank you for saving us. Amen.

February 5, 2017Fourth Sunday after Epiphany: **Healing of Social Divides***Old Testament: Ruth 1:1-21*

¹In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land, and a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to live in the country of Moab, he and his wife and two sons. ²The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion; they were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there. ³But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. ⁴These took Moabite wives; the name of one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. When they had lived there for about ten years, ⁵both Mahlon and Chilion also died, so that the woman was left without her two sons or her husband.

⁶ Then she started to return with her daughters-in-law from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the LORD had had consideration for his people and given them food. ⁷So she set out from the place where she had been living, she and her two daughters-in-law, and they went on their way to go back to the land of Judah. ⁸But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, 'Go back each of you to your mother's house. May the LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. ⁹The LORD grant that you may find security, each of you in the house of your husband.' Then she kissed them, and they wept aloud. ¹⁰They said to her, 'No, we will return with you to your people.' ¹¹But Naomi said, 'Turn back, my daughters, why will you go with me? Do I still have sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? ¹²Turn back, my daughters, go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. Even if I thought there was hope for me, even if I should have a husband tonight and bear sons, ¹³would you then wait until they were grown? Would you then refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, it has been far more bitter for me than for you, because the hand of the LORD has turned against me.' ¹⁴Then they wept aloud again. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

¹⁵ So she said, 'See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.' ¹⁶But Ruth said, 'Do not press me to leave you or to turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God.

¹⁷ Where you die, I will die—there will I be buried. May the LORD do thus and so to me, and more as well, if even death parts me from you!

¹⁸When Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more to her.

¹⁹ So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them; and the women said, 'Is this Naomi?' ²⁰She said to them, 'Call me no longer Naomi, call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt bitterly with me.

²¹ I went away full, but the LORD has brought me back empty; why call me Naomi when the LORD has dealt harshly with me, and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me?'

New Testament: Luke 13:10-17

¹⁰ Now he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. ¹¹And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. ¹²When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, 'Woman, you are set free from your ailment.' ¹³When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. ¹⁴But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because

Jesus had cured on the Sabbath, kept saying to the crowd, 'There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured, and not on the Sabbath day.' ¹⁵But the Lord answered him and said, 'You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water? ¹⁶And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the Sabbath day?' ¹⁷When he said this, all his opponents were put to shame; and the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things that he was doing.

General Concept: Social division is eradicated when human fellowship, care, respect, and dignity are restored.

Key Concept:

N/K/YE: Children can help in healing social differences.

Exegesis of the Biblical References

The Book of Ruth, like Jonah, is considered one of the best short stories from Antiquity. Like Jonah and Isaiah, chapters 40-55, Ruth serves as a counter-narrative to the exclusive tendencies of Ezra and Nehemiah and affirms that God's grace and revelation extend beyond the people of Israel to people of every nation.

Ruth 1:1-21 introduces us to the story's main protagonists, both women, a Moabite and an Israelite, and their covenant to be each other's keeper.

Luke's preferential option for the poor, oppressed, and marginalized continues in 13:10-17. The healing of the crippled woman was a complete surprise. She did not ask for the healing! Jesus saw her, touched her, and immediately healed her. After being bent, unable to straighten up for eighteen long years, the woman is able again to look at her fellow human beings, face to face. And she begins praising God. Of course, the religious leaders find nothing praise-worthy in this manifestation of God's love. They do not see the healing. What they see is the Sabbath-breaking.

Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users

One of the most palpable proofs of human depravity is the division of society into social classes according to income and ownership of property. There is only contempt, no respect for the rights of people to food security, safe dwelling, healthy environment and a fair share of society's wealth. Huge income disparities is bereft of any biological, cultural and moral basis. Rather, they are products of specific types of social arrangements and processes constructed by a tiny minority that controls the levers of power by virtue of its ownership of society's productive wealth.

Adding to the vileness of the property-owning class, the more a family earns and owns the less contribution it has to the larger society. This situation finds justification in an ideology that places people's health and wellbeing in each person's responsibility and should not be passed on to society. There develops a culture that makes the classification of people into rich and poor as a normal fact of life that is not subject to moral discourse. It is a culture that makes people deaf to the voice of conscience and immune to moral criticism.

Against that, the gospel has an unchanging message that condemns unjust social relations and that makes mutual respect and regard for one another's wellbeing and dignity as the norms of human relations in society. Jesus irked and embarrassed the self-proclaimed righteousness of

the Pharisees when he received everyone as an equal regardless of social and moral status. He brought into the fellowship of disciples all kinds of people, especially those who failed the test of "righteousness." Jesus' open circle of followers was to become the precursor of a reconciled humanity that has been healed of its brokenness.

I. Objectives:

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

1. Tell the story of the woman who was healed by Jesus
2. Explain how the poor and the sick find it hard to be accepted by others
3. Demonstrate ways by which children can help in healing the poor and the sick

II. Concept: Children can help in healing social differences.

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV); a picture of a subdivision for the rich and a picture of an area of poor illegal settlers (in the picture, there are persons and how they look are very different from each other; this will be used for the picture study before the story); a picture of Jesus healing the crippled woman; costumes for the role plays: for a poor woman, for Jesus, for a rich boy, for a poor girl

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time: Warmly greet each child as they arrive.
2. Teach the songs, "Ang Umaga Ngayon"

Ang umaga ngayon, kay ganda, kay ganda (2x)

Tayo ay magsaya, magbigay ng ligaya

Ang umaga ngayon, kay ganda, kay ganda

"I Will Share" (*Children Praise God*, 109)

I will share with others, I will share with others

Pleasing God in all I do that will make me happy too

I'll be kind to others, I'll be kind to others

Pleasing God in all I do that will make me happy too.

3. Opening Prayer: Dear God, we are happy to be here. We are happy because you love us. Thank you for our loving teacher. Thank you for our classmates. Thank you for our friends. Thank you for our neighbors. Amen.

B. Getting Ready

Picture study: Present the two contrasting pictures. Let the children react to the pictures.

C. Learning Time

1. Say: In our past stories, we saw that God heals many people. It does not matter to God whether we are rich or poor. God heals everyone. Our Bible story today is about an old woman who was healed by Jesus. We will also listen to a second story.
2. Tell these stories:

Jesus Heals a Crippled Woman

Jesus was teaching in a synagogue. There were many people. Men, women and children. Women, especially when they are old, were not welcome. They were pushed aside.

“Old woman, stay at the back. You are dirty. You are crippled.” people kept saying.

Just then Jesus saw her. He said, “Come, you are free from your sickness.” Jesus touched her and she was healed.

The old woman was very happy. The leader of the synagogue was not happy, but the crowd was happy. They praised God for the wonderful things Jesus did.

Domini and the Beggar

Caring, Julie and Domini were washing clothes in the river. Neighbors were there. A beggar passed by.

“Beggar, beggar go away!” chanted the children. “Stranger, stranger go away.” The beggar went by.

“Where is Domini?” Caring said, “Domini, Domini, where are you?” She thought Domini might have gone to the deep part of the river. Caring was worried. Domini is her youngest sister.

After some time, Domini appeared. “I brought the beggar home. I gave her food. She was hungry. I treated her wound. I pity her.”

They saw the beggar. Her leg had a white band. She was wearing a clean blouse. She was holding Domini’s hand.

“Thank you Domini,” the beggar said.

“Inang will be mad,” Julie said.

“But Inang told us to be kind because Jesus loves us. Jesus loves all people. He gave food to the hungry. He helped the poor. I love Jesus. Jesus will be happy. I am happy,” answered Domini.

D. Deepening Activity/ Sharing Time

Ask these questions:

1. In our first story, where was Jesus teaching?
2. What did the people say to the old woman?
3. What did Jesus do to the old woman?
4. In our second story, where were Caring, Julie and Domini washing clothes?
5. What did the children say to the beggar?
6. What did Domini do to the beggar?
7. Who should we be like, the people and the children who made the sick woman and the beggar stay at the back and go away, or Jesus and Domini? Why?

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Children can help in healing social differences. If we respect and care for others, we help heal social differences. That is Jesus' way. Jesus showed us to respect, care and love other people.

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

For N/K: Let the children role play the story of the crippled woman who was healed by Jesus. The role of Jesus being accepting and loving towards the old woman must be emphasized.

For YP: Let them role play a poor girl standing at the gate of a rich boy. The rich boy is trying to shoo him away. Ask the children what they should do. Let them act it out.

G. Closing Worship

1. Read from the Bible the memory verse (Luke 13:13), then simplify it: "The woman stood up straight and began praising God".

2. Give the Offering while singing:

Sharing, sharing, gladly sharing day by day

Sharing, sharing gladly day by day.

3. Closing song:

Ikaw at ako, bati na tayo. Iwasan ang pag-aaway, magmahalan tayo

4. Closing prayer: Dear Jesus, thank you for letting us share with others. Please help us be more loving to everyone, but especially for the poor and sick. Amen.

February 12, 2017Fifth Sunday after Epiphany: **Healing of Broken Relationships***Old Testament: Genesis 32:1-32, 33:1-4*

32 Jacob went on his way and the angels of God met him; ²and when Jacob saw them he said, 'This is God's camp!' So he called that place Mahanaim. ³ Jacob sent messengers before him to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the country of Edom, ⁴instructing them, 'Thus you shall say to my lord Esau: Thus says your servant Jacob, "I have lived with Laban as an alien, and stayed until now; ⁵and I have oxen, donkeys, flocks, male and female slaves; and I have sent to tell my lord, in order that I may find favor in your sight." '

⁶ The messengers returned to Jacob, saying, 'We came to your brother Esau, and he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him.'⁷ Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed; and he divided the people that were with him, and the flocks and herds and camels, into two companies, ⁸thinking, 'If Esau comes to one company and destroys it, then the company that is left will escape.'

⁹ And Jacob said, 'O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O Lord who said to me, "Return to your country and to your kindred, and I will do you good", ¹⁰I am not worthy of the least of all the steadfast love and all the faithfulness that you have shown to your servant, for with only my staff I crossed this Jordan; and now I have become two companies. ¹¹Deliver me, please, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I am afraid of him; he may come and kill us all, the mothers with the children. ¹²Yet you have said, "I will surely do you good, and make your offspring as the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted because of their number." '

¹³ So he spent that night there, and from what he had with him he took a present for his brother Esau, ¹⁴two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams, ¹⁵thirty milch camels and their colts, forty cows and ten bulls, twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys. ¹⁶These he delivered into the hand of his servants, each drove by itself, and said to his servants, 'Pass on ahead of me, and put a space between drove and drove.'¹⁷ He instructed the foremost, 'When Esau my brother meets you, and asks you, "To whom do you belong? Where are you going? And whose are these ahead of you?" ¹⁸then you shall say, "They belong to your servant Jacob; they are a present sent to my lord Esau; and moreover he is behind us." '¹⁹ He likewise instructed the second and the third and all who followed the droves, 'You shall say the same thing to Esau when you meet him, ²⁰and you shall say, "Moreover your servant Jacob is behind us." '²¹ For he thought, 'I may appease him with the present that goes ahead of me, and afterwards I shall see his face; perhaps he will accept me.'²¹ So the present passed on ahead of him; and he himself spent that night in the camp.

²² The same night he got up and took his two wives, his two maids, and his eleven children, and crossed the ford of the Jabbok. ²³He took them and sent them across the stream, and likewise everything that he had.²⁴ Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until daybreak.²⁵ When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he struck him on the hip socket; and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. ²⁶Then he said, 'Let me go, for the day is breaking.' But Jacob said, 'I will not let you go, unless you bless me.'²⁷ So he said to him, 'What is your name?' And he said, 'Jacob.'²⁸ Then the man said, 'You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with humans, and have prevailed.'²⁹ Then Jacob asked him, 'Please tell me your name.' But he said, 'Why is it that you ask my name?' And there he blessed him. ³⁰So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, 'For I

have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved.’ ³¹The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, limping because of his hip. ³²Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat the thigh muscle that is on the hip socket, because he struck Jacob on the hip socket at the thigh muscle.

³³Now Jacob looked up and saw Esau coming, and four hundred men with him. So he divided the children among Leah and Rachel and the two maids. ²He put the maids with their children in front, then Leah with her children, and Rachel and Joseph last of all. ³He himself went on ahead of them, bowing himself to the ground seven times, until he came near his brother. ⁴But Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept.

New Testament: Matthew 5:24

²⁴leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift.

General Concept: Where there are broken relationships, it is the duty of the church to bring about reconciliation through forgiveness and repentance.

Key Concept:

N/K/YE: We need to forgive each other.

Exegesis of the Biblical References

Genesis is the first book in the Hebrew Bible’s Pentateuch (Five Scrolls) or Torah or “The Law.” When the New Testament talks about the law and the prophets it generally refers to the Pentateuch and the Prophetic Tradition (Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve minor prophets). The Law can also refer to teaching or revelation. Tradition ascribes the authorship of the books from Genesis to Deuteronomy to Moses. This book of beginnings has three major story arcs: Abraham’s, Jacob’s, and Joseph’s.

The passage under study is one of the most poignant scenes in Genesis: the reconciliation of Esau and Jacob. Separated for twenty years the twins reunite but before they did, Jacob wrestled with God at Jabbok where God changed Jacob’s name to Israel. From “Supplanter” to “God reigns.” Jacob was afraid to see Esau face to face. But God revealed Godself to Jacob and their face to face empowered Jacob to reconcile with Esau. When the brothers eventually meet in chapter 33, verse 4, Esau runs to meet Jacob, they embrace, kiss, and weep.

The Gospel of Matthew is generally considered the manual of Christian teaching. Jesus’ five major discourses in the gospel is referred by many as the New Testament’s “Pentateuch.” Chapters 5, 6, and 7, where our reading comes from, is called “The Sermon on the Mount.” Matthew 25: 31-46, a favorite passage of the UCCP, is arguably the heart of Jesus’ mission in the gospel: serving people, especially the least, is serving God. Thus, in chapter 5, verse 24, reconciling with a sister or brother takes priority over gift-giving on the altar.

Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users

The church, although a community of forgiven and redeemed sinners, continues to carry the marks of its sinful past until it achieves full sanctification. In its present state, some among the faithful may have offended others resulting in broken relationships. The difference with past is that the church has a built-in mechanism for restoring broken relationships: forgiveness and repentance.

Both the offended and the offender need healing. The offended heals by forgiving while the offender heals by repenting, each moving towards each other. From the human point of view, the offender should take the first move by repenting and asking forgiveness to which the offended reciprocates by acknowledging the other's repentance and offering his/her forgiveness. From the divine point of view as demonstrated by Jesus, the offended (God) first offers forgiveness that will break down the offender's (sinner) pride and turns him/her into a repentant person. The reconciliation process may start from either end of the bridge.

To succeed, the process should take place in the context and auspices of a forgiving and repenting community, the church. The church that conducts reconciliation on behalf of Christ gathers around as a forgiven and repentant participant-counsellor rather than sits as a judge. This stance and attitude is actualized through the pastor or the elders whose duty it is to heal relationships among the members. It is not a haphazard work but rather a deliberate act impelled by graciousness and informed by the tradition of the church.

I. Objectives:

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

1. Tell the story about how Esau and Jacob reconciled after Jacob asked for forgiveness
2. Describe the need to forgive each other
3. Demonstrate ways of asking for forgiveness and forgiving others.

II. Concept: We need to forgive each other.

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV), picture of Esau and Jacob embracing (to be used in the story)

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time: Greet the children with a warm smile and ask how they are.
2. Sing the songs:
Hello, hello, hello! How are you today?
Hello, hello, hello! I am fine.

Ikaw at ako, bati na tayo. Iwasan ang pag-aaway, magmahalan tayo!
3. Teach the Song, "Forgive, My Friend" (*Children Praise God*, 167)
Forgive, my friend, Oh, have I hurt you?
I made you cry with pain and sorrow
But now I know that Jesus loves you so
He loves us all so let's love each other too!
4. Opening Prayer: Good morning, Jesus! We thank you for your blessings. Thank you for making us loving. Help us share your love to others. Amen.

B. Getting Ready

Ask the children:

1. Have you experienced having been hurt by someone?
2. Have you experienced having hurt someone?
3. What did you feel?
4. What do you think can make you happy?

C. Learning Time

Tell the story

The Twin Brothers

In the Bible, there is a story of twin brothers, Esau and Jacob. Esau was born first, but their father Isaac gave the first-born blessing to Jacob, not Esau. Esau was very angry. He was deeply hurt. Jacob went away. He lived with his Uncle Laban in a far-away land. Many years passed. Jacob was very sad. He was always thinking of his brother Esau. He missed Esau. He wanted to see him. He wanted to say sorry to him. But he was afraid.

But he loved his brother Esau. He remembered they played together. They worked together and ate together. They were happy.

Jacob said, "I must go home to my brother. I am not happy here."

Jacob was coming closer to Esau's home. But Jacob was afraid of Esau. So he sent many gifts of goats, sheep, camels, cows and donkeys.

Finally, Esau and Jacob met. Jacob bowed as he came near his brother. Esau ran to meet him, He embraced and kissed him. They cried. They were tears of happiness. Jacob was sorry and Esau forgave Jacob.

D. Deepening Activity/ Sharing Time

Ask these questions:

1. What are the names of the twin brothers?
2. Who was born first?
3. Who received the first-born blessing?
4. How did Esau feel about this?
5. Where did Jacob go?
6. Was Jacob happy?
7. What did he want to do?
8. What happened when Esau and Jacob finally met? (They embraced and kissed and Esau forgave Jacob.)

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask more questions?

1. Why is it important to say sorry?
2. Why is it important to forgive?

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

In order for the children to practice saying sorry, have them form two lines with an equal number of children for each line (if the number is not equal, the teacher will join). Let the two lines face each other. The children in the first line extends their right hand to the children in the second line and says, "I am sorry." The children in the second line accepts the extended hand and they shake hands while the children in the second line say, "I forgive you."

Let them all sing together:

Ikaw at ako, bati na tayo. Iwasan ang pag-aaway, magmahalan tayo!

G. Closing Worship

1. Read from the Bible the memory verse (Genesis 33:4), then simplify it: "Esau went to meet him, embraced him and they wept."
2. Give the Offering while singing:
Sharing, sharing, gladly sharing day by day

Sharing, sharing gladly day by day.

3. Closing song:

“Forgive, My Friend” (*Children Praise God*, 167)

Forgive, my friend, Oh, have I hurt you?

I made you cry with pain and sorrow

But now I know that Jesus loves you so

He loves us all so let's love each other too!

4. Closing prayer: Dear Jesus, thank you for letting us forgive our sisters, brothers and friends. We love them. Make us more loving and forgiving. Amen.



February 19, 2017Sixth Sunday after Epiphany: **Healing from Demon Possession****Old Testament: 1 Samuel 16:14-23**

14 Now the spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD tormented him. ¹⁵And Saul's servants said to him, 'See now, an evil spirit from God is tormenting you. ¹⁶Let our lord now command the servants who attend you to look for someone who is skillful in playing the lyre; and when the evil spirit from God is upon you, he will play it, and you will feel better.' ¹⁷So Saul said to his servants, 'Provide for me someone who can play well, and bring him to me.' ¹⁸One of the young men answered, 'I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite who is skillful in playing, a man of valour, a warrior, prudent in speech, and a man of good presence; and the LORD is with him.' ¹⁹So Saul sent messengers to Jesse, and said, 'Send me your son David who is with the sheep.' ²⁰Jesse took a donkey loaded with bread, a skin of wine, and a kid, and sent them by his son David to Saul. ²¹And David came to Saul, and entered his service. Saul loved him greatly, and he became his armour-bearer. ²²Saul sent to Jesse, saying, 'Let David remain in my service, for he has found favour in my sight.' ²³And whenever the evil spirit from God came upon Saul, David took the lyre and played it with his hand, and Saul would be relieved and feel better, and the evil spirit would depart from him.

New Testament: Mark 5:1-20

5They came to the other side of the lake, to the country of the Gerasenes. ²And when he had stepped out of the boat, immediately a man out of the tombs with an unclean spirit met him. ³He lived among the tombs; and no one could restrain him anymore, even with a chain; ⁴for he had often been restrained with shackles and chains, but the chains he wrenched apart, and the shackles he broke in pieces; and no one had the strength to subdue him. ⁵Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always howling and bruising himself with stones. ⁶When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and bowed down before him; ⁷and he shouted at the top of his voice, 'What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me.' ⁸For he had said to him, 'Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!' ⁹Then Jesus asked him, 'What is your name?' He replied, 'My name is Legion; for we are many.' ¹⁰He begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country. ¹¹Now there on the hillside a great herd of swine was feeding; ¹²and the unclean spirits begged him, 'Send us into the swine; let us enter them.' ¹³So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the swine; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the lake, and were drowned in the lake.

14 The swineherds ran off and told it in the city and in the country. Then people came to see what it was that had happened. ¹⁵They came to Jesus and saw the demoniac sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the legion; and they were afraid. ¹⁶Those who had seen what had happened to the demoniac and to the swine reported it. ¹⁷Then they began to beg Jesus to leave their neighbourhood. ¹⁸As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed by demons begged him that he might be with him. ¹⁹But Jesus refused, and said to him, 'Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and what mercy he has shown you.' ²⁰And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.

General Concept: The Spirit of God drives away the demons of envy, fear, and greed for the Spirit to dwell in.

Key Concept:

N/K/YE: When the Spirit of God is present in us, it can drive away our spirits of fear and envy.

Exegesis of the Biblical References

I Samuel, part of the Prophetic Tradition, has 3 major characters: Samuel, Saul, and David (who is the primary character in 2 Samuel). That King Saul loved David greatly and was his armor-bearer is a biblical tradition that many readers have forgotten. Both King Saul and his son, Jonathan, loved David. And David loved them back (see 2 Samuel 1:17-27).

The passage for today, I Samuel 16:14-23, is a story about how King Saul met David. It also tells about the beginning of the King's mental illness which, in Antiquity, was attributed to an evil spirit. Every time the King was tormented by his illness, David's music would make the King feel better and the "evil spirit would depart from him" (vs.23).

A Roman Legion consisted of four thousand to six thousand soldiers. There were up to 28 legions deployed in the empire in the First Century. That Mark would name the demon possessing the Gerasene "Legion" is a clear indication that the "Gospel of Augustus Caesar, the Son of God" was evil and should be cast away. Every one possessed by legion needs an exorcism.

Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users

There is God's Spirit and there are spirits. Demons are spiritual powers that dominate and drive people to become evil and do wicked things. In the mythical world of ancient peoples, demons are personal beings that are just as real as physical beings. In modern cultures, demons represent psychic forces that corrupt the human intellect and distort human emotions making people *buang* (Cebuano) to do things against their own physical, moral and spiritual well-being to the point self-destruction and radical alienation from family and community.

Some personal characteristics and forms of behavior may be considered sinful but not necessarily demonic. Jesus forgave sinful persons but drove away demons possessing persons. Being sinful and demon-possessed are different in degree but also radically different. The analogy may be between corruption in government and plunder or between sexual harassment and rape. An economic system may be considered sinful when it fosters inequality but when such inequality keeps the vast majority of people in severe poverty to the point of food deprivation and makes a tiny minority in possession of unimaginable wealth – that economic state is not just sinful but demonic. People who suffer from severe deprivation and driven to a life of crime and vices may be said to having been demonized by a demonic economy. While those who wage wars and commit crimes against humanity just so to maintain and preserve such a system are not only demonized but have become the demons themselves.

Christ's Spirit of freedom and liberation opens up a vision of a new world and inspires the victims to unite in order to bring about a different future where everyone is free and empowered to achieve his/her full humanity and manifest the image of God in them. It will be a world where the Spirit of God indwells, as it is envisioned in the Book of Revelation that "God's dwelling will be among the people" and the whole earth.

The ministry of casting out demons continues as the church endeavours to follow Jesus' ministry. The church may be able to exorcise some demons in terms of the members'

relationships in the family, workplace and especially within the church fellowship. It is not for the church to accomplish the whole task of setting the world free from demonic powers. The church's mission is to show (proclaim) to the world that making and keeping the world free for the Spirit of God to dwell in is the way to go into the future. Its small victories against demonic powers illustrate God's power to overthrow them in order to establish God's reign of love, peace, prosperity and goodwill. This is the church's evangelistic task.

I. Objectives:

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

1. Tell how King Saul's sadness would make him feel very bad
2. Explain how the God-inspired music of David makes King Saul feel better
3. Affirm that the presence of the Holy Spirit in us can drive the spirit of fear and envy from our hearts
4. List ways of appreciating the presence of the Spirit of God in us

II. **Concept:** The presence of the Spirit of God in us drives away our spirits of fear and envy.

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV), paper and crayons

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time. Greet the children warmly as they arrive. Ask them how their week was.
2. Sing some greeting songs.
Teach this song:
Let Everyone Clap Hands
Let everyone clap hands with me
It's easy as easy can be
Let everyone join in the game
You'll find that it's always the same
3. Opening prayer: Dear God, thank you for bringing us once again to Sunday School. Be with us as we continue to learn more about you and about your love. Help us to be loving like you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

B. Getting Ready

Ask:

1. Who among you have felt so sad that you felt so bad?
2. What made your sadness go away?

Say: Today, we will listen to a story about someone who would listen to beautiful music from God whenever he felt very sad.

C. Learning Time

Tell the story

Healing Music from God

A long time ago in the time of the Bible, there lived a king named Saul. There were times he felt so sad it made him feel very bad. He asked for someone who could play very good music, so they looked for David the son of Jesse from Bethlehem. David went to King Saul and played beautiful music for him on the lyre and Saul would feel better. King Saul loved David and David loved him back. David played beautiful healing music from God many times.

D. Deepening Activity/ Sharing Time

Ask these questions:

1. What is the name of the king?
2. What happens to him when he feels so sad?
3. How did King Saul feel better?
4. Who played beautiful healing music from God for the king?

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Say: The Spirit of God is most powerful, and one of the ways we can feel it is through the love we have for each other.

Ask more questions:

1. Aside from the beautiful healing music from God, what else do you think made King Saul feel better? (The love he shared with David)
2. When you are so sad you feel very bad, what makes you feel better? (The love that we share with our loved ones)

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

Have the children draw the ways by which they feel better when they feel they are loved.

G. Closing Worship

1. Read from the Bible the memory verse (I Samuel 16:21b), then simplify it: "Saul loved David very much."
2. Give the Offering while singing:
I'm giving, I'm giving because I love Jesus
I'm giving, I'm giving because I love him.
3. Closing song: "How Can We Show Our Love Today"
4. Closing prayer: Dear God, thank you for your healing love. Thank you that we share your love with others. Make us help heal others through your love. Amen.

February 26, 2017Seventh Sunday after Epiphany/Transfiguration Sunday: **Healing towards Transformation****Old Testament: Exodus 34:29-35**

29 Moses came down from Mount Sinai. As he came down from the mountain with the two tablets of the covenant in his hand, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. ³⁰When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, the skin of his face was shining, and they were afraid to come near him. ³¹But Moses called to them; and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses spoke with them. ³²Afterwards all the Israelites came near, and he gave them in commandment all that the Lord had spoken with him on Mount Sinai. ³³When Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face; ³⁴but whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, he would take the veil off, until he came out; and when he came out, and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, ³⁵the Israelites would see the face of Moses, that the skin of his face was shining; and Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with him.

New Testament: Mark 9:2-8

2 Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, ³and his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. ⁴And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, who were talking with Jesus. ⁵Then Peter said to Jesus, 'Rabbi, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.' ⁶He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. ⁷Then a cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud there came a voice, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!' ⁸Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them anymore, but only Jesus.

General Concept: The transfiguration of Jesus is a preview of his resurrection which is our hope and destiny.

Key Concept:

N/K/YE: Jesus transfigures up in the high mountain.

Exegesis of the Biblical References

Ancient Israel's root experiences of grace, God's revelation in the Exodus from Egypt and at Mount Sinai are both in the book of Exodus. Historians generally agree on the period 1350-1200 BCE as the probable setting when Egypt was at the height of its imperial ambitions built on the backs of so many slaves. Moses is the central character in the book.

God revealing Godself in the Hebrew Bible is categorized into three: via the Law, via the Prophets, and via Wisdom. In the Law or the Pentateuch, Moses was God's primary spokesperson. They had a face-to-face relationship. According to the Priestly Tradition, the glory of the LORD so transfigured Moses' face that he had to wear a veil.

The Transfiguration or Metamorphosis (in Greek) affirms two things: that Jesus is the fulfilment of the Law (represented by Moses) and the Prophets (represented by Elijah); and that he is God's Anointed (Messiah or Christ) since Elijah was expected to appear before the Messiah appears.

Moreover, in chapters 8, 9, and 10, Jesus, over and over, tells his disciples that the Son of Man

must undergo great suffering, be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days, be raised up. The mountain-top experience of the transfiguration for the Messiah is the beginning of the Passion Narrative in Mark. Jesus comes down the mountain and heads for Jerusalem.

Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users

Transfiguration is the point of transition from Epiphany to Lent, that is, between Jesus' presentation to the world and the unfolding of his messianic destiny. It is a preview of the elevation of Jesus' earthly ministry, especially his suffering and death, to the realm of God's eternal plan for the salvation of the world. Jesus' resurrection point to his destiny which is also creation's destiny – the healing of the whole creation from its bondage to corruption and decay (Rom. 8). Jesus was approaching the climax of the drama of his life.

The disciples who witnessed the event thought that Jesus' messianic victory would be no more than a continuation and expansion of his work but still within the conditions of a world that they knew. According to this view, Jesus, the messiah from God would be king of the Jewish nation and the disciples would share power in his kingdom. Their parochial Jewish mind could not possibly grasp the universal and cosmic significance of Jesus' messianic reign. The scenario must be quite flattering to Jesus, a humble carpenter's son, to be put alongside Moses, founder of the nation, and Elijah, the legendary prophet par excellence. But Jesus refused to be boxed into that mundane view. His eyes were fixed on a much higher purpose.

As the church prepares to move to the Lenten season, the members are invited to sum up the things that Jesus said and did. New Testament scholars say that the Gospel of Mark is a narrative of Jesus' passion with a long introduction that serves as preamble. Their personal reflection on Jesus' words and work should now be taken from the perspective of his final destiny. Jesus, indeed, healed the blind and fed the hungry. That in itself is a clear manifestation of God's saving act. But these concrete acts point to a transcendental future that radically redefines history and personal existence as we know it. In other words, Jesus' journey from Nazareth to Jerusalem signifies a movement in God's plan of salvation that starts from where we are to a new plane that never existed before. The journey of life is at the same time a journey of faith in which more and clearer truths unfold as we move on to our ultimate destination in God. "Behold," says the triumphant transfigured suffering Messiah, "I am making all things new" (Rev. 21:5).

I. Objectives:

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

1. Tell what happened to Jesus as he was up in the mountain
2. Relate the change in the appearance of Jesus as the fulfillment of the prophecy of his resurrection
3. Demonstrate ways by which one makes changes in one's life for Jesus

II. Concept: Jesus transfigures up in the high mountain.

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV),

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time: Let the children greet each other as they come into the room.
2. Opening Prayer: Dear Jesus, thank you for your love. Thank you for bringing us here today to Sunday School. Teach us, we pray. Amen.

3. Opening Song
"Jesus Loved Each Little Child" (*Children Praise God*)

B. Getting Ready

Talk about the following:

1. Who has seen a butterfly? Aren't they beautiful?
2. Have you seen a caterpillar? That is where butterflies come from.
3. When caterpillars change into butterflies, something beautiful happens.
4. When we become ready to do something more than what we think we can do, a beautiful change happens within us.
5. Let us listen to a story about Jesus when he changed into something more beautiful and became ready to do something very important.

C. Learning Time

Tell the story

Jesus Transfigures

Jesus went up to a high mountain with his friends Peter, James and John. Suddenly, Jesus' clothes shone very white and his friends saw Jesus talking with Elijah and Moses. Jesus' friends just wanted to stay there in the high mountain, but Jesus wanted to go down and be with the people to help them. All of them heard a voice say, "This is my Son, the Beloved; listen to him!" So they all went down so Jesus can continue serving the people all the more.

D. Deepening Activity/ Sharing Time

Discuss the following:

1. Do you like helping other people?
2. Do you like making other people happy?
3. Jesus wanted to do all these that is why he transfigured in the mountain.
4. Just like butterflies, a beautiful change happened in him as he prepared himself to serve others, even die for them, and be resurrected.

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: Are you ready to make changes in your life just like what Jesus did?

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

Encourage the children to demonstrate in their lives ways by which they can follow Jesus: by doing good to others.

G. Closing Worship

1. Closing song: "Jesus Went About Doing Good"
Jesus went about doing good, the Bible tells me so
He helped the sick, and healed the blind, to little children he was kind
He gave the hungry people food, and said to all, "Be kind and good!"
Jesus went about doing good, the Bible tells me so.
2. Give the Offering while singing
I'm giving, I'm giving because I love Jesus
I'm giving, I'm giving because I love him.
3. Closing prayer: Dear God, thank you for our Sunday School. Thank you for teaching us to be like Jesus. Help us to change into even better persons and ready to help others. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.