

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: ***Youth and Adults***

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. 39 Jesus 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." 40 Some of the Pharisees near him heard this and said to him, "Surely we are not blind, are we?" 41 Jesus 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:

Youth and Adult: **God uses everyone to heal one another.**

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 the story about the lepers who were used by God to bring food to the people
2. Explain that God’s epiphany in Jesus is the good news of healing and restoration of wholeness
3. Make plans by which one can be involved in the healing ministry of the church

II. Concept: God uses everyone to heal one another.

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV)

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time: Warmly greet each other, asking: “How are you feeling? How is your health?”
2. Opening Prayer: God of our salvation, fill us with gratitude for the richness of your healing in Jesus Christ. Make us healers of this broken world. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.
3. Opening Song:

“Jesus Thank you for Healing Me” (NCCP VCS 2008 Theme Song)

I was down and you carried me; I was lost and you found me

I was weak and you gave me strength; I was sick and you healed me

Chorus: Jesus thank you for healing me

Thank you for your love and your care

You have called me to be a healer too

Bringing wholeness to all God’s world

When you’re sad God gives you joy; when you’re afraid God is with you

When you’re worried God gives you rest; when you’re sick God heals you (*Chorus*)

When someone’s sick, let us carry one through; when someone’s lost, let us show the way

When someone’s weak, let us give our strength; when someone’s sick let us show that we care (*Chorus*)

B. Getting Ready

1. "Flower Power". Distribute paper, crayons and pens to the learners. Let them draw a big flower with 5 petals and a big stem. On each petal, let them write down sicknesses they have encountered in the last 10 years of their lives. On the stem, let them write down how God healed their sickness. (This is a reminder to them that God, symbolized by the stem, holds them (flower) and keeps them beautiful and healthy.
2. Let them share what they have written to the class.

C. Learning Time

Appoint two readers from the class. Let the first one read aloud the Old Testament biblical reference, then the other one the New Testament biblical reference.

D. Deepening Activity/ Sharing Time

Discuss the stories in the biblical references. Ask these questions.

1. What was the significant effort of the four lepers in 2 Kings 7:1-16?
2. In what ways was the blind man in John 9:1-41 healed and restored?

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

1. Ask: How can those who are sick be instruments of healing and restoration?

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

Encourage each one to fill in this table:

My Plans to Help in the Healing Ministry of the Church

Activity	Ways on How I Can Help
(example) Medical Mission	(example) Donate medicines, help with logistics, etc.

G. Closing Worship

1. Offering
2. Closing song: "Jesus, Thank you for Healing Me" (NCCP-VCS 2008 Theme Song)
3. Closing prayer: "God of New Creation, we thank you for the wonderful works of your hand in healing the sick and this broken world. Help us be active in the healing ministry of the Church. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. 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:

Y/A: God's epiphany in Jesus is an unequivocal message from heaven that caring for the sick is a political, moral, and spiritual mandate of the church.

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. Describe and compare the healing of Naaman and Peter's mother-in-law
2. Explain that inclusiveness and indiscrimination are requirements in the healing ministry of the church
3. Get involved in the healing ministry of the church to reach out to the poor and marginalized

- II. **Concept:** God's epiphany in Jesus is an unequivocal message from heaven that caring for the sick is a political, moral, and spiritual mandate of the church.

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV), Hymnal, worksheet

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time.
2. Opening Prayer: Lord God, help us to realize our duties and responsibility as your sons and daughters. May your healing power be with us as we strive to be instruments of healing for others. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.
3. Opening song: "Christian Unity" (*Hymnal of a Faith Journey*, p. x)

B. Getting Ready

Ask the class to recall how they helped heal a sick relative or friend. Allow them to share.

C. Learning Time

1. Have the class read 2 Kings 9:1-16 in unison.
2. Have some students read Mark 1:29-31 one student at a time. Have the same students read their verses again, but this time have the rest of the students dramatize the verses as they are read.

D. Deepening Activity/ Sharing Time

1. Have the class describe the healing process Naaman underwent.
2. Have the class describe the healing process Simon's mother-in-law underwent.
3. Have the class fill out this table:

	Naaman	Simon's mother-in-law
What were the circumstances of the sick person?	A foreigner and a leper	A widow
What was the illness?		
Was he/she healed?		
Who was/were the instrument(s) of healing?		
What did he/she do after being healed?		

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Discuss the following:

1. Ask: Were the sick person's circumstances prevent her/his healing?
2. Emphasize that being a leper, a foreigner, and a widow were three of the most marginalized in Israel's society at that time.
3. Ask: What do these stories in the Bible tell us about how our society should pattern our healthcare system?
4. Ask: Should our healthcare system be exclusive and discriminatory or should it be inclusive and indiscriminatory?
5. Ask: What can you say about our present healthcare system? Is it exclusive and discriminatory or is it be inclusive and indiscriminatory?

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Divide the class into 2 or 3 groups. Have them discuss about how our present healthcare system can be more inclusive and indiscriminatory and what the church can do in order to achieve this.
2. Have each one personally share how she or he can be involved in the healing ministry of the church that reaches out to the poor and marginalized.
3. Have each group share their answers in plenary.
4. Emphasize that caring for the sick is a political, moral, and spiritual mandate of the church, as specified in the UCCP Statement of Faith: "The kingdom of God is present...where healing is given to the sick."

G. Closing Worship

1. Offering
2. Closing song: "Christian Unity"
3. Closing prayer: Thank you God for the healing ministry of the Church. Empower us to be more involved so that your healing love may reach more people, especially the poor and marginalized of our sisters and brothers. Thank you for the message of our lesson today. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. 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:

Y/A: Respecting and appreciating differences is a condition for creative unity and harmony.

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. Illustrate ways of acknowledging commonalities and respecting differences
2. Describe how these factors can lead to unity and harmony
3. Emphasize that the commonality of being one in Christ can help people unite and harmonize
4. Get involved in the church ministry which works on improving relationships among the people inside and outside of the church

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

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV)

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time.
2. Opening Prayer.
3. Opening Hymn: "He Leadeth Me"

B. Getting Ready

Ask the class to group in pairs and have them talk about their commonalities and differences. Have them write their answers on this table:

	<name>	<name>
Commonalities		
Differences		

C. Learning Time

1. Tell the students to read the biblical references responsively. Then let them paraphrase the verses.

a.) Isaiah 11:2 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.

b.) Isaiah 11:6 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.

c.) Galatian 3:28 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.

D. Deepening Activity/ Sharing Time

1. Ask: How did the text in Isaiah describe unity and harmony?
2. Going back to their earlier sharing, have them discuss how their commonalities and differences can lead to unity and harmony.

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Discuss how unity and harmony is described in Galatians 3:28 and how being one in Christ can help people unite and harmonize.

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

Tell the class to prepare a personal plan of working and improving relationships among

the people inside and outside of the church.

G. Closing Worship

1. Offering
2. Closing song
3. Closing prayer



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:

Y/A: Salvation comes whenever healing happens.

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 on being healed
4. Demonstrate one's thankfulness for God's healing

II. Concept: Salvation comes whenever healing happens.

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV)

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time
2. Opening prayer: Loving God, we know you love, heal and care for us. As your children and with your Holy Spirit's intervention, may we learn more about you. Prepare our hearts and minds as we do our lesson today. This is our prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.
3. Opening song: "I Need Thee Every Hour" HFJ 220

B. Getting Ready

Have the class read and briefly comment on the following statement adapted from The UCCP Healing Ministry, 2007:

"The UCCP engages itself in holistic health ministry in obedience to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ for abundant life for all.

In affirmation of this conviction, we thus further state that health is a basic right.

While it is the duty of the State to provide health care, the church has a moral

responsibility towards the entertainment of a wholesome and healthy life for everyone as God intended, recognizing that the art and science of healing is an integral part of the message of salvation.”

C. Learning Time

1. Instruct the class to read 2 Kings 4:8-37 and Luke 8:41-56 in unison.
2. Divide the class into three groups. Assign each group verses for further study. After they finish discussing the verses, tell each group to role play the assigned verses.
Group 1: 2 Kings 4:8-23. Tell the group to discuss the background of the Shunamite woman.
Group 2: 2 Kings 24-37. Ask the members to discuss what happened to the son of the Shunamite woman.
Group 3: Luke 8:42-56. Instruct the students to find out who the characters were, what happened, and what the climax of the story is.
3. After the groups have finished analyzing the verses, ask each group leader to share their insights before the class.

D. Deepening Activity/ Sharing Time

Ask these questions:

1. Who are the characters in the Old Testament story?
2. What did Elisha prophesy about the Shunamite woman?
3. What happened to the boy?
4. Did healing happen?
5. Who are the characters in the New Testament reference?
6. What are the illnesses of the woman and the girl?
7. Did healing happen?

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Have the class discuss their experiences of being healed and if they think that their healing was an act of salvation.

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

Let each one creatively demonstrate thankfulness for God's healing.

G. Closing Worship

1. Offering
2. Closing song: “Search Me, O God” (HFJ 216)
3. Closing prayer: Loving God, thank you for the Holy Spirit who teaches us, keeps us, and gives us the power to proclaim God's message of healing to humankind. In Jesus' name, this is our prayer. 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!

¹⁸ When 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?' ²⁰ She 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:

Y/A: Social division is eradicated when human fellowship, care, respect, and dignity are restored.

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. Compare the social standing of Ruth and the bent woman in the biblical texts
2. Describe the effect of social divisions on the poor, the sick, the widows and orphans, and the foreigners
3. Illustrate how these people are healed of their brokenness
4. Demonstrate ways by which social divisions are eradicated by acceptance, love, and respect
5. Make one's resolve to help restore human dignity

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

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV); hymnal

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time.
2. Opening prayer: Gracious God, give us the strength to do your will as we study your Word. May your overwhelming presence be with us this day. May the message of today's Sunday school be settled down in our hearts. This we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.
3. Opening song: "Living for Jesus" (Hymnal of a Faith Journey, 289)

B. Getting Ready

Ask the class about their thoughts about social divisions, human fellowship, care, respect, and dignity.

C. Learning Time

Let the students read the two biblical references. Have them compare the social standing of Ruth and the bent woman. Let them write in their notebooks.

D. Deepening Activity/ Sharing Time

Discuss the texts and answer this:

1. What effects do you see does social divisions have on:
 - a. the poor
 - b. the sick
 - c. the widows and orphans
 - d. the foreigners?

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: "Is social division healed and cured when human fellowship, care, respect and dignity is established and visible?"

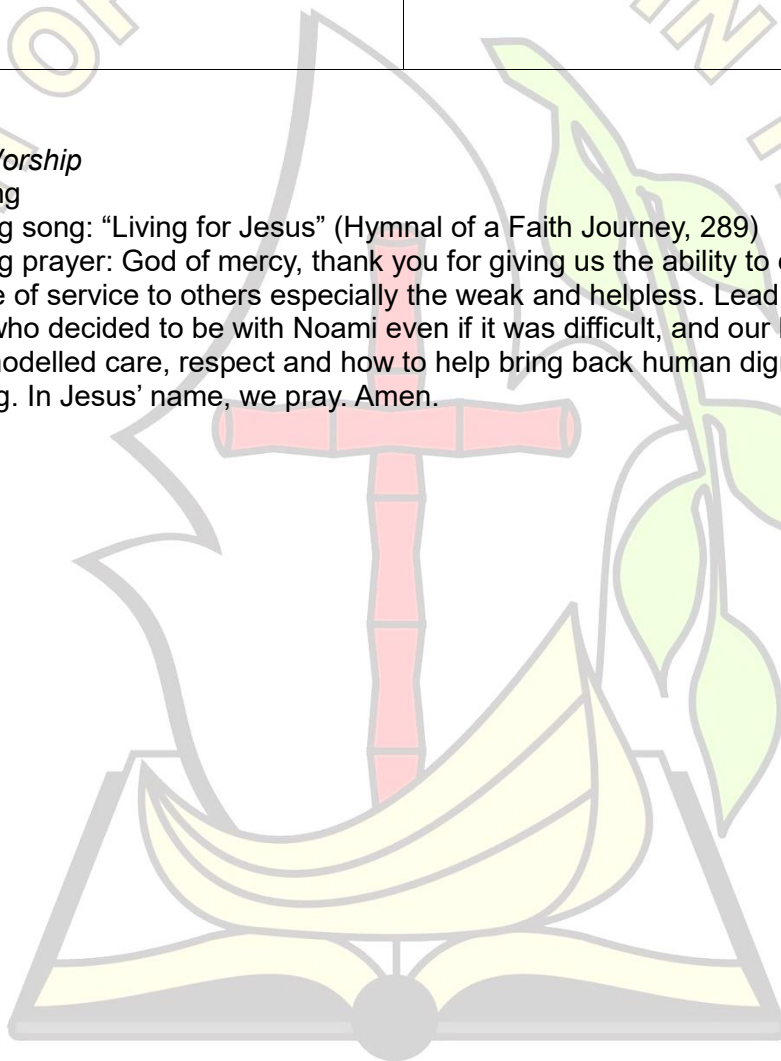
F. Applying the Biblical Truth

Let the students make a reflective action showing their participation in restoring social divisions. After finishing the exercise, have them share their thoughts with their seatmates. Tell them to use this format.

PLACE	DETAILED ACTION
HOME	
CHURCH	
COMMUNITY	

G. Closing Worship

1. Offering
2. Closing song: "Living for Jesus" (Hymnal of a Faith Journey, 289)
3. Closing prayer: God of mercy, thank you for giving us the ability to change our ways and be of service to others especially the weak and helpless. Lead us to become like Ruth who decided to be with Naomi even if it was difficult, and our Lord Jesus Christ who modelled care, respect and how to help bring back human dignity through healing. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.



February 12, 2017**Fifth 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. ³Jacob 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.' ⁷Then 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.' ¹⁷He 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." ' ¹⁹He 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." ' 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.' ²¹So 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. ²⁴Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. ²⁵When 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.' ²⁷So he said to him, 'What is your name?' And he said, 'Jacob.' ²⁸Then the man said, 'You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with humans, and have prevailed.' ²⁹Then 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:

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

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. Define the meaning of repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation
2. Illustrate how the hand of God and the repentance of Jacob and his asking for forgiveness from Esau made reconciliation between them possible
3. Explain the significance of reconciliation before gift-giving at the altar as found in the NT text
4. Resolve to get involved in the healing ministry of the church to restore broken relationships
5. Demonstrate ways of reconciling with others by the offender asking for forgiveness and the offended forgiving the offender.

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

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

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time
2. Opening song:
Bind us together, Lord! (2x) Bind us together in love! (repeat)
3. Opening Prayer: Good morning, God! We thank you for your blessings. We thank you for the blessing of learning about your ways. Teach us today about repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation. Thank you for making us loving like you. Help us share your love to others. Amen.

B. Getting Ready

Form three groups. Assign the term *repentance* to the first group, the term *forgiveness* to the second group, and the term *reconciliation* to the third group. Allow each group 5 minutes to discuss among themselves and define the word given to them. Have each group share with the big group their definition.

C. Learning Time

Let the students read the two biblical references.

D. Deepening Activity/ Sharing Time

Talk about Jacob and Esau's story.

Ask these questions.

1. Who are the main characters in the story? (God, Jacob, Esau)
2. How many years were Jacob and Esau separated? (20 years)
3. What was the reason why their relationship was broken? (Jacob took the birthright of Esau)
4. Who initiated the reconciliation of the twins?
5. What was God's role in the reconciliation?
6. What happened during the meeting of Esau and Jacob?
7. If you were present during Esau and Jacob's meeting, what would you feel?
8. Are you challenged to do the same act of reconciliation with whom you have been estranged?

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Stress that in order for reconciliation to take place, there must first be repentance and forgiveness.

Ask:

1. Should the church be an instrument of reconciliation?
2. What should be done by the church if there are broken relationships among the members?
3. How can you be involved in the healing of broken relationships within the church?

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

There might be broken relationships within the class. Encourage the participants to go to their classmate(s) with whom they have a broken relationship and initiate the process of reconciliation by going through the process of repentance and forgiving.

G. Closing Worship

1. Offering
3. Closing song:
Bind us together, Lord (2x), bind us together in love (repeat)
4. Closing prayer: Dear God, thank you that we are forgiven and for letting us forgive our sisters, brothers and friends. Thank you for teaching us about repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation. Make us more loving and forgiving like you and be more involved in the church's healing ministry, restoring broken relationships to become healthy relationships. In Jesus' name. Amen.

February 19, 2017**Sixth 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

5 They 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:

Y/A: It is the evangelistic task of the church to establish God's reign of love, peace, prosperity, and goodwill to drive away the demons of envy, fear, and greed.

Exegesis of the Biblical References

1 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, 1 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 have 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. Describe King Saul's mental torment as an illness or sickness that is treatable.
2. Relate the presence of God's healing spirit through David's music in addressing the sickness of King Saul, and that how, aside from medicines, laughter, touch, and music can heal.
3. Compare the case of King Saul and the man with unclean spirit in the OT and NT texts
4. Affirm that the presence of the Holy Spirit in us can drive away possession of demons in people
5. List ways by which one can get involved in the evangelistic task of the church in establishing God's reign of love, peace, prosperity and goodwill

II. Concept: It is the evangelistic task of the church to establish God's reign of love, peace, prosperity, and goodwill to drive away the demons of envy, fear, and greed.

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

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time.
2. Opening song: Sing a Song of Joy
Come on everybody sing a song of joy, let everybody listen to the happy sound
Come on everybody sing a song of joy, let everybody hear the world around
Joy is like the sunshine, joy is like the rain, joy is like a gold mine
Come on everybody sing it once again!
Come on everybody sing a song of joy, let everybody listen to the happy sound
Come on everybody sing a song of joy, let everybody hear the world around!
3. Opening prayer: Dear God, thank you for giving us love and courage through Jesus. Help us so that your love stays in our hearts and spill out in all our days and all our doings. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

B. Getting Ready

Ask:

1. Who among you have been depressed?
2. What made your depression go away?

C. Learning Time

Read the biblical texts.

D. Deepening Activity/ Sharing Time

Discuss the following:

1. What do you think was King Saul's illness? Do you think it was treatable?
2. How was David helpful in the healing of King Saul?
3. How was God's healing spirit present through David's music?
4. What are the similarities and differences between the case of King Saul and the man

with the unclean spirit in the New Testament text?

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: How are people today “demon-possessed”? What are the demons in our society today that makes so many people suffer so much?

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Discuss: How can each one of us contribute in establishing God’s reign of love, peace, prosperity and goodwill for all?

G. Closing Worship

1. Offering
2. Closing song: “Lord Heal our Land”
3. Closing prayer: Thank you, God, for the life of Jesus who continually teaches us how to be your children. Bless us according to your will so that we become Your instruments of healing, restoration and freedom from sin and sickness. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. 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:

Y/A: The transfiguration of Jesus is a preview of his resurrection which is our hope and destiny.

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. Relate the transfiguration of Jesus as God's revelation of his plan of salvation
2. Compare Moses' and Jesus' transfiguration
3. Explain the transfiguration of Jesus as the fulfillment of the prophecy of his resurrection
4. Deduce that the transfiguration of Jesus is the triumph of the suffering Messiah
5. Demonstrate ways by which one makes changes in one's life for Jesus

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

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV), hymnal

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time.
2. Opening Prayer: Gracious God, transform us through your Holy Spirit. May the

lesson today be in our hearts. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

3. Opening Song

B. Getting Ready

Talk about the following:

1. Where do butterflies come from?
2. When caterpillars change into butterflies, something beautiful happens.
3. When we become ready to do something more than what we think we can do, a beautiful change happens within us.
4. Let us read our biblical texts about Moses and Jesus when they transfigured into something more beautiful and became ready to do something very important.

C. Learning Time

Read the biblical texts.

D. Deepening Activity/ Sharing Time

Discuss the following:

1. Do you like helping other people?
2. Do you want to be part of God's plan of salvation from everything sinful?
3. Jesus fulfilled all these that is why he transfigured in the mountain.
4. What change in appearance happened to Jesus? What change in appearance happened to Moses?

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

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

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

Encourage each one to have a self-appraisal and find out which of the following three ministries they can do as healers or social transformers. Then ask them to be involved in these ministries:

1. Edifying (discipleship)
2. Comforting (shepherding)
3. Exhorting (counselling or challenging others towards a healthy relationship with God)

G. Closing Worship

1. Offering
2. Closing song: "Beyond the Dying Sun" HFJ 391
3. Closing prayer: Thank you, Almighty God, for the courage to be healers in this wounded world. May you continually transforms us by your grace. In the name of Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen.