

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/Christian 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/National Bible Sunday	Healing of Animositities	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.

Third Sunday after Pentecost

Defending the Powerless

Old Testament: Psalm 82:3-4; 146:5-9 (NRSV)

³“Give justice to the weak and the orphan; maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute.

⁴Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.”

⁵Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD their God,

⁶who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them; who keeps faith forever;

⁷who executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry. The LORD sets the

prisoners free; ⁸the LORD opens the eyes of the blind. The LORD lifts up those who are

bowled down; the LORD loves the righteous. ⁹The LORD watches over the strangers; he

upholds the orphan and the widow, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.

Proverbs 31:8-9 (NRSV)

⁸Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute. ⁹Speak out, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy.

New Testament: James 1:27 (NRSV)

²⁷Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

General Concept: The Holy Spirit sustains the church in its ministry of protecting the oppressed and the helpless and upholding their rights.

Key Concepts in the Different Age Levels in Sunday School

N/K/YE: The Holy Spirit helps us to protect the helpless and uphold their rights.

ME/OE: The Holy Spirit helps us to protect the oppressed and uphold their rights.

Y: The Holy Spirit sustains the church in its ministry of protecting the oppressed and the helpless and upholding their rights.

A: The Holy Spirit sustains the church in its ministry of protecting the oppressed and the helpless and upholding their rights.

Exegesis of the Biblical References

Psalm 82 is a plea for justice. To do justice is very clear in verses 3 and 4: give justice to the poor, the humble, and the destitute. The poor, the destitute, the orphan, and the humble are victims of the wicked. And it is important to be with these people in their struggle against the wicked. For this is what God wants.

Psalm 146:5-9. In this Psalm, we can see clearly what makes a person happy. Those who execute justice (transliteration: one doing justice to the ones being extorted), giving food to those who are hungry, to set those who are imprisoned free are blessed not because they are doing these things but because they are being used as instruments of God.

God is the one who sets the prisoners free, opens the eyes of the blind, lifts up those who are bowed down, loves the righteous, watches over foreigners and upholds the orphan and widows. When one participates in the work of justice, they are happy because they will witness the great things God will do. Only those who do wicked will come into ruin.

Proverbs 31:8-9 tells us that we must not remain silent in speaking out in defending for those who have no voice. We are to speak and do justice, defending those who are

powerless such as the poor and the needy. God is indeed a God of justice and the community of faith is enjoined to speak out in the struggle for justice.

James 1:27. In the Greek, the word “world” in this verse is transliterated as “the system”. This holds a very remarkable point as James is acknowledging that the injustice that is being rampant in the world is systematic. More often than not, powerful oppressive structures are causing evil and causing people to suffer; and so for James pure religion is to help the ones suffering particularly the orphans and the widows which during their time belong to the lowest class in their society. In a patriarchal world in 1st century Palestine, widows and orphans are without fathers to give them security and even an identity in society. Taking care of them and not joining in the systematic oppressive structure is what is considered pure and undefiled religion.

All the texts are very clear that the work of justice is very much part of God's work. The church is encouraged to join this ministry as there are so many people in need of God's justice. By joining in God's work for justice, we witness God's wonderful acts.



Nursery/Kindergarten/Younger Elementary Levels

I. Objectives

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

1. Describe helpless children and their right to be helped;
2. Explain that God wants them to help the helpless and uphold their rights; and
3. Demonstrate ways by which they can be helped by the Holy Spirit to follow God's will.

II. Concept: The Holy Spirit helps us to protect the helpless and uphold their rights.

Materials: The Holy Bible (NRSV), offering plate, coloring sheets of paper

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time
2. Opening prayer: "Dear God, we thank you for being in our Sunday school today. We are grateful for your presence in everything we think of, we say and we do in your name. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."
3. Opening song: "Come, Holy Spirit"
*Come, Holy Spirit, I need You, come, Holy Spirit, I pray;
Come with Your strength and Your power, come in Your own special way.*

B. Getting Ready

1. Prepare pictures that show children who are helpless (babies, toddlers, children who cannot reach their food or drinks, children begging in the streets, etc.) Tell the children to say something about each of these children. Preferably, ask them to relate their personal experience on this matter. End the discussion by saying that "These children are helpless."
2. Ask the class if they can name some helpless children in their class or in their community.

C. Learning Time

1. Read before the class Proverbs 31:8-9.
2. Prepare the children to listen to the story.

Life of Orphans

Children are orphans when they have no fathers or mothers or both. They are helpless. They cannot live on their own, especially babies. Sometimes their relatives or friends take them in to live with them. Some are taken to orphanages, homes of children who have no one to care for them.

Life in orphanages is difficult. They do not have enough persons to take care of many babies. These babies usually stay in a room where they lay in cribs. Although they are fed, they cry most of the time because they want to be held or rocked to sleep.

When these helpless orphans get older, they stay in a room full of beds. They sleep there and they have no toy, or special something to take with them when they sleep. At bedtime, the children climb into bed. The light is turned off. Many of them are afraid of the dark. When they cry, nobody comes to console them.

They leave the orphanages when good-hearted families adopt them.

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

Discuss how the children felt as they listened to the story.

1. How do you feel about orphans? (Expect varied answers and ask why they feel that

- way about the orphans.)
2. What does the Scripture tell us to do? Present each of the following verses and ask the children to say each in their own words.
 - a. Proverbs 31:8a—"Speak out for those who cannot speak." ("If my friend cannot say what he or she wants, I will say it for him or her. When my baby sister cries, I will tell my mother to give her milk or change her wet diaper. When my classmate is hungry and I have lots of food, I will share it with him or her.")
 - b. Proverbs 31:8b—"Speak out for the rights of all the destitute." (Explain the meaning of destitute as one who is so poor that he or she does not have the basic things in life like food and shelter. "I will speak for those who have no shelter. I will speak for those who are hungry. I will join persons who give food to the helpless.")
 - c. Proverbs 31:9a—"...judge righteously." (I will tell good things about others. I will not say something bad about others. I will tell my friends to stop saying bad things about others. I will be a friend to others.")
 - d. Proverbs 31:9b—"Defend the rights of the poor and needy." (I will always help the poor and needy.)
 3. Remind the children that the Holy Spirit helps the church to teach her members to help the helpless and defend their right to be helped.
- E. Discovering the Biblical Truth**
- Ask: What does the Holy Spirit teach the church on what to do to the helpless? (The Holy Spirit helps us to protect the helpless and uphold their rights.)
- F. Applying the Biblical Truth**
1. Teach the memory verse: "Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute. Speak out, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy." (Proverbs 31:8-9)
 2. **N/K:** Download coloring sheets that show children helping the helpless. Have the children decorate it and below the drawing, let them copy this: The church teaches me to help the helpless.
 3. **YE:** Form two groups. Let them dramatize any one of these situations. After they practice their presentation, ask them to show it before the class.
 - a. A group of children teaching some street children during a mission activity of the church
 - b. A group of children putting together food items and joining some church people giving these to victims of flood
 - c. A group of children visiting an orphanage, bringing with them food and singing joyfully to the orphans
- G. Closing Worship**
1. Tell the children to recite the memory verse in unison.
 2. Offering
 3. Closing song: "Doxology"
 5. Closing Prayer: "Dear God, thank you for being with us today. We learned in church that some persons are helpless because they have no parents, they have no homes, they are hungry, and they need help. Please show us how we can help these helpless children even though we are young children. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."

Middle and Older Elementary Levels**I. Objectives**

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

1. Describe oppressed children and their right to be defended;
2. Explain that God wants them to defend the oppressed children and uphold their rights; and
3. Demonstrate ways by which they can be helped by the Holy Spirit to follow God's will.

II. Concept: The Holy Spirit helps us to protect the oppressed and uphold their rights.

Materials: The Holy Bible (NRSV), offering plate, materials needed in the game

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

1. Welcome time: Smile and greet the children as they come. Check the attendance.
2. Opening prayer: "Merciful God, who indwells the Church through the Spirit of Christ, inspire us today to study your word so that we will better understand ourselves and others. Help us to be mature in our faith. This is our prayer in Jesus' name. Amen."
3. Opening song: "Spirit Who Broods" (HFJ # 185) stanzas 1 and 2

B. Getting Ready

1. Prepare the class to do the game (sourced from <http://sundayschoolsources.com/wp/object-lesson-staying-pure-in-the-world/>). Get ready with these materials: 1 clear glass, 2 clear medicine cups, red food coloring; water, and 3 cotton balls.
2. Follow these steps.
 - a. Put clean water in the glass. Tell the class that the clear water represents the world before sin.
 - b. When sin came in, the water became polluted. Put in a drop of red dye. This colored water represents the polluted world. From then on, human beings were not able to resist sin so they kept on sinning.
 - c. Dip one clean cotton ball into the red water. Put it out and place it in one of the medicine cups. Let the children describe it.
 - d. Put two cotton balls in the other medicine cup. Stuff them at the bottom so that they will stay put when upside down.
 - e. Hold the cup upside down and push it into the red water. Do not tip it so that the air inside the upside down cup will keep the red water out. Pull out the upside down cup straight out of the glass of red water. Show that cotton balls are not wet and contaminated with the red water.
3. Set aside the materials for use later.

C. Learning Time

1. Make four groups and assign each group to read the biblical passages.
 - a. First Group: Psalm 82:3-4
 - b. Second Group: Psalm 146:5-9
 - c. Third Group: Proverbs 31:8-9
 - d. Fourth Group: James 1:27
2. Let each group say something about the verses that they have read. Allow the children to ask questions about the report of each group.

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

1. Go back to the game. Ask these questions:
 - a. Why do you think the two cotton balls in the second medicine cup remained dry? (They were not contaminated with the red water.) Why? (They were protected.)

- b. What protected them? (The invisible air in the medicine cup prevented the cotton balls to fall and get wet. The air protected them.)
 - c. How can we protect ourselves from sin? (Refer to James 1:27)
 2. Ask the class to read from the three biblical passages how God protects us. Discuss how the Holy Spirit, our faith, the armor of God, forgiveness and other unseen elements protect us from the evil in the world. Expect these answers.
 - a. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and **to keep oneself unstained by the world.** James 1:27
 - b. **"... the LORD loves the righteous. The LORD watches over the strangers; he upholds the orphan and the widow, but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin."** (Psalm 145:8a-9)
 3. Tell the class to quote what the Lord expects us to do. Expect these answers. Then ask the class to tell the common commands of God regarding the oppressed (the **weak, orphans, lowly, needy, hungry**).
 - a. **³Give justice to the weak and the orphan; maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked."**
 - b. **"... who executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry..."** (Psalm 145:7a)
 - c. **"Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute. Speak out, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy."**
- E. Discovering the Biblical Truth*
- Ask: "How does the Holy Spirit help the church to protect the oppressed and uphold their rights? (Through the intervention of the Holy Spirit, the church provides inreach and outreach ministries to both members and nonmembers of the church.)
- F. Applying the Biblical Truth*
1. Discuss the memory verse: "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world." (James 1:27)
 2. **ME:** Prepare a poster showing this: "When God's word takes root in our hearts, we care for others more than ourselves. We look after the needy and oppressed." Tell the class to decorate it.
 3. **OE:** Have the students list some ways by which they can show protection to the oppressed at home, in their school, and in church. Tell them to act them out. (making sure that medicines are given to the needy; joining outreach mission of giving food and clothes to the destitute; protecting those who are bullied in school by seeking help from authorities; telling about God's love for us; speak for the rights of classmates and friends; etc.)
- G. Closing Worship*
1. Have the children recite the memory verse.
 2. Offering
 3. Closing song: "Spirit Who Broods" (HFJ # 185) stanzas 3 and 4
 4. Closing prayer: "Merciful and glorious God, we know that your Spirit continuously sustains us as members of the church to do what is pleasing in your sight—to care and protect the oppressed. Please continue to use us as your vessels of goodwill to the needy. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."

Youth Level**I. Objectives**

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

1. Describe vulnerable persons as weak, helpless, defenseless, and oppressed;
2. Explain that God has always wanted the church to minister and defend the vulnerable people in order to uphold their inherent rights;
3. Appreciate how the Holy Spirit sustains the church through its ministries that help in defending the weak, helpless, and oppressed to uphold their rights; and
4. Get involved as youth in the ministries of the church to follow God's will in relation to the vulnerable people.

II. Concept: The Holy Spirit sustains the church in its ministry of protecting the oppressed and the helpless and upholding their rights.

Materials: The Holy Bible (NRSV), worksheets

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

1. Welcome time
2. Opening prayer: "Merciful God, who indwells the Church through the Spirit of Christ, inspire us today to study your word so that we will better understand ourselves and others. Help us to be mature in our faith. This is our prayer in Jesus' name. Amen."
3. Opening song: "Spirit Who Broods" (HFJ # 185) stanzas 1 and 2

B. Getting Ready

1. Prepare the class to do the game (sourced from <http://sundayschoolsources.com/wp/object-lesson-staying-pure-in-the-world/>). Get ready with these materials: 1 clear glass, 2 clear medicine cups, red food coloring; water, and 3 cotton balls.
2. Follow these steps.
 - a. Put clean water in the glass. Tell the class that the clear water represents the world before sin.
 - b. When sin came in, the water became polluted. Put in a drop of red dye. This colored water represents the polluted world. From then on, human beings were not able to resist sin so they kept on sinning.
 - c. Dip one clean cotton ball into the red water. Put it out and place it in one of the medicine cups. Let the children describe it.
 - d. Put two cotton balls in the other medicine cup. Stuff them at the bottom so that they will stay put when upside down.
 - e. Hold the cup upside down and push it into the red water. Do not tip it so that the air inside the upside down cup will keep the red water out. Pull out the upside down cup straight out of the glass of red water. Show that cotton balls are not wet and contaminated with the red water.
3. Set aside the materials for use later.

C. Learning Time

1. Tell the class to look for the meaning of the words "destitute" and "vulnerable"
(A destitute has no basic necessities of life. The synonyms are penniless, poor, impoverished, poverty-stricken, impecunious, without money. Destitute children are cared for by charitable institutions. A vulnerable person is susceptible to physical or emotional attack or harm. Synonyms include helpless, defenseless, powerless, in need of special care, support, or protection because of age, disability, or risk of abuse or neglect.)

2. Let the class read in unison the biblical passages found in Psalm 82:3-4; 146:5-9, Proverbs 31:8-9, and James 1:27.

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

Prepare a table showing the four passages and let the students analyze what is common in the four passages.

Psalm 82:3-4	Psalm 146:5-9	Proverbs 31:8-9	James 1:27
What God requires			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give justice to the weak and the orphan. Maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute. Deliver them (weak and the needy) from the hand of the wicked. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Execute justice for the oppressed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Judge righteously. Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute. Defend the rights of the poor and needy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep oneself unstained by the world.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rescue the weak and the needy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give food to the hungry. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Care for orphans and widows in their distress.
How God rewards			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD their God, who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them; who keeps faith forever." "The LORD sets the prisoners free; opens the eyes of the blind; lifts up those who are bowed down." The LORD loves the righteous; watches over the strangers; and upholds the orphan and the widow." We will have a "religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father." 			

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: How does the Holy Spirit sustain the church to do what God requires? (The Holy Spirit sustains the church in its ministry of protecting the oppressed and the helpless and upholding their rights.)

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

Tell the class if these ways are practical for them to follow: using **compassionate justice** by fighting for the freedom of those who are oppressed by joining missions on empowering the marginalized and enslaved (Luke 19:10, Acts 4:12, Acts 4:20); 2) and using **selfless service** by seeing needs and responding to them practically, emotionally and spiritually (1 Corinthians 15:58; 1 Peter 4:10).

G. Closing Worship

1. Offering
2. Closing song: "Spirit Who Broods" (HFJ # 185) stanzas 3 and 4
3. Closing prayer: "Merciful and glorious God, we know that your Spirit continuously sustains us as members of the church to do what is pleasing in your sight—to care

and protect the oppressed. Please continue to use us as your vessels of goodwill to the needy. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."



Adult Level**I. Objectives**

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

1. Describe vulnerable persons as weak, helpless, defenseless, and oppressed;
2. Explain that God has always wanted the church to minister and defend the vulnerable people in order to uphold their inherent rights;
3. Appreciate how the Holy Spirit sustains the church through its ministries that help in defending the weak, helpless, and oppressed to uphold their rights; and
4. Get involved as adults in the ministries of the church to follow God's will in relation to the vulnerable people.

II. Concept: The Holy Spirit sustains the church in its ministry of protecting the oppressed and the helpless and upholding their rights.

Materials: The Holy Bible (NRSV), worksheets

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

1. Welcome time
2. Opening prayer: (Assigned Leader)
3. Opening song: "Spirit Who Broods" (HFJ # 185) stanzas 1 and 2

B. Getting Ready

1. Prepare the class to do the game (sourced from <http://sundayschoolsources.com/wp/object-lesson-staying-pure-in-the-world/>). Get ready with these materials: 1 clear glass, 2 clear medicine cups, red food coloring; water, and 3 cotton balls.
2. Follow these steps.
 - a. Put clean water in the glass. Tell the class that the clear water represents the world before sin.
 - b. When sin came in, the water became polluted. Put in a drop of red dye. This colored water represents the polluted world. From then on, human beings were not able to resist sin so they kept on sinning.
 - c. Dip one clean cotton ball into the red water. Put it out and place it in one of the medicine cups. Let the children describe it.
 - d. Put two cotton balls in the other medicine cup. Stuff them at the bottom so that they will stay put when upside down.
 - e. Hold the cup upside down and push it into the red water. Do not tip it so that the air inside the upside down cup will keep the red water out. Pull out the upside down cup straight out of the glass of red water. Show that cotton balls are not wet and contaminated with the red water.
3. Set aside the materials for use later.

C. Learning Time

1. Tell the class to look for the meaning of the words "destitute" and "vulnerable"
(A destitute has no basic necessities of life. The synonyms are penniless, poor, impoverished, poverty-stricken, without money. Destitute children are cared for by charitable institutions. A vulnerable person is susceptible to physical or emotional attack or harm. Synonyms include helpless, defenseless, powerless, in need of special care, support, or protection because of age, disability, or risk of abuse or neglect.)
2. Let the class read in unison the biblical passages found in Psalm 82:3-4; 146:5-9, Proverbs 31:8-9, and James 1:27.

D. Deepening Activity/ Sharing Time

Discuss the four passages and let the students give their insights as they answer these questions.

1. What is common in the biblical passages in the matter of justice?
 - a. Psalm 82:3: "Give justice to the weak and the orphan. Maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute. Deliver them (weak and the needy) from the hand of the wicked."
 - b. Psalm 146:7a: "Execute justice for the oppressed."
 - c. Proverbs 31:8-9: "Judge righteously. Speak out for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all the destitute. Defend the rights of the poor and needy."
 - d. James 1:27c: "Keep oneself unstained by the world."
2. What is common in the biblical passages in the matter of good deeds?
 - a. Psalm 82:4: Rescue the weak and the needy.
 - b. Psalm 146:7b: Give food to the hungry.
 - c. James 1:27b: Care for orphans and widows in their distress.
3. How does God reward us for being obedient to His will?
 - a. Psalm 146:7a: "Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD their God, who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them; who keeps faith forever."
 - b. Psalm 146:7e: "The LORD sets the prisoners free; opens the eyes of the blind; lifts up those who are bowed down."
 - c. Psalm 146:8c-d "The LORD loves the righteous; watches over the strangers; and upholds the orphan and the widow."
 - d. James 1:27a: We will have a "religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father."
4. Where do spiritual gifts fit in with obedience to God's word? If a person is not endowed with the gift of mercy, how can he or she relate to orphans and widows?
5. How involved have you been with widows and orphans? How has that involvement influenced your life?

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: How does the Holy Spirit sustain the church to do what God requires? (The Holy Spirit sustains the church in its ministry of protecting the oppressed and the helpless and upholding their rights.)

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

Tell the students to list down the commands of God in relation to the oppressed and the helpless. Then have them present their work before the class.

G. Closing Worship

1. Offering
2. Closing song: "Spirit Who Broods" (HFJ # 185) stanzas 3 and 4
3. Closing prayer: "Merciful and glorious God, we know that your Spirit continuously sustains us as members of the church to do what is pleasing in your sight—to care and protect the oppressed. Please continue to use us as your vessels of goodwill to the needy. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."