

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

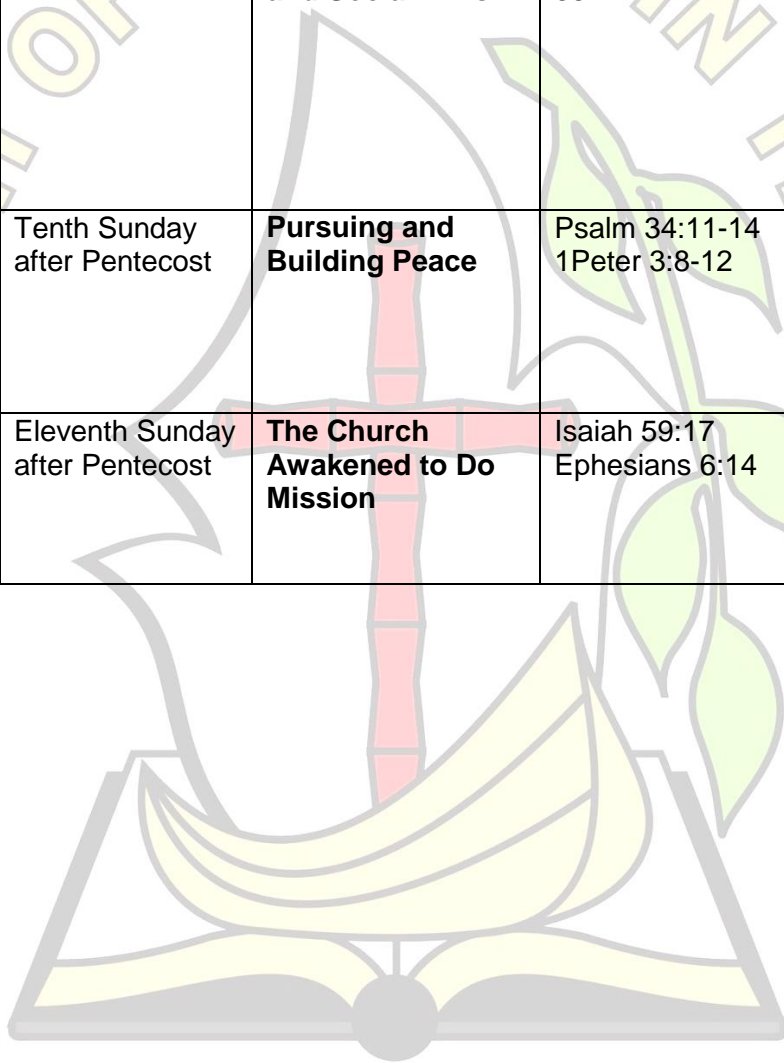
				to apprehend the risen Lord. But Jesus overcomes our failure to discern and communes with us.
(26) May 21, 2017	Fifth Sunday after Resurrection/UC CP Sunday	Celebrating the Resurrection	Exodus 16:1-26 Luke 24:36-46	Jesus comes to commune with us in ordinary, basic, and common activities and struggles.
(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.

Second Sunday after Pentecost

The Holy Spirit Sustaining the Church

Old Testament: Jeremiah 7:1-11 (NRSV)

¹ The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ²Stand in the gate of the LORD's house, and proclaim there this word, and say, Hear the word of the LORD, all you people of Judah, you that enter these gates to worship the LORD. ³Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Amend your ways and your doings, and let me dwell with you in this place. ⁴Do not trust in these deceptive words: "This is the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD."
⁵For if you truly amend your ways and your doings, if you truly act justly one with another, ⁶if you do not oppress the alien, the orphan, and the widow, or shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not go after other gods to your own hurt, ⁷then I will dwell with you in this place, in the land that I gave of old to your ancestors forever and ever. ⁸Here you are, trusting in deceptive words to no avail. ⁹Will you steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely, make offerings to Baal, and go after other gods that you have not known, ¹⁰and then come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, "We are safe!"—only to go on doing all these abominations? ¹¹Has this house, which is called by my name, become a den of robbers in your sight? You know, I too am watching, says the LORD.

New Testament: Matthew 23:13-28 (NRSV)

¹³But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you lock people out of the kingdom of heaven. For you do not go in yourselves, and when others are going in, you stop them. ¹⁴Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites. For you devour widows' houses, and for pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation. ¹⁵Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cross sea and land to make a single convert, and you make the new convert twice as much a child of hell as yourselves. ¹⁸Woe to you, blind guides, who say, "Whoever swears by the sanctuary is bound by nothing, but whoever swears by the gold of the sanctuary is bound by the oath." ¹⁷You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the sanctuary that has made the gold sacred? ¹⁸And you say, "Whoever swears by the altar is bound by nothing, but whoever swears by the gift that is on the altar is bound by the oath." ¹⁹How blind you are! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? ²⁰So whoever swears by the altar, swears by it and by everything on it; ²¹and whoever swears by the sanctuary, swears by it and by the one who dwells in it; ²²and whoever swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by the one who is seated upon it. ²³Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others. ²⁴You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel! ²⁵Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. ²⁶You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup, so that the outside also may become clean.

27^{Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which on the outside look beautiful, but inside they are full of the bones of the dead and of all kinds of filth. 28}So you also on the outside look righteous to others, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

General Concept: The Holy Spirit bids the church to unite with the people to confront the oppressive powers.

Key Concepts in the Different Age Levels in Sunday School

N/K/YE: The Holy Spirit helps the church in uniting its people to do what is right.

ME/OE: The Holy Spirit helps the church in uniting its people to do what is right.

Y: The Holy Spirit bids the church to unite with the people to confront the oppressive powers.

A: The Holy Spirit bids the church to unite with the people to confront the oppressive powers.

Exegesis of the Biblical References

The Hebrew word used for "amend" in verse 3 is eitibu and is transliterated as "make good you". Verses 1-4 is an admonition from God to the Israelites to make amends or do what is good for them to stay in the Promised Land. This is to warn them from falling back to the false security that God will protect the temple.

In verse 5, God encouraged the Israelites to "amend" (Hebrew eitib - make good) and in verse 6 provided concrete ways to do good. To do good is not to oppress or extort the orphan, the widows and the foreigner. The innocent is not to be harmed, blood is not to be shed and people should not to go to other gods.

This is what God is saying through Jeremiah: that the Israelites should not depend on being the chosen people as represented by Solomon's temple. They must be faithful to Yahweh and do what is good and right. Doing good out of faithfulness and obedience to God allows one to remain in the place God has given them or else they will be cut off as the temple itself has become a den of robbers instead of a place that gives glory to God.

The phrase "woe to you" is pretty dominant in the selected verse. Its transliteration is exactly the same "woe to you" (Greek ouaihumini). This shows the phrase has been retained in its original translation all throughout the years to show the seriousness of Jesus' message to those who commit all these atrocities. Hypocrites (Greek hupokritai) are defined as a pretender and actor, stage player. This shows that Jesus was against all pretense of religiosity which the scribes and the Pharisees seem to embody. These people are much more concerned of showing off holiness to others.

Aside from the scribes and Pharisees, blind guides are given the "woe to you" admonition. Because they are giving more weight to the oath given to the gold than to the altar. This implies that the gold is more important or valued than the altar which is hypocritical since it is the altar as God's representation that makes the oath holy, not the economic value of the gold.

From the text it is very clear that Jesus had strong words against those who are hypocrites. Despite all their religiosity and aim for purity (they could have been the ones Jesus could have been closest to but it is the opposite), their rules and regulations became obstacles for people to reach God. The point is to make God closer to the people but because of their hypocrisy it only alienated the people away from God. And this alienation is what Jesus was most incensed about towards the scribes and the Pharisees.

Exegeting both texts from Jeremiah and Matthew, it becomes quite clear that no religious sanctuary and regulation can make us secure and holy. It is hypocritical for us to

make ourselves holy in our own terms. Only God can make people holy through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit encourages and empowers us to make amends or do good. And doing good includes going against oppressive powers that bring so much evil and suffering. If the church is doing oppressive practices, then it becomes a den of robbers. We are to heed God's message as revealed in Jeremiah and Matthew not to be hypocrites and do what is good.

Doing God's work is not only limited to the church. God's Spirit is always working even outside the boundaries of the church. It is then right to work with people even outside the church to go against oppressive powers for this is still part of God's ministry.



Nursery/Kindergarten/Younger Elementary Levels

I. Objectives

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

1. tell how the Holy Spirit helps the members of the church to do what is right;
2. explain how young children respond to God by doing what is right; and
3. demonstrate one's resolve to do what is pleasing to God.

II. Concept: The Holy Spirit helps the church in uniting its people to do what is right.

Materials: The Holy Bible (NRSV), offering plate, worksheets

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time
2. Opening prayer: "Loving God, we thank you for being in our class today. As young children, help us to know your Word and follow it. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."
3. Opening song: "When the Spirit of the Lord Is in Our Heart"
*When the Spirit of the Lord is in our heart, we can sing like Mary sang (twice).
 We can sing oh, Lord (twice). We can sing like Mary sang. (repeat this line)
 When the Spirit of the Lord is in our heart, we can lead like Moses led (twice).
 We can lead oh, Lord (twice). We can lead like Moses led. (repeat this line)
 When the Spirit of the Lord is in our heart, we can pray like Daniel prayed (twice).
 We can pray oh, Lord (twice). We can pray like Daniel prayed. (repeat this line)
 When the Spirit of the Lord is in our heart, we can dance like Miriam danced (twice).
 We can dance oh, Lord (twice). We can dance like Miriam danced. (repeat this line)*

B. Getting Ready

1. Prepare the class to play the game "Unseen Faith" game (<http://www.kidssunday-school.com/>). Use these materials: an old glove marked with F E A R on each knuckle, 2 empty plastic water bottles.
2. Take two empty plastic water bottles. Cap one bottle and do not cap the other bottle. Put on the glove and let the class read the word written on the glove. Talk about fear and let the class tell some things that make them afraid. On a table crash each bottle using the glove. Ask: Was fear successful in crashing the uncapped bottle? Was fear successful in crashing the capped bottle? Tell the children that the capped bottle represents a person with faith and the uncapped bottle represents a person that has no faith. Help them to realize that our faith in God will help us in times of fear, sorrow, anger, or depression.
3. Lead them to say that "we cannot see faith itself, but what faith produces we can see quite easily, such as strength, courage, peace of mind, and self-control. We do not need to worry or be afraid of anything when we have faith in Jesus." Remind them that the Holy Spirit will help us experience this.

C. Learning Time

Tell the story.

Jesus Talks about Scribes and Pharisees

(Based on Matthew 23:13-28)

Jesus spoke to his disciples and other people. The scribes and Pharisees were there, too, to listen. Jesus spoke about humble service to others. He said that serving others is more important than appearances. God does not want the clothes we wear or the kind of house where we live to keep us from serving God.

Jesus also said that humble service is more pleasing to God than being recognized by what a person does. When we serve others, we show our thankfulness and gratitude to God.

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

1. **N/K:** Discuss the things that the church has taught the children about doing what is right.
 - a. Sharing food to classmates
 - b. Helping a new classmate look for the comfort room
 - c. Sharing one's Bible to a classmate
 - d. Telling good things about a classmate
 - e. Listening to a friend tell his or her story
2. **YE:** Ask these questions.
 - a. What does God look in us, our clothes or our sharing of clothes to the needy?
 - b. Which is right, giving food to homeless children or ignoring homeless children?
 - c. Which is right, helping or ignoring a single mother who requests you to play with her kid while she shops in the grocery store?
 - d. What does God want to see in us, being honored for the things we do or helping others even if we are not recognized?

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: "Who helps the church to teach its members to do what is right?" (The Holy Spirit helps the church in uniting its people to do what is right.)

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

Tell the class to list some acts that show God's love to others at home, in school, and in the church. Emphasize that these simple acts show kindness to others and to strangers so that we can offer them love and hope to build the church and the Kingdom of God. After the discussion, help the children to realize how hard it truly can be for them. Let them see that although it is a difficult task to show love for others, God is pleased with them for doing the right thing. Provide coloring sheets that show acts of love and ask the **N/K** children to color using crayons and the **YE** children to use water color or water soluble paint.

G. Closing Worship

1. Offering
2. Recall songs that show acts of love or kindness to others.
3. Closing Prayer: "Dear God, thank you for our teachers in church for teaching us to do what is right in order to please God. May the Holy Spirit remind us to do this always. 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. tell how the Holy Spirit helps the members of the church to do what is right;
2. explain how Christians live their lives for God and respond to God by doing what is right; and
3. demonstrate one's commitment to do humble service to others as this is pleasing to God.

II. Concept: The Holy Spirit helps the church in uniting its people to do what is right.

Materials: The Holy Bible (NRSV), offering plate, song chart, verse chart, crayons, white cartolina (or manila paper, craft paper, or any material that could be used for the Story Map Reading)

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time: Smile and greet the children as they come. Check the attendance.
2. Opening prayer: "Loving God, we thank you for being in our class today. As young children, help us to know your Word and follow it. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."
3. Opening song: "When the Spirit of the Lord Is in Our Heart"
*When the Spirit of the Lord is in our heart, we can sing like Mary sang (twice).
 We can sing oh, Lord (twice). We can sing like Mary sang. (repeat this line)
 When the Spirit of the Lord is in our heart, we can lead like Moses led (twice).
 We can lead oh, Lord (twice). We can lead like Moses led. (repeat this line)
 When the Spirit of the Lord is in our heart, we can pray like Daniel prayed (twice).
 We can pray oh, Lord (twice). We can pray like Daniel prayed. (repeat this line)
 When the Spirit of the Lord is in our heart, we can dance like Miriam danced (twice).
 We can dance oh, Lord (twice). We can dance like Miriam danced. (repeat this line)*

B. Getting Ready

1. Prepare the class to play the game "Unseen Faith" game (<http://www.kidssunday-school.com/>). Use these materials: an old glove marked with F E A R on each knuckle, 2 empty plastic water bottles.
2. Take two empty plastic water bottles. Cap one bottle and do not cap the other bottle. Put on the glove and let the class read the word written on the glove. Talk about fear and let the class tell some things that make them afraid. On a table crash each bottle using the glove. Ask: Was fear successful in crashing the uncapped bottle? Was fear successful in crashing the capped bottle? Tell the children that the capped bottle represents a person with faith and the uncapped bottle represents a person that has no faith. Help them to realize that our faith in God will help us in times of fear, sorrow, anger, or depression.
3. Lead them to say that "we cannot see faith itself, but what faith produces we can see quite easily, such as strength, courage, peace of mind, and self-control. We do not need to worry or be afraid of anything when we have faith in Jesus." Remind them that the Holy Spirit will help us experience this.

C. Learning Time

1. Tell the class to read the Scriptural passages in unison. Assist the class to realize the following:
 - a. Jeremiah cries to God's people to amend their ways so that God will give them the land where they live.

- b. Matthew talks about what Jesus dislikes among the scribes and Pharisees—hypocrisy.
- c. Common to the two references is the need to live one's life for God in order to build the church and God's kingdom through the intervention of the Holy Spirit.
- d. Children have their own desires for material possessions but as Christians, we should give them up and instead submit fully to God's will—service to others.

D. Deepening Activity/ Sharing Time

Discuss the lesson.

1. What wrong things did God's people do? (Jeremiah 7:5-6, 8-9)
2. Why did Jeremiah want God's people to amend their ways? (Jeremiah 7:7)
3. Why did Jesus call the scribes and Pharisees hypocrites? (They are more concerned on appearances and recognition instead of doing true and humble service to others.)
4. How do you think that God wants us to live our lives? (Have God in control of our lives. Do what is right. Respect others. Live in peace with others. Help the weak. Be patient and joyful. Pray continuously. Give thanks always. Avoid evil at all costs.)
5. Why should we live our lives for God? (God is our Creator and Savior. He loves us and will make all things work out for the good of everyone.)
6. Why is living for God so difficult? (Human beings are selfish and they want to live for themselves.)
7. What can happen to us when we live our lives for God? (Living our lives for God will glorify God. The presence of God will remain with us.)

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: "Who helps the church to teach its members to do what is right?" (The Holy Spirit helps the church in uniting its people to do what is right.)

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

Let the class do the following:

1. **ME:** Tell the class to do the "Following God" artwork: Discuss how to follow God by using their footprints that will show their hope in God wherever they go. Prepare a large sheet of paper where all the children can walk through. Tell the class to put some paint on their feet's sole. Each child will have different color. Let the children walk through the paper and clean their feet as soon as they finish walking. Let dry the paper and hang it for the class to see. Encourage the class to say that their footprints show that they follow God wherever they go in life.
2. **OE:** Tell the class to play the game "Live for God". The aim of this game is for the class to realize that in order to live for God, they need to be Christ-like. Their lives should mirror the life of Jesus Christ. Divide the class into triads. One member is the leader who will show acts of love or service to others.. Another member is the follower who will mirror what the leader does.. The third member is the judge who will evaluate what the mirror did. Let each member of the triad switch roles until each member is able to play all the roles. After the activity, each child will say that in life we should try to be like a mirror of Jesus' life by doing what He did.

G. Closing Worship

1. Offering
2. Recall songs that show acts of love or kindness to others.
3. Closing Prayer: "Dear God, thank you for our teachers in church for teaching us to do what is right in order to please God. May God, through the Holy Spirit, watch over us and remind us to serve others always. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."

Youth Level

I. Objectives

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

1. define the words phylacteries, hypocrisy, and woe operationally
2. describe the evil things done by the Israelites during the time of Jeremiah and the solution proposed by Jeremiah;
3. compare the wrong doings of the Jews during Jeremiah and Jesus' times;
4. explain the role of the Holy Spirit in helping unify the members of the Church in order to combat oppressive powers; and
5. demonstrate one's commitment to do what is pleasing to God.

II. **Concept:** The Holy Spirit bids the church to unite with the people to confront the oppressive powers.

Materials: The Holy Bible (NRSV), worksheets

III. Learning Experiences

A. *Opening Worship*

1. Welcome time
2. Opening prayer: "Gracious God, we thank you for giving us the opportunity to learn about your Word. We recall how the Triune God created us and gave a unique purpose for our lives. Be with us as we to study and analyze your purpose for each of us. This is our prayer in your Son's name. Amen."
3. Opening song: "Living for Jesus" (HFJ # 289) stanzas 1 and 2

B. *Getting Ready*

Tell the class to do some dictionary work and find the meaning of the following words. Tell the class to compare the dictionary work with the given operational meaning of the words.

1. *Phylacteries*. These are small boxes that contain written verses from the Scriptures. These boxes are worn by the Jews on their foreheads or arms (Deuteronomy 6:6-8). Aside from the phylacteries, the Jews also put tassels on the borders or hems of their clothes in remembrance of God's laws (Numbers 15:38-40.)
2. *Hypocrisy*. A commentator describes the word hypocrite, in Greek means "play actor." Moreover, a hypocrite is someone pretending to be something that he or she is not in order to receive recognition or gain. Hypocrisy is a result of pride. Humble followers of God seek to live according to His laws because they love God and other people-not because they will be recognized or honored for it. When it is pointed out that a humble follower of God is in the wrong, he or she immediately works toward doing what is right. The hypocrite seeks to cover sins and make excuses for them.
3. *Woe*. This word refers to sorrow and suffering. This word was mentioned eight times in Matthew 23 spoken by Jesus to admonish the scribes, Pharisees, and hypocrites. The term woe expresses pity due to imminent punishment

C. *Learning Time*

1. Divide the class into two groups and assign each group to read Jeremiah 7:1-11 or Matthew 23:13-28. Ask each group to say what they have in mind after reading the passages.
2. After letting the class report about their observations, provide the following additional information to elucidate the passages.
 - a. Jeremiah 7:1-11. God used Jeremiah to warn God's people who became dependent on their material possessions for their safety and security rather than depending on God.

- 1) They lived a life of sin because they were overconfident that God would still save them and their Temple. They did not realize that God's will take precedence over everything.
 - 2) Jeremiah was asked to "stand in the gate" and proclaim God's warning and Jeremiah cried to the people to amend their ways.
 - 3) Jeremiah spoke about what God will do to them if they remain in sin and how God will reward them if they turn to God. Jeremiah concluded that if the stiff-necked Jews get right with God, they will find that God's will is the only true safe place.
- b. Matthew 23:13-28. Jesus declared sorrow and suffering to the scribes, Pharisees, and hypocrites who were listening to him.
- Woe # 1 (v. 13) Woe to those who shut up the kingdom.
- Woe # 2 (v. 14) Woe to the religious leaders who steal from the vulnerable.
- Woe # 3 (v. 15) Woe to the religious leaders who led their converts on the wrong path.
- Woe # 4 (vv. 16-22) Woe to the religious leaders who made false and deceptive oaths
- Woe # 5 (vv. 23-24) Woe to the religious leaders who are obsessed with trivialities, and ignoring the weighty matters.
- Woe # 6 (vv. 25-26) Woe to the religious leaders who are impure both inside and out.
- Woe # 7 (vv. 27-28) Woe to the religious leaders who have the appearance of good, but without spiritual life in the inner man.

D. Deepening Activity/ Sharing Time

Discuss the lesson and ask these questions:

1. How did God use the prophet Jeremiah? What was God's message to God's people? (Jeremiah was God's instrument in warning God's people to amend their ways because God is displeased with them)
2. How can Jeremiah's warning become useful in today's life of Christians? (The Word of God remains unchanged and it is still the safest way to mend our evil ways.)
3. What is God's reward to people who remain faithful to God's word and will? (They will have the security of life as sustained by the Holy Spirit's presence.) Are the phrases: "Return to me or Come back to me" fitting to describe the unchanging heart of God towards God's people? Why or why not? (Yes)
4. What are the seven woes spoken by Jesus? Instruct the pupils to read the woes one by one and paraphrase the descriptions made by Jesus and tell what can happen to anyone who remains a hypocrite.
5. What are the ministries of the church that can prevent sorrow and suffering of its members when they are in the midst of oppression?

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: How can the church confront the oppressive powers? (The Holy Spirit bids the church to unite with the people to confront the oppressive powers done by leaders, both religious and otherwise.)

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

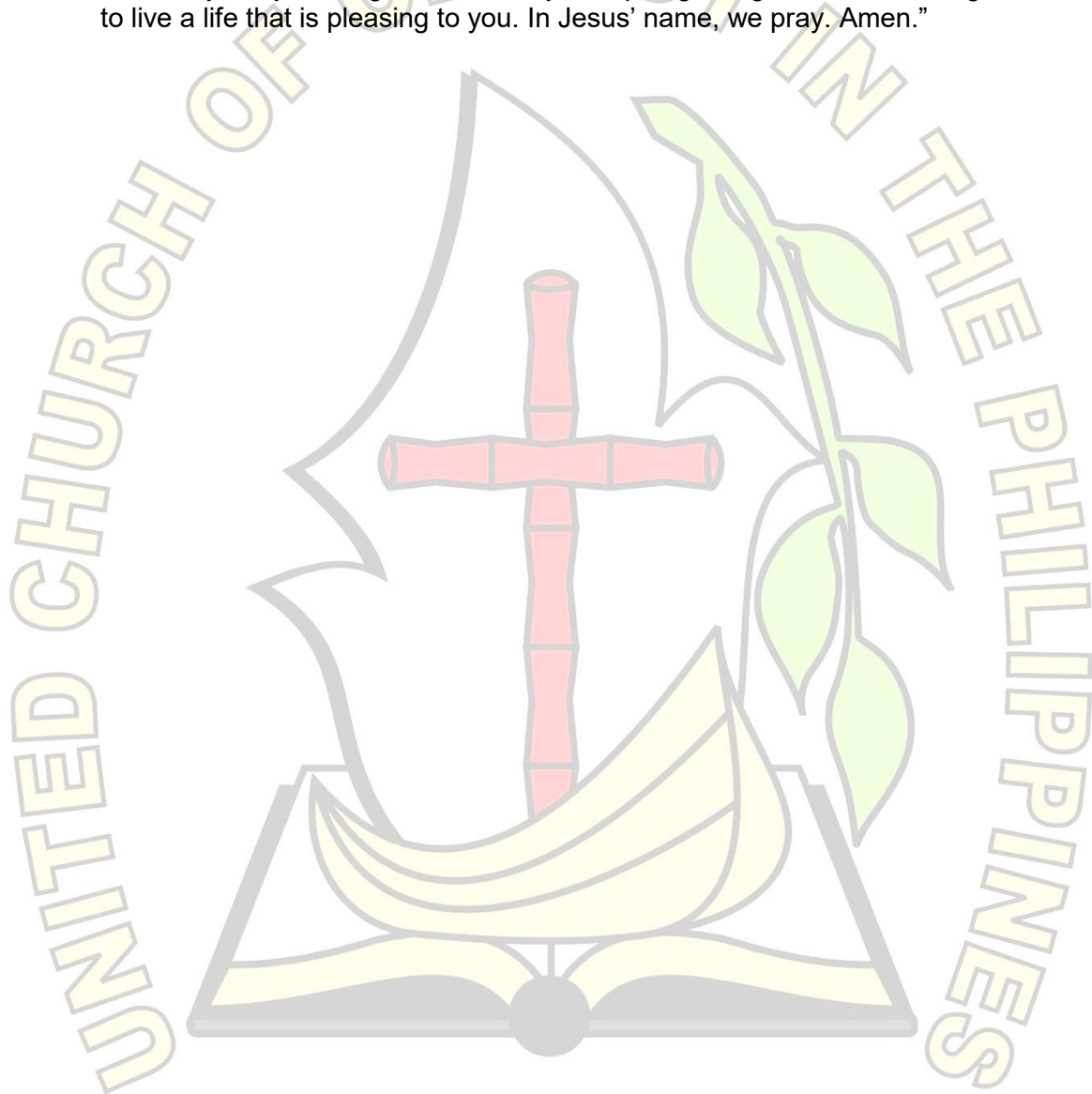
As youth workers in your local church, what ways can you do to achieve the following?

1. Maintain a good relationship with God and must carry a heart of service. (Make a self-denial posture where you serve others before yourself. Surrender absolutely to God by accepting the plans He made for you and to promise to abide by these rules.)
2. Be obedient to the Triune God. (When called, always answer God with "Here I am, Lord." Work for God without having excuses or postponements. Trust that God,

- through the intervention of the Holy Spirit paves the way for all our undertakings. Live a Christ-like life and remember that God will not let us down. Believe that God has begun to work in you and will sustain you up to its completion.)
3. Be prayerful as a way of life. (Read and meditate God's word. Pray for understanding and guidance. Focus on your mission to serve.)

G. Closing Worship

1. Offering
2. Closing song: "Living for Jesus" (HFJ # 289) stanzas 3 and 4
3. Closing prayer: "Compassionate God, we thank you for giving us the opportunity to work for you by serving others. With your Spirit guiding and to sustaining us, we want to live a life that is pleasing to you. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."



Adult Level

I. Objectives

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

1. define the words phylacteries, hypocrisy, and woe operationally
2. describe the evil things done by the Israelites during the time of Jeremiah and the solution proposed by Jeremiah;
3. compare the wrong doings of the Jews during Jeremiah and Jesus' times;
4. explain the role of the Holy Spirit in helping unify the members of the Church in order to combat oppressive powers; and
5. demonstrate one's commitment to do what is pleasing to God.

II. Concept: The Holy Spirit bids the church to unite with the people to confront the oppressive powers.

Materials: The Holy Bible (NRSV), worksheets

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time
2. Opening prayer: "Gracious God, we thank you for giving us the opportunity to learn about your Word. We recall how the Triune God created us and gave a unique purpose for our lives. Be with us as we to study and analyze your purpose for each of us. This is our prayer in your Son's name. Amen."
3. Opening song: "Living for Jesus" (HFJ # 289) stanzas 1 and 2

B. Getting Ready

1. Tell the class to do some dictionary work and find the meaning of the following words. Tell the class to compare the dictionary work with the given operational meaning of the words.

1. *Phylacteries*. These are small boxes that contain written verses from the Scriptures. These boxes are worn by the Jews on their foreheads or arms as a compliance to Deuteronomy 6:6-8. Aside from the phylacteries, the Jews also put tassels on the borders or hems of their clothes in remembrance of God's laws found in Numbers 15:38-40.)
2. *Hypocrisy*. A commentator describes the word hypocrite, in Greek means "play actor." Moreover, a hypocrite is someone pretending to be something that he or she is not in order to receive recognition or gain. Hypocrisy is a result of pride. Humble followers of God seek to live according to His laws because they love God and other people-not because they will be recognized or honored for it. When it is pointed out that a humble follower of God is in the wrong, he or she immediately works toward doing what is right. The hypocrite seeks to cover sins and make excuses for them.
3. *Woe*. This word refers to sorrow and suffering. This word was mentioned eight times in Matthew 23 spoken by Jesus to admonish the scribes, Pharisees, and hypocrites. The term woe expresses pity due to imminent punishment

C. Learning Time

1. Tell the class to read in unison Jeremiah 7:1-11.
2. Divide the class into seven groups and assign the groups to read and analyze the seven woes spoken of by Jesus in Matthew 23:13-18.
 - a. Group 1: (v. 13) Woe to the religious leaders who keep people out of God's kingdom.
 - b. Group 2: (v. 14) Woe to the religious leaders who take advantage of widows.

- c. Group 3: (v. 15) Woe to the religious leaders who mislead men into eternal destruction.
- d. Group 4: (vv. 16-22) Woe to the religious leaders who are covetous of worldly things.
- e. Group 5: (vv. 23-24) Woe to the religious leaders who refuse to show compassion. Woe to religious leaders who care to tithe but ignore the important things of the law: justice, mercy, and faith.
- f. Group 6: (vv. 25-26) Woe to the religious leaders who are inwardly corrupt.
- g. Group 7: (vv. 27-28) Woe to the religious leaders who afflict the righteous with good appearance but without inner spiritual life.

D. Deepening Activity/ Sharing Time

1. Ask the class to comment on Jeremiah 7:1-11 on the following points.
 - a. The sending of Jeremiah by God to warn God's people
 - b. The declaration of the sins committed by God's people
 - c. The consequences of this sin and the reward for returning to God
 - d. The similarity of this situation in today's world
2. Ask each of the seven groups to present their report by reading the assigned verses aloud. Then let them say in their own words what the scribes, Pharisees, and the hypocrites did that are not pleasing to God. Have them describe the imminent judgment coming to each of them if they do not amend their ways. At the end of the report, the following conclusive statements are expected to come out.
 - a. Group 1: (v. 13). We strive to make sure that no person is kept out of God's kingdom.
 - b. Group 2: (v. 14). We strive to make sure that we do not take advantage of anyone because of our selfish agenda.
 - c. Group 3: (v. 15). We strive to make sure that every person is led to eternal life in God's kingdom.
 - d. Group 4: (vv. 16-22). We strive to live a life not only materially without coveting the things that are not ours but more importantly, spiritually.
 - e. Group 5: (vv. 23-24). We strive to show compassion, mercy, and grace to anyone who needs it to please the compassionate, merciful, and gracious God.
 - f. Group 6: (vv. 25-26). We strive to be pure inwardly.
 - g. Group 7: (vv. 27-28). We strive to make the lives of the righteous not difficult than they already are.

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: "How can the church confront the oppressive powers? (The Holy Spirit bids the church to unite with the people to confront the oppressive powers done by leaders, both religious and otherwise.)"

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

The seven woes proclaimed by Jesus lead to sorrow and destruction. Change the behavior of the religious leaders so that the seven sins will become seven pathways to happiness. Expect varied answers from the class.

	Stepping Stones to Sorrow	Pathway to Happiness
Verse 13	Keeping people out of God's kingdom	_____
Verse 14	Taking advantage of others	_____
Verse 15	Misleading people to destruction	_____
Verses 16-22	Coveting other's possessions	_____

Verses 23-24	Ignoring justice, mercy, and grace	_____
Verses 25-26	Internally corrupt	_____
Verses 27-28	Afflicting the righteous	_____

G. Closing Worship

1. Offering
2. Closing song: "Living for Jesus" (HFJ # 289) stanzas 3 and 4
3. Closing prayer: "Compassionate God, we thank you for giving us the opportunity to work for you by serving others. With your Spirit guiding and to sustaining us, we want to live a life that is pleasing to you. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."

