



Quadrennial Theme: **SPIRITUALITY FOR THESE CRITICAL TIMES**Season: **Kingdomtide**Age Level: **Middle Elementary and Older Elementary**

August 27, 2017

**1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Kingdomtide/Mission Sunday****Love as a Kingdom Value***Old Testament:***Deuteronomy 6:5 (NRSV)**

<sup>5</sup> You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.

*New Testament:***1 Corinthians 13:13 (NRSV)**

<sup>13</sup>And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

**General Concept: Underlying everything, what the church does is love, without which, her works are nothing. It is the sacrificial love lived out by Jesus.**

**Key Concept: The church, as a loving community, is a caring community.**

**Exegesis of the Biblical References**

Deuteronomy tracks down Moses and the Israelites in the territory of Moab in the area where the Jordan flows into the Dead Sea. As his final act at this time of transmitting leadership to Joshua, Moses conveyed his farewell addresses to prepare the people for their entry to Canaan. In them, Moses highlighted the laws that were specifically needed at such a time, and he presented them in a way applicable to the situation. Here, the words of Moses come to us from the heart as this servant of the Lord presses God's claim on God's people Israel.

Deuteronomy 6:5 - Love the Lord. Primarily in view here is the love shown by a subject to a king. To love King Yahweh is to be his loyal and obedient servant (Israel was the Lord's kingdom people). Love for God and neighbor is based on and constructed upon the love that the Lord has for His people, and on His identification with them. Such love is to be total, involving one's whole being. "With all your heart" points toward total involvement and commitment. The phrase is applied not only to "how the Lord's people should seek God but also to how they should fear (revere) God, live in obedience with God, love and serve God."

The letter (1 Corinthians) revolves around the theme of problems in Christian conduct in the church. It has to do with progressive sanctification, the continuing development of a holy

character among those who have become followers of Christ. Obviously, Paul was personally concerned with the Corinthians' problems, revealing a true pastor's (shepherd's) heart.

This last and final verse (1 Corinthians 13:13) in Paul's exposition of love acts as the conclusion telling the people that without it all of the traits and gifts mentioned above is down to nothing.

The triad of faith, hope and love is found often in the New Testament. Faith produces action. Hope, is not unfounded wishful thinking, but firm confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ and His return. But the greatest of these is love because God is love and has communicated His love to us and now commands us to love one another. Love therefore, supersedes all the gifts because it outlasts them all, whether they are wonderful gifts of prophecy and speaking in tongues, or that of wisdom and knowledge, or that of teaching and healing (1 Cor. 12:4-10). Long after these sought-after gifts are no longer necessary, love will still be the governing principle that controls all that God and God redeemed people are to manifest and carry out.

Here, in these passages, we can see the importance of love as a virtue in building up the kingdom of God. The church therefore, being God's representative here on earth has the accountability to make known that love of God embodied in and exemplified by Jesus the Christ.

#### **Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users**

Mission is essentially an extension of God's love in history as concretely demonstrated in the life and work of Jesus. And the church is the historical extension of the risen Lord. Hence, God's mission was Jesus' mission which is none other than the mission of the church. Spreading God's love throughout the world in myriad ways is the essential content of the mission of the church. There are several core tasks for the realization of the church's mission which are integrally linked to each other. The whole gospel unfolds as these tasks are accomplished. There is no actual order of priority but the task of proclaiming the gospel logically comes first. Then comes the educational task consisting of the passing on of church traditions representing the historical elucidation of the gospel and its implications for current issues faced by the church. The other tasks serve as signs of the reality and efficacy of the gospel in concrete life: social advocacy and action that serve the cause of justice and equity, people's welfare, relief from distress and others. An emerging but urgent task is the recovery and defense of ecological integrity. Although these tasks sound contemporary, for the church they are derived from the ministry of Jesus. Every time Jesus brought benefits to people, such as healing, liberation from demonic powers, restoration to community and others, he conveyed to them the gospel of God's love in the most personal and concrete ways. Part of the mission thrust of the church is the establishment of local congregations. Church growth (in terms of new congregations added) is an evidence of the kingdom unfolding. This task aims at broadening the sphere of God's grace through the church for others' sake, not for the church's glory. Otherwise, it's not church mission but human pride, not about not about the kingdom of God but empire-building

**Objectives:**

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

1. sing songs and recite biblical verses of love;
2. give examples of situations/illustrations that show love in different ways; and
3. say a sincere "I love you" to each other.

**Materials:** The Holy Bible (preferably NRSV), song/verse chart, big drawing of a church, materials needed in the application activity

**Learning Experiences:***A. Opening Worship*

1. Welcome time: Smile and greet the children as they come. Check the attendance.
2. Opening prayer: "Dear God, we thank you for this day. Thank you for allowing us to go to church with our families and friends. We pray that you will enlighten us today with your wisdom teaching us ways on how to love you and others. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen."
3. Opening song: "Oh I Love You with the Love of the Lord"  
Oh I love you with the love of the Lord. (2X)  
I can see in you the glory of his name  
Yes, I love you with the love of the Lord.

*B. Getting Ready*

1. Tell the class to do the game "Disappearing words" by replacing the blanks. Have them use their Bibles as their reference.
  - a. "You shall (love) the Lord your (God) with all your (heart), and with all your (soul), and with all your (might)." (Deuteronomy 6:5"
  - b. "And now (faith), (hope), and (love) abide, these three; and the greatest of these is (love)." (1 Corinthians 13:13)
2. Ask the class which word appeared the most. (love)

*C. Learning Time*

Divide the class into three groups. Assign each group to read the following verses written in index cards.

1. Group 1. 1 Corinthians 13:1-3

<sup>1</sup>If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup>And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup>If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

2. Group 2: 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

<sup>4</sup>Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant <sup>5</sup>or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; <sup>6</sup>it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. <sup>7</sup>It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all



things, endures all things. <sup>8</sup>Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end.

3. Group 3: 1 Corinthians 13:9-13

<sup>9</sup>For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; <sup>10</sup>but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. <sup>11</sup>When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. <sup>12</sup>For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. <sup>13</sup>And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

*D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time*

1. Let each group do the following:

- a. Group 1. Retell the verses 1 to 3 in your own words. (Expect the class to mention that while the ability of a person to tell about the Gospel is acceptable to God but if the reason behind doing this is not love but recognition of one's ability, then it will be useless and not acceptable to God. If people profess to have faith in God but doing it only as a lip service and without love, their faith is questionable. If people will be generous in giving their riches but do not have love, those persons do not gain anything from God.)
  - b. Group 2: Tell the group to list all the attributes of love. (Love is patient, kind, not envious or boastful, not arrogant, not rude, not irritable, not rejoicing in wrongdoing, but rejoicing in the truth, and bearing, believing, enduring all things. Love does not end unlike prophecies, tongues, and knowledge that will come to an end.)
  - c. Group 3: Explain the mystery that will happen when we come face to face with God and why love is the greatest. (Life on earth is temporal. At the Second Coming of Christ, all that we see or know in part will be completed. Jesus will make us understand the mystery in full. By then, we need not prophesy, we need not show our faith anymore, but love will prevail.)
2. Discuss the role of love in the mission of the church. Emphasize that without love, mission cannot be realized because the love of God permeates all mission work. The caring ministry of the church is anchored on love.

*E. Discovering the Biblical Truth*

Ask: How can our church as a loving community express a caring attitude?

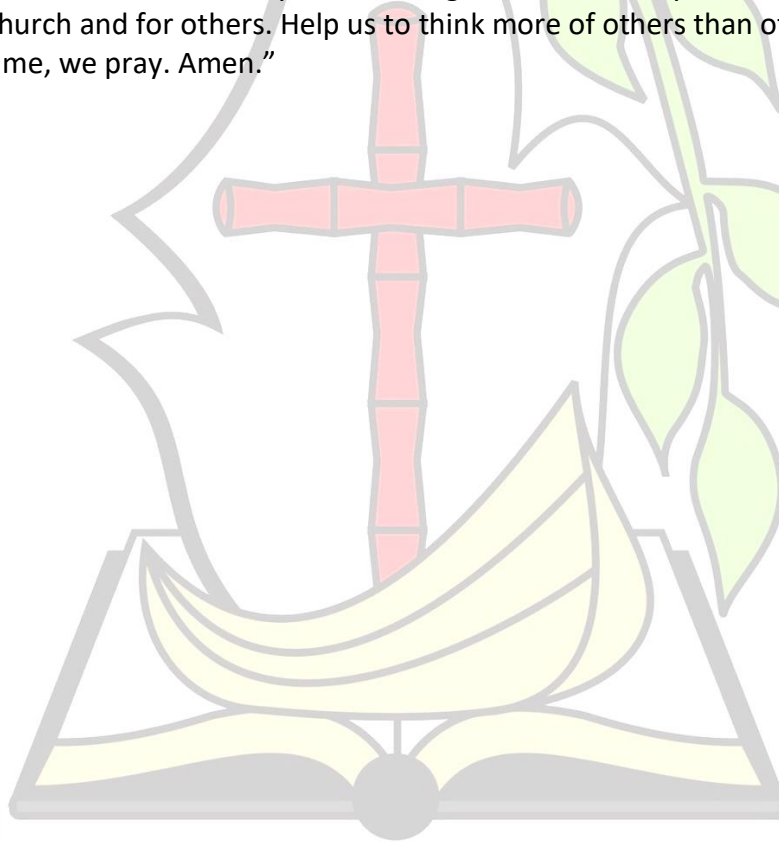
*F. Applying the Biblical Truth*

1. Ask the class about the ways of caring for others.
2. **For ME:** Let the children complete these sentences.
  - a. I learned that I can show my love and care for the members of our church by \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. I discovered that being caring to the members of our church means \_\_\_\_\_
3. **For OE:** Let the class look at the ministries of their local church and show support

ministries that show care for others

*G. Closing Worship*

1. Memory verse: "And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love." (1 Corinthians 13:13)
2. Commitment: "As a member of a caring church, I will respond to the needs of others."
3. Offering
4. Closing song: "Jesus was a Loving Teacher"  
Jesus was a loving teacher helping people day by day;  
Know the love of God Creator, teaching them to love and pray.  
Jesus was a patient teacher, waiting all to learn God's will,  
Telling stories they'd remember, stories that we're reading still.  
God we thank you for this teacher, and our praise to you we give,  
For his love and for his patience, showing people how to live.
5. Closing prayer: "Dear God, thank you for letting us know the ways on how to care for our church and for others. Help us to think more of others than of ourselves. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."



September 3, 2017

**2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Kingdomtide**

***Joy as Kingdom Value***

*Old Testament:*

**Psalms 100 (NRSV)**

All Lands Summoned to Praise God

A Psalm of thanksgiving.

<sup>1</sup>Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth. <sup>2</sup>Worship the LORD with gladness; come into his presence with singing. <sup>3</sup>Know that the LORD is God. It is he that made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. <sup>4</sup>Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him, bless his name. <sup>5</sup>For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

**Habakkuk 3:17-18 (NRSV)**

Trust and Joy in the Midst of Trouble

<sup>17</sup>Though the fig tree does not blossom, and no fruit is on the vines; though the produce of the olive fails and the fields yield no food; though the flock is cut off from the fold and there is no herd in the stalls, <sup>18</sup>yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will exult in the God of my salvation.

*New Testament:*

**Philippians 4:4-7 (NRSV)**

<sup>4</sup>Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. <sup>5</sup>Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. <sup>6</sup>Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. <sup>7</sup>And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

*General Concept: The church rejoices in the midst of adversities.*

*Key Concept: The church rejoices at all times.*

**Exegesis of the Biblical References**

The Book of Psalms is traditionally attributed to David, although not all Psalms is of his own writing. The book actually is divided into several themes that depict the worship life of the Israelites. Walter Brueggemann offers 3 schemes to understand the theological path of these powerful poems: These are the 1. Psalms of orientation; 2. Psalms of disorientation and 3. Psalms of reorientation. Psalms, according to him point us to a twofold movement of faith. First, we move from a settled orientation to a season of disorientation. Then we move unto a new orientation that comes to us as a surprise gift of God's grace.

Psalm 100 points us to a call to all the people of Israel to give thanks and rejoice knowing that they are God's people. It has a special similarity with Ps. 95:1-2, 6-7. Why is there a need for Israel to praise the Lord? Because God is above all gods, and there is nothing in the universe that do not belong to God. The word "all the lands" or "all the earth"



gives us an idea of the inclusive nature of this call. Although it is very clear here that God has a special relationship with Israel, these words give us an idea that the call goes out to the whole world, "all the lands" with all its peoples which ought to acknowledge the Lord because "the Lord is indeed good, His steadfast love endures, and His faithfulness to all generations" of peoples.

Among the prophetic writings, Habakkuk is somewhat unique because it seems that there is no oracle addressed to Israel, like that of other prophetic writings. It contains, however, a dialogue between the prophet and God. In this writing, Habakkuk was somehow confused of the "going ons" in Israel, especially of the rise of the ruthless Babylonians, and with God seemingly doing nothing about it. Habakkuk then wrestled with the question: "How could God, who is "too pure to look on evil" (1:13) appoint such a nation to "execute judgment" (1:12) on a people "more righteous than them" (1:13)? God makes it clear however, that eventually the corrupt destroyer will itself be destroyed. In the end, Habakkuk learns to rest in God's sovereign appointments and await God's working in a spirit of worship. He learns to wait patiently in faith (2:3-4) for God's kingdom to be expressed universally (2:14).

Habakkuk 3:1-18 is actually a prayer of Habakkuk expressing his confusions and his resolve to patiently wait for God's ultimate expression of making known God's kingdom universally. Thus, he would just continue to rejoice in the Lord no matter what happens around him trusting fully that when God promises, God fulfils. This is truly rejoicing in the Lord even in the midst of deep adversities.

Paul's sole purpose in writing this letter to the Philippians is to express his gratitude for the gifts they sent to him when they learned that he was detained in Rome. He made use of this opportunity to express his other desires: to make known his own circumstances; to encourage the Philippians to stand firm in the face of persecution and rejoice regardless of circumstances that they face.

An exhortation of Paul to the Philippians (4:4-7) is to rejoice in the Lord under all kind of circumstances, including suffering. Thus, they should embody Christ-like gentleness and consideration for others, especially for the leaders. They should not be anxious or self-centered or worried but they should be prayerful to attain the peace of God which is not merely a psychological state of mind, but an inner tranquility based on peace with God. It is the kind of peace that passes all understanding because it comes purely as a gift of God. It cannot be forced or imposed by some other powers. It cannot even be banned or prohibited. It is the kind of peace that transcends all kinds of tribulation that can ever be faced by those who would become loyal followers of Christ. It is the kind of peace that enables the faithful exemplified by the early church to rejoice even in times of extreme persecution and repression of their faith. It is all because we know and are assured that we have a God who is with us and who fights with and for us. The whole UCCP has been threatened, criticized and attacked nowadays because of the distinct faith expression and faithful prophetic witness it is rendering to the least of our brothers and sisters. This is precisely what the prophets, the apostles and the early church and finally Jesus himself had experienced, yet they persisted with great joy, serenity and steadfast persistence. Because of their kind of historical witness, we the Church have become what we are today: called to continue what they have done. But let this be a reminder, that we are not alone; that we



should not be moved but remain joyful in the Lord in whatever circumstance we may be facing in this life.

### **Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users**

The church is bound to suffer especially when it must give up part of itself for the sake of others as Jesus did. But the right response to the experience of suffering is not to wallow in self-pity but to find joy in it, which is a fruit of the Spirit for those whose hope is in the coming of the kingdom of God. The joy that comes from the Spirit is intimately connected with doing the mission of the church.

Some Christians are drawn to congregations offering experiences that are supposed to induce happy feelings. They find no satisfaction in a church that preaches a message that disturbs their peace. For them the church is the one place in the world that can hide them from the daily fares of troubles, hurt, sadness and burdens in life. They wish to follow a kind of mission that's self-gratifying and self-fulfilling. This is a false gospel that only leads sincere and gospel-starved Christians to damnation.

Joy as a fruit of the Spirit in us is the one experienced and shared by the apostle Paul at his most trying moments when he was incarcerated with a real prospect of execution. His last word to the Christians in Philippi was for them to rejoice rather than mourn for his impending departure. This is the epitome of genuine Christian joy that is available to all who suffer for the sake of the gospel. Christian joy is not to be found in the pursuit of personal happiness for its own sake. It is a unique kind of joy that one finds in suffering for the gospel. The joy of the Spirit makes the pursuit of the kingdom light rather than burdensome, delightful rather than mournful.

### **Objectives:**

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

1. share happy and sad experiences at home, in school, or in the church;
2. explain that joy in all circumstances comes for the Spirit;
3. describe how rejoicing is connected to the mission of the church; and
4. tell ways by which the church remains joyful at all times.

**Materials:** The Holy Bible (preferably NRSV), song/verse chart, cartolina of different colors, coloring materials, markers, glue, scissors, 3' x 0.5' sheet of white paper and a tongue depressor

### **Learning Experiences:**

#### **A. Opening Worship**

1. Welcome time: Greet the children as they arrive.
2. Opening prayer: "Dear God, we come to you rejoicing because we know that you are our ever-present God. As we listen to your word today, help us to follow and do your will joyfully. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."
3. Opening song: "C'mon Everybody"

C'mon everybody, preach the name of Jesus.  
All the people of the earth let them hear. (Repeat)

Chorus: Joy is like the sunshine shining down upon us  
Joy is like a golden crown so c'mon everybody.  
Preach the name of Jesus, Halleluia. (4X)  
C'mon everybody, sing a song of joy.  
Let everybody listen to the happy song. (Repeat)

**B. Getting Ready**

1. Prepare the class to worship the Lord as they prepare streamers. Provide each child a 3' x 0.5' sheet of white paper and a tongue depressor. Make the other materials available for class use: markers, crayons, glue, and scissors. Tell each child to glue one end of the streamer to the tongue depressor. Ask them to decorate their streamers and let them choose from any of the following texts (or expect their own statements):
  - a. I'm joyful in the Lord always!
  - b. I will always rejoice in the Lord!
  - c. I will make a joyful noise unto the Lord!
  - d. The peace of God will guard my heart and mind in Christ.
2. Ask the class how they felt when working on their streamers. Then let them set aside their work for use later.

**C. Learning Time**

1. Ask the class to share any happy or sad moments in their life at home, in school, or in the church. Tell them that today's lesson will help them face whatever challenges that may come their way.
2. Divide the class into two groups. Tell them to do a choral recitation of the two texts.

Group 1: Psalm 100  
All: *1Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth.*  
Girls: *2Worship the LORD with gladness; come into his presence with singing.*  
Boys: *3Know that the LORD is God. It is he that made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.*  
All: *4enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him, bless his name. 5For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.*

Group 2: Philippians 4:4-7  
Girls: *4Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. 5Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near.*  
Boys: *6Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.*  
All: *7And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*
3. Discuss the texts using the given information:
  - a. *Psalm 100.* This psalm is attributed to David. Verse 1 tells us to shout joyfully to the Lord when we consider what God has done for us. We say **we praise God with a joyful heart**. Verse 2 says we respond in singing as we come into God's

presence and as we acknowledge God's love for us. We say **we worship God with a joyful heart**. Verse 3 says we honor God knowing that God is our Creator and we come into fellowship with God through Jesus Christ. We say **we honor God with a joyful heart**. Verses 4 and 5 say that as we enter into God's presence, we thank and praise God because God is good and God's love for us is everlasting. We say **we praise, honor, and worship God with a thankful and joyful heart**.

b. *Philippians 4:4-7*. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Philippians during his two-year imprisonment in Rome. In these verses, Paul exhorts the Philippians to rejoice in the Lord always and for everything. Paul says the following:

- 1) Our experience of God's peace is the answer to our anxiety. Worry becomes a sin when we do not believe and trust God's presence and providence.
- 2) We must pray with thanksgiving regarding all our concerns, be they big or small. The Holy Spirit will always intercede for us as we pray.
- 3) The peace of God will always help us understand because God's peace is sovereign and not based on human anxiety, all-knowing, and stays in the inner heart, mind, and thoughts of human beings.

*D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time*

Ask these questions.

1. What idea is being discussed in both texts? (Rejoice in the Lord always.)
2. How can we make sure that we do not fall into the sin of anxiety when we experience life's challenges? (Philippians 4:6)
3. Why is it important to have a regular prayer schedule even during happy and sad experiences in life? Why? (Philippians 4:7)
4. How can the church include prayer as a ministry of the church? (Answers may vary depending upon the experiences of the pupils.)

*E. Discovering the Biblical Truth*

Ask: What programs or ministries of the church help her members to rejoice at all times? (Prayer is the best tool to help God's people to rejoice at all times. Serving others with joyful hearts will keep our hearts and minds joyful at all times.)

*F. Applying the Biblical Truth*

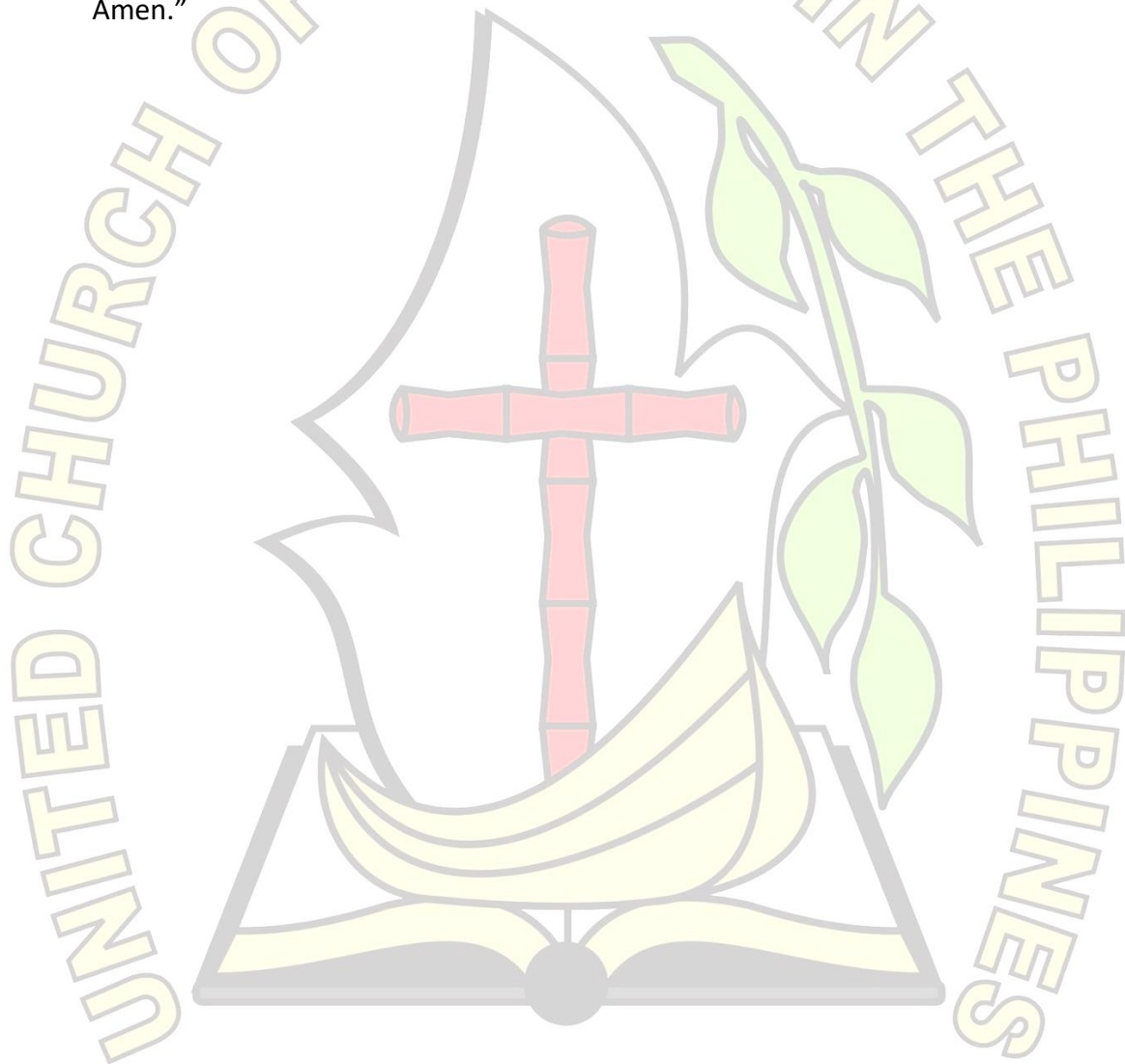
1. **For ME:** Tell the class to find partners. Call each pair the "praise pair" and ask each pair to talk about five things that they can thank or praise God for. After they finish exchanging their notes, let them write these things on the board. After all the praise pairs have done their work, emphasize to them that there are endless things that we can thank God for as Christians who enjoy God's goodness.
2. **For OE:** Ask the class to make a bookmark using cartolina of different colors. Let the children use the form of a church in making the bookmark. Let them write at least five ways on how to joyfully serve God in the church. Encourage the children to share their work to the class.
3. After the activity, lead the class to say a prayer of praise and thanks for God's



goodness.

*G. Closing Worship*

1. Memory verse: Psalm 100: 1 and Philippians 4:5
2. Offering: Let the children use their streamers while singing and giving their offering.
3. Closing song: "Rejoice, Give Thanks in the Lord Always" (HFJ # 174)
4. Closing prayer: "We rejoice O God for your love and faithfulness to us. Teach us dear God to do this even in the midst of trials and temptations, in sadness and in joy. As a church, help us and teach us how to be joyful at all times and in all circumstances. This we pray in Christ's name, our source of joy and strength. Amen."



September 10, 2017

**3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday in Kingdomtide**

***Peace as a Kingdom Value***

*Old Testament:*

**Isaiah 32:16-18 (NRSV)**

The Peace of God's Reign

<sup>16</sup>Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness abide in the fruitful field.

<sup>17</sup>The effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust for ever. <sup>18</sup>My people will abide in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places.

*New Testament:*

**Matthew 5:9 (NRSV)**

<sup>9</sup>Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.'

**General Concept: The Church participate in peace building by uncovering the roots of injustice and pursuing peace.**

**Key Concept: The church promotes peace.**

### **Exegesis of the Biblical References**

Isaiah is a book that unveils the full dimensions of God's judgment and salvation. God is "the Holy One of Israel" (1:4; 6:1) who will certainly punish the rebellious people (1:2) but will afterward redeem them (41:14,16). Israel is a nation who has become so blind and so deaf to God's instructions. In all these, they have experienced the awful judgment of God yet God will have compassion on God's people, and will rescue them from both political and spiritual oppression. Their restoration is like a new exodus as God redeems them and rescues them. That day will be marked by peace and safety when a king will descend from the line of David who will reign in righteousness and God's people will no longer be oppressed by rulers and Jerusalem will truly be the "City of the Lord" (60:14). Isaiah's idea of peace is like that of the rest of the prophets, when justice is served to the needy and the oppressed and the wicked are punished and destroyed.

These particular passages in Isaiah 32:16-18 are one of the many visions of Isaiah for God's shalom (Eirene in Greek, which means peace). This is the kind of peace and safety in a Messianic age wherein little children will be unharmed as they play with previously ferocious animals. This is a vision of an extraordinary peace and prosperity that will come to Israel under a just and righteous ruler.

Matthew's main purpose is to prove to his Jewish readers that Jesus is their Messiah. He does this primarily by showing how Jesus in his life and ministry fulfilled the Old Testament Scriptures. Although all the Gospel writers quotes the OT, Matthew includes nine proof texts unique to his Gospel (1:22-23; 2:15; 2:17-18; 2:23; 4:14-16; 8:17; 12:17-21; 13:35; 27:9-10) to drive home his basic theme: Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament's predictions of Messiah. To accomplish his purpose, Matthew also emphasized

Jesus' Davidic lineage right from the very first chapter of the Gospel.

Matthew 5:9. This verse comes from the Sermon of Jesus Christ on the Mount, wherein Jesus was somehow delivering an address that serves as the inauguration of his ministry, explaining what he expects of the members of his kingdom. The exhortations discussed here may look so demanding, difficult seen in moral and ethical standards but this is for us to realize that we can only do it with the help and guidance of our God. This verse gives us an idea of the future of the one who chooses to be a peacemaker. The text calls the peacemaker blessed. Blessed here means more than just being happy because normally, happiness is an emotion often dependent on outward circumstances. Here blessed refers to the ultimate well-being and distinctive spiritual joy of those who share in the salvation of the kingdom of God. It's not just being "masaya" usually identified with plain merry-making, having parties and so on. It's having "kagalakan" "na hindi kayang burahin ng anumang mapait na karanasan dahil sa may ganap na kapayapaan ang kalooban." Peacemakers remain resolute, steadfast and unwavering in their conviction in spite and despite of what they may be going through because they know and believe that they are holding on to the way of the only God of their lives who remains in control of everything happening around them. Because of this inner peace, they become committed and passionate peacemakers. These peacemakers are the ones who promote peace. In so doing, they reflect a character of their heavenly father and are fittingly called "children of God".

These passages urge the church to become the peacemakers of today. The church being the representative of God and the body of Christ is given the task to continue the mission and ministry of Jesus for genuine peace to be real in the midst of so many unfavorable and unjust circumstances we may encounter along the way. Remember, we have been redeemed by the Messiah, now it is our chance to embody that Messiah in our living as children of God.

### **Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users**

Whereas the empires of history are built on terror, the kingdom of God is founded on genuine and lasting peace. In God's kingdom there is a cessation of all struggles for domination and monopoly control of the earth's resources. As soon as peace based on justice prevails, the false gods and idols of power and wealth will topple down and people will come to worship God alone. Here lies the connection between worship and the pursuit of peace. The story of the Exodus depicts the Hebrew people's departure from slavery and the worship of false gods. They were in a journey to a land of freedom where peace dwells and where God alone reigns.

The biblical concept of peace includes both an end to warfare and the establishment of justice. The prophetic vision of turning swords into plowshares is an apt metaphor for the cessation of hostilities and the building of a new society. There is no shortcut on the road to genuine peace. A judicious combination of truce and a gradual dismantling of structures of injustice require an extended process that allows time for healing and for the conflicting sides to gain mutual trust and capability to hammer out a new order. Other than that, a peace process will only be used to gain tactical advantage and propaganda mileage.

In these days of wars and rumors of wars, the church has been at the forefront in peace processes involving the warring parties. The pursuit of peace has become a venue where



churches of differing doctrinal persuasions come together in unity. Although they have yet to forge a common agenda for peace, the church is known as a vigorous peace advocate the world over.

**Objectives:**

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

1. tell that peace comes from God, is made known by Christ, and is made available by the Holy Spirit;
2. describe the promise of becoming children of God as peacemakers;
3. explain why the church should promote peace; and
4. participate in church activities that promote peace as believers who abide in Christ by studying God's word, singing praises, praying, and doing peacemaking activities.

**Materials:** The Holy Bible (preferably NRSV), song charts, pictures, bond papers, worksheets, coloring materials, drawing of a dove

**Learning Experiences:***A. Opening Worship*

1. Welcome time: Greet the children as they come.
2. Opening prayer: "Lord, teach us to be gentle in all our ways. Help us to follow your ways by being instruments of peace to all the people we meet each day. In the mighty name of Jesus, we pray. Amen."
3. Opening song: "I've Got Peace like a River"  
I've got peace like a river (2x).  
I've got peace like a river in my soul, halleluia!  
I've got peace like a river (2x).  
I've got peace like a river in my soul.

*B. Getting Ready*

1. Write the word **PEACE** on the board and let the class write their thoughts about peace. Provide these guide questions for their use.
  - a. What is peace?
  - b. "What situations do you know that do not look like that there is peace?"
  - c. "Do you think God wants us to have peace in our life?"
2. Accept the answers of the class and organize them.

*C. Learning Time*

1. Divide the class into three groups. Provide each group each of the following situations (maybe written on index cards). Let each group discuss the situation and ask the members to tell how they can change these situations in order to pursue peace.
  - a. Group 1. Situation: It's playtime in school. You are waiting for your turn to go up the stairs and go down the slide. Suddenly, another pupil runs and cuts you and goes up the ladder. You push the pupil because it was after all your turn to use

- the slide. Action: Share what you can do to make peace in this situation. The small group shares what they would do to make peace in this situation.
- b. Group 2. Situation: A big boy neighbor bullies you by calling you names. You feel hurt but cannot fight back. Action: What can you do to make peace in this situation?
  - c. Group 3. Situation: There are toys in the cabinet. Each of you in your classroom is given a chance to choose one toy and play with it. You have chosen a particular toy. Your turn will come after the pupil in front of you. This pupil chose the toy you like and there are no more toys to play with. Action: What do you do to make peace in this situation?
2. Let each group present their actions. After the presentation, tell the class that when they are able to make peace in the different situations, they are now called peacemakers.

*D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time*

1. Ask the children why they should pursue peace. Instruct them to read Matthew 5:9. Say: "Peace comes from God. It is made known to all believers through Jesus Christ upon his death and resurrection. When Jesus ascended to the Father, the Holy Spirit gave us the gift of peace. Christians are called to pursue peace in relationships. To have peace with God is the greatest gift that we can receive."
2. Discuss the three situations and compare the notes of the children in their presentations.
  - a. First situation. *Reaction of a pupil whose turn was taken by another pupil that resulted in a violent action.* Tell the class to refer to Romans 12:18-19: "If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.'" Ask the class to paraphrase the verses. (The Bible tells us we are to do whatever we can to be at peace with others. We should never take matters in our own hands because God will avenge us and God will take care of us.) Let the pupil who pushed another pupil to apologize and seek forgiveness without mentioning what wrong thing the latter has done to the former.)
  - b. Second situation. *A big boy bullying a neighbor who cannot fight back.* Tell the class to refer to Hebrews 12:14: "Pursue peace with everyone, and the holiness without which no one will see the Lord." Assist the children to paraphrase the verse: (The verse tells us to pursue peace always and with all people.) Draw from the class the idea that efforts (with adult supervision) should be made to ask the bully why he calls the neighbor names and in the process, you are showing the bully your desire to make peace with him.
  - c. Third situation. *The favorite toy that has been used by another pupil.* Ask the class to read 1 Peter 3:10-12: For those who desire life and desire to see good days, let them keep their tongues from evil and their lips from speaking deceit; let them turn away from evil and do good; let them seek peace and pursue it. For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer.

But the face of the Lord is against those who do evil." Lead the class to realize that using mean words will not solve the situation. There is need to understand that the pupil in front may want something similar to what the pupil next to him or her wants, too. God wants us to have peace with everyone.

*E. Discovering the Biblical Truth*

Say: God calls us children when we make peace with others. Ask: As peacemakers at home, in school, and in the church, how can we help promote peace?

*F. Applying the Biblical Truth*

1. Tell the class that now that they know they can be at peace God, then it is their duty to share this peace to others. Let the class look for ways by which they make peace and share the peace of God in their hearts to others.
2. **For ME:** Provide cutouts of doves and tell the class to choose one person at home or in school that they are committed to make peace and share God's peace in their hearts. Let them write something about their peace effort. Make sure that they will be given to their chosen person.
3. **For OE:** Divide the class into two groups. Let each group choose a person in church or a neighbor that they can make peace and share God's peace in their hearts. Have them prepare peacemaking materials and share them with the person/s they have in mind. The teacher can assist the groups to present their work to the chosen persons.
4. For both groups, present the following situations for their reference or guide. Remind the class that asking for forgiveness and forgiving others is necessary to promote peace whether in prayer or in face-to-face encounters.
  - a. Your classmate and best friend are fighting.
  - b. You see a boy throwing his garbage on the floor.
  - c. Madison is very upset. She got a very low grade in Math.
  - d. You are anxious because you lied to your parents.
  - e. You provided bad information about a friend to destroy his or her image.

*G. Closing Worship*

1. Memory verse: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." (Matthew 5:9)
2. Offering
3. Closing song: "Let There Be Peace on Earth" (1st stanza only)

Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.  
Let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be.  
For God is our Parent, children all are we.  
Let me walk with each other in perfect harmony.
5. Closing prayer: "Great and mighty God, thank you for your wisdom that inspires us to be peacemakers. Guide us as we begin to think of ways of promoting God's peace to others. This we pray in Jesus' peacemaking name. Amen."



September 17, 2017

**4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Kingdomtide**

***Patience as a Kingdom Value***

*Old Testament:*

**Isaiah 40:28-31 (NRSV)**

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

**Lamentations 3:26 (NRSV)**

<sup>26</sup>It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.

*New Testament:*

**Luke 8:15 (NRSV)**

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

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

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

### **Exegesis of the Biblical References**

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

they seem to be forgetting all about the saving grace of God that has been demonstrated already in the past in the event of the Exodus in Egypt when they were rescued and liberated from the oppressive, enslaving hands of slavery of king Pharaoh. The text however tries to reiterate the undiminished power and commitment of God to God's own people even in such times of great crisis. The prophet reassures the people of God's never ending mercy and everlasting love and that God has never forgotten God's chosen Israel. It is this love and gracious power of God that will sustain those who wait on the Lord with constant and persistent patience with a faith that never gives up, who walk according to the will of God. God's promises never fail to those who trust in God, but God gives strength to those who wait patiently on God's saving grace.

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

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

### **Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users**

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

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

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

And third, patience in waiting for the kingdom to arrive is constantly being replenished by hope. The horizon seems to recede at every forward step and nothing seems to appear above it. But patience in the faith is not merely a subjective commitment to an unknown quantity. There's a reality more vivid than the eye can see that looms transparent behind

the events of history. The Old Testament prophets project this reality against the backdrop of Israel's colonial history. Jesus paints it in the frame of the experience of the poor of his time. This reality continues in the present to reveal new images to inspire patience among those who hope in the coming of God's kingdom.

**Objectives:**

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

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

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

**Learning Experiences:****A. Opening Worship**

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

**B. Getting Ready**

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

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



- d. Watching how flowers bloom
- e. Watching a newly born sibling grow

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

### *C. Learning Time*

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

### *D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time*

Discuss the lesson further.

1. Who do you think is the sower in the parable? Refer to Matthew 13:37. (The sower is God who scattered the seeds of faith to enlighten the people.)
2. What does the seed represent? (The seed is the word of God.) Since God is the sower, can we confidently say that the seed is good?
3. Why is the seed important? (We have to believe in the word of God to be saved. We have to prepare our hearts to receive God's word.)
4. What does the kind of soil represent? Why is it important? (The soil represents our hearts. The condition of our hearts will make us keep or throw away God's word. Our hearts attuned with God can sincerely and patiently wait for God's blessings.)
5. Why do you think the seeds that fell on the roadside did not grow? (They were eaten by the birds. Somebody hinders the growth of the seed and that is the enemy of God's people.)
6. Why do you think the plants did not survive in the shallow, rocky soil? (The plants

were not strong enough to survive. People find it hard to sustain their trust in God's providence because they cannot endure life's challenges. Their hearts are not rooted in faith in God. They are unproductive. They are unable to support Christian life.)

7. Why do you think the plants that grew in the thorn-infested soil died? (The plants were choked by the weeds. Without full trust and confidence in God's word, God's will, and God's timing, people are choked by the cares of the world. The challenges become destructive to them. Their hearts are not ready to obey God.)
8. Why do you think the seeds that fell on good soil grew and produce plenty of fruit? (God's word was received by good hearts, kept and used to serve others. Good hearts follow Jesus for the right reasons. The fruits that were produced are products of patience and perseverance in our lives.)

#### *E. Discovering the Biblical Truth*

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

#### *F. Applying the Biblical Truth*

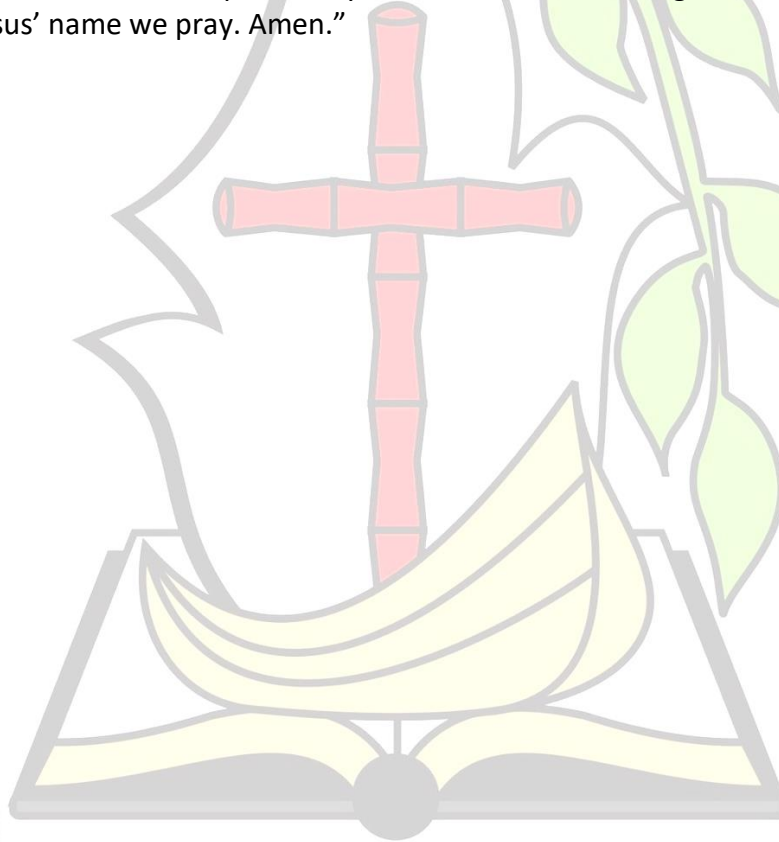
1. Present the four kinds of hearts. Ask the class what kind of heart they want to have. Expect that the choice of the class is that of the good heart.
  - a. The hardened heart where Satan and other distractions keep a person from knowing God's word.
  - b. The shallow heart where life's cares and challenges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

- b. Group 2: In school
- c. Group 3: In church
- d. Group 4: In the playground

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

#### G. Closing Worship

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





September 24, 2017

**5<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Kingdomtide**

***Kindness as a Kingdom Value***

*Old Testament:*

**Micah 6:8 (NRSV)**

<sup>8</sup>He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

*New Testament:*

**1Timothy 2:1-7**

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, <sup>2</sup>for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. <sup>3</sup>This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, <sup>4</sup>who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. <sup>5</sup>For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human, <sup>6</sup>who gave himself a ransom for all-this was attested at the right time. <sup>7</sup>For this I was appointed a herald and an apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

**Luke 10:25-37 (NRSV)**

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

<sup>25</sup>Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. 'Teacher,' he said, 'what must I do to inherit eternal life?' <sup>26</sup>He said to him, 'What is written in the law? What do you read there?'

<sup>27</sup>He answered, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.'

<sup>28</sup>And he said to him, 'You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live. <sup>29</sup>But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?'

<sup>30</sup>Jesus replied, 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead.

<sup>31</sup>Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup>So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup>But a Samaritan while travelling came near him; and when he

saw him, he was moved with pity. <sup>34</sup>He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. <sup>35</sup>The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, "Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend." <sup>36</sup>Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who

fell into the hands of the robbers?' <sup>37</sup>He said, 'The one who showed him mercy.' Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'

**General Concept: The church is compassionate and sensitive to the needs of the people and acts to address their situation.**

*Key Concept: It is good to show kindness to everyone.*

### **Exegesis of the Biblical References**

Micah 6:8 signifies God's sole demands on God's people: "to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with God." The whole chapter 6 of Micah is actually addressed to the ruling elite of Judah in the 8th century BCE, to those who are in the position to prevent and rectify acts of injustice and to maintain and preserve justice towards their own people. They are those who are in the position to spend so much lavish and generous amounts for sacrifices and offerings at the altar of Yahweh as their mode of expressing their worship and thanksgiving to God. Micah, however, witnessed the sad reality that the very class of people entrusted to lead justly in the name of the God of Israel had been corrupted by the ways of power. He witnessed the enormous amount of abuses done to the poor and powerless people of the land by those who have power and privilege (cf. Mi. 2:1-2; 3:1-3). The small landowners suffered massive and systematic confiscation of their lands due to indebtedness imposed by the usurers and heavy taxation coming from the state apparatuses of the king. Massive deprivation and impoverishment of the common people of the land became a widespread phenomenon in the time of Micah. At the same time, this class of the ruling elite would always try to delude themselves into thinking that things in the land remain well especially in their relationship with God by assuming that they can always win God's favor by making abundant offerings of the most expensive and numerous amount before the altar of the Lord. They had assumed that God's favor and God's blessings can be won or bought with expensive offerings intended to erase whatever wrongdoing or transgression that may have been committed by them (v.7). This is where Micah makes the crucial rebuttal of these people's distorted religious assumptions. The only thing God requires of his people is something very basic and fundamental in the building of a peaceful and prosperous community: the doing of justice always, the passion for kindness towards the people and the attitude of humility towards God. This is the non-negotiable requirement of God for the building of a true and alternative kingdom where the only Lord and king is the only God of justice.

Luke 10: 25-37 (the parable of the 'Good Samaritan') begins with a lawyer trying to put to test Jesus, asking him about how to inherit eternal life. Jesus replied by asking the lawyer with a very basic question: "Well, what is written in the Law?", to which the lawyer replied by reciting the great commandments based on Deut. 6:5 and Lev. 19:18: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself" to which Jesus replied: "Ok, good! Just do this and you will live. The lawyer however, pursued further, wanting to justify himself: "But who then is my neighbor?" Jesus answered by simply relating the story of the Samaritan who came to the rescue of a victimized and seriously wounded Jew. This Jew fell into the hands of robbers on the highway from Jerusalem to Jericho. After being bypassed by a priest and then a Levite, a Samaritan passed by and saw the victim. The Samaritan immediately had deep compassion on the person, treated his wounds and brought him to an inn. The deep historical animosity and hatred between the Jews and the Samaritans are well known already. They look at each other as enemies and people who cannot be trusted as a neighbor. Jesus however called the Samaritan, the one hated by the Jews, as the

neighbor. The teaching on “loving one's neighbor” is actually reversed here by Jesus. The hated one, the one considered as the historical enemy can actually be the neighbor to us who consider ourselves as the good guys, being the people of God. We who consider ourselves as the good guys may become victims ourselves. And people who we hate, who we consider as enemies, can actually be a source of rescue, kindness and deep compassion, in acts that transcend political, racial and ideological boundaries. It is time to break the walls and the barriers that separate peoples into enemies and strangers. It is time to practice kindness and compassion even unto people we hate and consider as enemies for as Jesus himself said, they themselves are capable of becoming a compassionate neighbor to us. This is the way to really live and enjoy the life in the kingdom of God being offered to us by God in and through Jesus. Kindness and compassion are very essential virtues of people who are to become citizens of the kingdom of God.

### **Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users**

For people who are used to walking along the corridors of power, kindness is a mark of weakness. On the other hand, the gospel regards kindness as a trait of God. Nations that are constantly on a war path against their perceived enemies have no right to call upon God to prosper their march to war. Kindness is a non-negotiable condition in building up the kingdom of God.

Only those who “love kindness” (Micah 6:8) may be admitted citizens of God's kingdom. But how may people learn kindness in a world that lives by the rule of “survival of the fittest?” This Darwinian principle of evolution has been appropriated by establishment social thinkers to justify the evolution of a brutish human character. It stands in direct contradiction to the values of the kingdom.

The church has been called to be a school for making people kindly. Kindliness is learned not only by means of the church's formal instructions but even more effectively by example in the way the church conducts itself within and outside its walls. Church leadership, for example, follows Jesus' model of leadership by servanthood. Towards the outside, the church shows a kindly face that is inviting to people in need to come for help and succor. The church does not choose whom to be kind. Against its adversaries, the church seeks their redemption by transforming them from being enemies into friends.

Being kindly to all may not be possible or appropriate in the real world. This is a real challenge because educating the people according to the values of the kingdom is not backed by concrete realities. But the world may not learn it unless it is taught by those who actually practice this virtue, namely, the church.

### **Objectives:**

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

1. observe church activities that develop kindness;
2. demonstrate acts of kindness; and
3. express one's appreciation for being recipients of kindness and for given chances to show kindness.

**Materials:** The Holy Bible (preferably NRSV), song chart, bond paper, coloring materials



**Learning Experiences:****A. Opening Worship**

1. Welcome time: Smile and greet the children as they come. Check the attendance.
2. Opening prayer: Your ways, O God, are kind. It echoes in our hearts, always telling us to follow you. As we study your word today, may you prepare us to understand more about your ways. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.
3. Opening song: "Jesus' Hands Were Kind Hands"

Jesus' hands were kind hands, doing good to all,  
Healing pain and sickness, blessing children small,  
Washing tired feet, and saving those who fail;  
Jesus' hands were kind hands, doing good to all.  
Take my hands, Lord Jesus, let them work for you;  
Make them strong and gentle, kind in all I do.  
Let me watch you, Jesus till I'm gentle too,  
Till my hands are kind hands, quick to work for you.

**B. Getting Ready**

1. Provide each child a cutout of a person. Tell them to write their names on the cutout.
2. Tell the class to form a big circle and let them sit. Ask each child to pass the cutout to the person seated to his or her right. On your count, tell the children to crumple the cutout. On your count again, ask the child to return the crumpled cutout to the owner.
3. Tell the owner to repair their own crumpled cutout by flattening it. Ask if they are able to return the cutout to its original look.
4. Tell the class that the activity of crumpling the cutout is similar to telling unkind words or deeds to a person. Once unkind words and deeds are said and done to a person, that person gets hurt and it would be difficult to erase that hurt even though we apologize for our mistake. Encourage the children to talk about the bad effects of saying unkind words or doing unkind deeds.

**C. Learning Time**

1. Discuss the background of the parable. Share the following points:
  - a. Jesus is talking to a Jewish teacher of the law.
  - b. The lawyer asked Jesus two questions.
  - c. At the time the parable was told, the Samaritans were the most hated persons in Israel.
2. Tell the class to read Luke 10:25-37.

**D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time**

1. What did the Jewish lawyer ask Jesus the first time? (Read the verse in Luke 10:25)
2. What did Jesus answer him? (Read the verse in Luke 10:26)
3. What was written in the law? (Read the verse in Luke 10:27)
4. According to Jesus, how can we inherit eternal life? (Read the verse in Luke 10:28)
5. Luke 10:28 is considered the foundation of our genuine commitment to serve? Do

you agree? Why or why not? (Loving and serving God cannot be separated from loving and serving others.)

6. What did the Jewish lawyer ask Jesus the second time? (Read the verse in Luke 10:29)
7. How did Jesus answer the lawyer? (Through the Parable of the Good Samaritan)
8. Who acted as the real neighbor to the man who was robbed, the priest, the Levite, or the Samaritan?
9. Why do you think Jesus chose the Samaritan to show kindness to the man who was robbed and become his neighbor? (Jesus is stressing the fact that loving others cannot be based on the racial, economic, and cultural laws or from exclusion of other people who may be different from us or who are not lovable.)
10. What is a better way of defining who is our neighbor? (A neighbor is not necessarily one who is living closely with us, but should be considered as a ministry opportunity to serve other human beings who are really in need.)
11. How did Jesus live his life as a kind neighbor? Direct the class to the opening song and let them underline the ways Jesus did to show kind hands. (Healing pain and sickness, blessing children small, washing tired feet, and saving those who fail).

#### *E. Discovering the Biblical Truth*

Ask: What are the programs of the church that teach kindness? (Churches may have different programs to teach the real meaning of kindness among her members.)

#### *F. Applying the Biblical Truth*

1. Teach the biblical verse "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." (Luke 10:27b)
2. **For ME:** Through role playing, let the children solve the following situations by showing act of kindness.
  - a. Group 1: You have seen some of your classmates throwing trash anywhere in your classroom.
  - b. Group 2: Your little brother asked you to help him do his homework.
  - c. Group 3: Your Sunday School teacher asked you to return the toys and books after class.
3. **For OE:** Hand at Work! Draw or trace your hand on a bond paper. On each finger, label them by answering the following questions. They can use coloring materials to color each finger. Encourage the class to present their work in the class.
  - a. Thumb: What act of kindness can you do with your friends?
  - b. Point finger: What act of kindness can you do with your parents?
  - c. Middle finger: What act of kindness can you do with your classmates?
  - d. Ring finger: What act of kindness can you do with your neighbors?
  - e. Pinky: What act of kindness can you do with your teachers/pastors?
  - f. Palm: Do you think God will be happy if you will do act of kindness?  
Why?

*G. Closing Worship*

1. Memory verse: Teach the biblical verse, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbour as yourself." -Luke 10:27
2. Offering
3. Closing song: "The Good Samaritan"  
Words and Music: Laila Fuertes/ Cebuano Translation.: Esther F. Camino  
There was a man from Jerusalem who was robbed on his way to Jericho.  
Nobody came to help him except the good Samaritan.  
Dunay tawo gikan sa Jerusalem gitulis paingon sa Jericho.  
Walay nitabang kaniya gawas sa maayong Samaritano.
4. Closing prayer: "Your kind deeds, O God, are our examples, inspiring us to follow your ways even at hard times. We pray that you will help us to always choose to do the right thing – to be kind to everyone at all times. This we ask and pray in Jesus' name. Amen."





October 1, 2017

**6<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Kingdomtide**

***Goodness as a Kingdom Value***

*Old Testament:*

**Psalms 23:6, 31:19 (NRSV)**

<sup>6</sup>Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long.

<sup>19</sup>O how abundant is your goodness that you have laid up for those who fear you, and accomplished for those who take refuge in you, in the sight of everyone!

*New Testament:*

**Romans 12:2 (NRSV)**

<sup>2</sup>Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God-what is good and acceptable and perfect.

**General Concept: Goodness is found in the church that chooses right from wrong, truth from falsehood, and justice from injustice.**

**Key Concept: The church shows goodness by knowing what is right, true, and just.**

### **Exegesis of the Biblical References**

We have learned that The Book of Psalms is attributed to David. As a collection, it contains a variety of emotions from a settled conviction and orientation in life and faith to one of disorientation due to painful contradictions in reality. There are efforts towards a faith reorientation of a people expressed mostly in the context of worship.

This particular verse (Psalm 23:6) belongs to the whole poem that most of us love to memorize: an utterance of a profound trust in the Lord as the good Shepherd-King. It is actually a concluding statement that summarizes the whole of the poem. Here, two important words are uttered: goodness and love. Both words refer to the covenant benefits that are personified here. Clearly, David here was expressing that the goodness and love of the Shepherd-King will follow him, or will pursue him not with hostile intent but will attend always to him. Thus, he shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever not as a priest but as God's welcome guest in Yahweh's holy, royal house, the temple.

This passage in Psalm 31:19 is part and parcel of David's prayer of deliverance when confronted with conspiracy so powerful and open that all of David's friends abandoned him. This particular verse then is an expression of a confident anticipation of God's saving help that will restore goodness and hope in him.

Paul's primary theme in Romans is the basic gospel, God's plan of salvation and righteousness for all humankind, Jews and Gentiles alike. Paul firmly believes that restoration and reconciliation of this world is achievable when Christians will open their door to the real gospel so that they become immovable and unashamed bearers of that gospel proclaiming and not condemning others who have become sensitive and have opened their doors to the righteousness of God. The gospel proclaimed by Paul is not just about

personal and individual gain and salvation but rather a kind of transformation that would bring all of the cosmos to a reality that God hoped it would really be. Even in the midst of so much persecution and in the midst of a great majority of Gentile audience who could easily mock and make fun of his message, Paul strongly holds on to his conviction to stand firm and not be ashamed of the gospel he is proclaiming for all people to hear and eventually manifest. The gospel proclaimed is not only for a few but for all people who have faith.

Romans 12:2 is a call for all believers that we should not be conformed to the patterns of this world. This world, with all its evil and corruption has indeed been characterized by and imbued with wickedness, therefore we should all be transformed. Here, Paul was not only talking about one single event but a process: first the mind, the thought and will as they relate to morality for we know that intent precedes the act. Then, after the person's transformation just described has taken place, the believer can now carry out what God wants the believer to do here and now... things that are good, pleasing to God and perfect.

These verses in the Old Testament and the New Testament are manifestations of the church's role in the realization of God's kingdom. Having been saved we were given the responsibility and the accountability to make known that salvation is for all the people who need it. Those who are still in search for what is right from what is wrong must be given the gift and the will to discern that God chooses God's people as bearers of God's goodness. Goodness here, is not a mere passivity but a wisdom discernment of what is right and wrong, what is true and false and of what is just and unjust. For the God of justice will not allow for all who remain in faith to just perish and succumb to the easy way out- to compromise one's faith principles, values and basic convictions. Goodness then is marked by a believer's will power to bring out God's goodness by leading the way to real salvation for all not just of the self but of the whole cosmos.

### **Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users**

Jesus is often addressed as good teacher, to which he would respond that "no one is good but God alone" (Mark 10:17). This implies that when God's reign comes to prevail, citizens of the kingdom will be exhibiting God's goodness. In the meantime, God's goodness is the absolute and unchanging norm of what is good in any ethical situation.

The church exists to show God's standard of goodness in the kingdom but under the conditions of a fallen world. In such a state, good is real but only in the relative sense, that is, in relation to certain realities that are manifestly evil. Thus, injustice is the lack of justice which is good; falsehood is the opposite of truth which is good; wrong is a deviation from what is right which is good. The Spirit of truth is there to teach the church to separate one from the other.

It makes good sense for the church not to burden itself with making definitions of the ideal good. Rather, it is called to make a judgment on actual, concrete, historical things and then establish by inference what is justice, truth and righteousness. In this way, the church will be spared from making universal statements that have no bearing at all to the concrete realities of the time.

This is evident in the biblical understanding of justice, truth and uprightness. When the prophets spoke of justice they made specific reference to farmers who were robbed of their ancestral land, of merchants who cheated with their weighing scales, or of farmer-debtors

whose working tools were confiscated as pledge. Jesus' Nazareth Manifesto was addressed to the real poor of his time, to the captives of war, the infirmed and those who lived in ignorance. That's the reason why they won the hatred and fear of people who prospered at the expense of others.

The church today has only to follow the lead of Jesus and the prophets in order to identify what is good so as to escape being mired in endless debates and procrastination.

**Objectives:**

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

1. define goodness by doing what is right and being true and just to others;
2. support the fact that being good to others pleases God; and
3. demonstrate acts of goodness at all times.

**Materials:** The Holy Bible (preferably NRSV), pieces of cartolina, coloring materials, copy of the prayer and song

**Learning Experiences:***A. Opening Worship*

1. Welcome time: Greet each other warmly as the children arrive.
2. Opening prayer: "Dear God, you are our Via, Veritas, Vita - the Way, Truth and the Life. We want to follow you so that in everything we do, you will be pleased by our good deeds. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."
3. Opening song: "God is so Good"

God is so good, God is so good.  
God is so good, God's so good to me.  
God answers pray'r, God answers pray'r.  
God answers pray'r, God's so good to me.

*B. Getting Ready*

1. Ask the class if they have seen identical twins. Assist the class to talk about how these twins are similar in looks, in height, and weight. But emphasize that they have also differences. Tell the class that the value of kindness last Sunday has also a twin value.
2. Have the children recall how the Samaritan showed his kindness to a person who was robbed. Explain to the class that this Samaritan is often called Good Samaritan because he was both kind and good. He was kind when he helped someone in need. He was also good because he did what is right in the eyes of God. Kindness and goodness are sometimes called the twin value or the twin fruit.

*C. Learning Time*

1. Present the following verses and discuss with the class the definitions of the underlined words as they are used in the verses.
  - a. Psalm 23:6: Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long.



- 1) Goodness and mercy (kindness) are the twin promises of God for us for all our tomorrows when we remain in God as we follow God's will in our lives.
- 2) God will also provide God's presence through the Holy Spirit.
- b. Psalm 31:19: O how abundant is your goodness that you have laid up for those who fear you, and accomplished for those who take refuge in you, in the sight of everyone!
  - 1) God's goodness is abundant for all people who fear God (does what is right in the eyes of God).
- 2) God's goodness is abundant for all people who take refuge (trust) in God.
  - c. Romans 12:2: Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God-what is good and acceptable and perfect.
    - 1) Conformed means not letting the world shape, or mold you or pressure you not to follow God's will.
    - 2) Transformed means to become a changed person or Christ-like through the intervention of the Holy Spirit.
    - 3) Doing what God wills for us is good, acceptable, and perfect in the eyes of God.

#### *D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time*

- 1. God is called the Good Shepherd (John 10) and Good Teacher (Mark 10:17/Luke 18:19). Why do you think Jesus is called good? (Jesus is goodness and mercy because of his love and righteousness.)
- 2. Why do you think David said that God will be good and merciful to him all the days of his life? (David followed God and he did God's will.)
- 3. Why is the love of God abundant to the people who fear and take refuge in God? (Fearing God means doing God's will and taking refuge in God is trusting God with everything.)
- 4. Why does Paul warn us not to conform to this world? (Paul wants us to conform to the ways of Christ instead of the ways of the world so that we will live well.)
- 5. Does God promise us to fulfill all of our longings? Why or why not? (God does not promise to fulfill all of our longings. What God promises is God's presence to accompany us in our life.)
- 6. God's presence is a gift for us from God. Read the following prayer and comment on God's presence in our lives.  
 The Prayer of St. Patrick, An Irish Prayer (Anonymous)  
 Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me,  
 Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me,  
 Christ on my right, Christ on my left,  
 Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down,  
 Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,  
 Christ in the mouth of every man who speaks of me,  
 Christ in the eye that sees me,  
 Christ in the ear that hears me.

*E. Discovering the Biblical Truth*

Ask: How does the church teach us to do what is right, true and just?

*F. Applying the Biblical Truth*

1. **For ME:** Comic Strip/Drawing. Divide the class into groups. Provide each group the needed materials. Let each group create a situation or a scenario in different places where they can apply the value of being good.

Group 1: Doing good at home

Group 2: Doing good in school

Group 3: Doing good in church

2. **For OE:** Slogan making. Divide the class into small groups. Let each group make a slogan with the theme: "We do good because it is right, true and just." Provide each group with cartolina and coloring materials. Encourage them to explain their work in class. Give each group a copy of the following song as their guide or reference.

"Jesus Went About Doing Good"

Jesus went about doing good, Jesus went about doing good

He told everyone God is love, God cares for you.

Jesus went about doing good, Jesus went about doing good

He makes people well and He said, "God cares for you."

Jesus went about doing good, Jesus went about doing good.

He held children close and He said, "God cares for you."

*G. Closing Worship*

1. Memory Verse: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD my whole life long." (Psalm 23:6)

2. Offering

3. Closing song: "Jesus Went About Doing Good"

4. Closing prayer: "Merciful God, we thank you for making us your children. Thank you for teaching us how to be good children. Help us to always do what is right, true and just by doing what is good for others. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."

October 8, 2017

**7<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Kingdomtide**

***Faithfulness as a Kingdom Value***

*Old Testament:*

**Ruth 1:16-17 (NRSV)**

<sup>16</sup>But 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. <sup>17</sup>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!'

**Hosea 2:19-20 (NRSV)**

<sup>19</sup>And I will take you for my wife for ever; I will take you for my wife in righteousness and in justice, in steadfast love, and in mercy.

<sup>20</sup>I will take you for my wife in faithfulness; and you shall know the LORD.

*New Testament:*

**Mark 8:34 (NRSV)**

<sup>34</sup>He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, 'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.'

***General Concept: A faithful church is loyal and obedient to Christ.***

***Key Concept: The church is loyal and obedient to Jesus.***

### **Exegesis of the Biblical References**

The text of Ruth 1:16-17 signifies the depth of commitment of Ruth to Naomi, her mother-in-law and to the God of Naomi, Yahweh, and her people. The terminology of verse 16 is reminiscent of marriage vows and covenant making in the Old Testament. It is a statement of total and unconditional loyalty to Naomi and her faith tradition. Ruth made a very crucial decision that will determine the shape and future of her life to follow Naomi and not to return anymore to her own country Moab. She absolutely made a decision that will change the rest of her life. This marks a critical turning point that will fix her destiny in the ensuing history of Israel. As she declares with full loyalty to Naomi, "Entreat me not to leave you or to return from following you; for where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God; where you die I will die, and there I will be buried," she has then cast her lot and entrusts her whole fate and future in following the great God of Israel, completely abandoning whatever connection, whatever roots she still has in Moab. Out of her loyalty and faithfulness, she has become a truly transformed being. Her loyalty and faithfulness have provided for her and Naomi. These have a redeeming and transforming impact on her life and on the life of Naomi, and eventually, the life and future of Israel. Loyalty and faithfulness to a relationship produce its redemptive, transforming impact even on a nation. This is itself one of the clear signs of living the life in the kingdom of God.



In the text of Hosea 2:19, the word "betroth" refers to "take a wife forever..." the verb refers to a legally binding agreement to be in a relationship of trust and commitment to each other which precedes the wedding. In this text God commands Hosea to marry a harlot woman to signify the wickedness of the people Israel. For in God's eyes the people had engaged in harlotry by going after other gods like the Baals that were worshipped all over the land. This is why Hosea was given a mission to marry the harlot woman, because Israel was judged as having become a harlot in God's eyes. The word betrothed refers to one being in a relationship of loyalty to God's will and commitment to follow and submit oneself to God.

Here emerges our calling as Christians today. We are called to a relationship of loyalty and commitment to the will of our God. In this light we need to submit ourselves with all our hearts and souls, with all our strength and mind to our God in loyal and committed service. In Mark 8:34, Jesus says, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." The model to follow therefore of such loyalty and commitment is no less than Jesus himself. To be part of God's mission and ministry involves a total commitment in the pursuit of Jesus' own mission here on earth even if it will entail costly sacrifices even of one's life. This is what it means to be a loyal partner in a divine-human covenant relationship. This is to enter into God's mission with that mode of selflessness displayed by Jesus himself.

### **Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users**

One of the key concepts in the Old Testament is God's faithfulness. Israel is betrothed to Yahweh in faithfulness, and to reciprocate Israel ought to be faithful to Yahweh. In the New Testament, the church is portrayed as the bride of Christ. The closest of human intimacies is a biblical metaphor for faithfulness.

The kingdom represents the full unfolding of God's faithfulness to creation and the perfection of its response to the Creator. In the meantime, the church is where people learn and mature in faithfulness to God and to the church under the tutelage of the Spirit. Because those who have been redeemed in Christ continue to exist in a sinful state they still bear the marks of sinful nature but under God's grace. Hence, the church's faithfulness to the Lord is still on the way to achieving perfection under the discipline of the Spirit.

Learning to be faithful is accomplished by practice and learning from it. Constant and consistent acts of obedience to the commands of the Lord make a faithful church. Loyalty is equivalent to active faithfulness as it is loaded with strong affection and a readiness to take action. A loyal church takes offense when the cause of the kingdom suffers injury and is ready to take action to advance its course. The church's loyalty to Christ is tested by outside forces that seek to hinder and counter its mission as well as from within by members who have succumbed to the lure of the Tempter. The church's loyalty is purified and strengthened each time it overcomes testing.

### **Objectives:**

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

1. explain that to be faithful and loyal to God is to obey God;
2. share their ways that show obedience to God; and

3. demonstrate using creative activities ways of showing obedience at home, in school and in the church.

**Materials:** The Holy Bible (preferably NRSV), For banner making: long band paper or cloth (cacha), tape, stick, pentel pen, coloring materials, copy of the story enough for each child

### **Learning Experiences:**

#### **A. Opening Worship**

1. Welcome time: As the learners enter the room, greet them with a BIG SMILE.
2. Opening prayer: Lead the prayer and instruct your learners to follow after you: "Dear God, thank you for this beautiful Sunday. Thank you for bringing us to this place and learn from you. Teach us to be loyal and obedient to you in all the days of our lives. This we ask in Jesus' name. Amen."
3. Opening songs: "I'll Praise the Lord Forever"  
I'll praise, I'll praise, I'll praise the Lord forever.  
I'll praise, I'll praise, I'll praise the Lord forever.  
I'll do my best, I'll do my best,  
I'll do my best for You, Oh, oh, oh.  
I'll obey, I'll obey, I'll obey the Lord forever  
I'll obey, I'll obey, I'll obey the Lord forever  
I'll do my best, I'll do my best,  
I'll do my best for You, Oh! Oh! Oh!  
"Follow the Leader"  
Do a little motion one, two, three (3x).  
Everybody follow me.  
Follow, follow, follow me(3x).  
Everybody follow me.

#### **B. Getting Ready**

1. Let the children sit together and tell them that you will have an activity. The activity is entitled "Mirror Me". Have them form pairs. The first person will make a movement or facial expression. Then, the second person will mirror the first person. Let the first child do three movements, then the pair reverse roles.
2. After the game, ask the children,
  - a. How do you feel when you're following the other person?
  - b. Do you find it easier or difficult to follow? Why?
  - c. How is this like following Jesus as Christians?

#### **C. Learning Time**

1. Say: One virtue in God's kingdom is faithfulness. Faithfulness is shown by being obedient and loyal to Jesus Christ who is the head of the church. Being obedient and loyal is what Jesus wants from His followers. This virtue is taught by Jesus to his first followers."
2. Prepare a written copy of this story. Divide the class into two groups and have the

groups read a sentence alternately.

Jesus Scolds  
(Mark 8:31-34)

One fine day, in a faraway land, Jesus tells His followers, "I must suffer and die."

At that time, the elders, the priest, and the writers in the temple did not like Jesus. They wanted to kill Him because they cannot accept Him as their king. But, after three days, the Son of Man will wake up again from the dead.

Peter does not like what he heard. He does not accept what Jesus said that he is to die. Peter takes Jesus aside from other followers and scolds Jesus.

Jesus scolds Peter back. Jesus tells Peter, "Go away from me, Satan! You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of humans."

Next, Jesus calls the people including His followers. He tells them: "If You want to be my follower you have to do these: deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Me." Then, Jesus continues to teach His followers.

*D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time*

1. Ask the following questions. Tell the class to read the answers from the copy of the story given to them.
  - a. What did Jesus say to his followers?
  - b. Who wanted Jesus dead?
  - c. Why did they want Jesus dead?
  - d. Why did Peter scold Jesus?
  - e. What did Jesus say to Peter?
2. Tell the class to simulate a TV program and let them call it "Sunday Morning Live". Tell the learners that they are to re-enact what happened when Jesus and his disciples walked around Caesaria Philippi. One would act as a reporter doing a live reporting on Jesus' movements and giving a background on the account. Assign one as Jesus and another as Peter. The rest plays the crowd. Have the narrator focus on the heated exchange of lines between Jesus and Peter.

*E. Discovering the Biblical Truth*

Ask: How does the church show loyalty and obedience to Jesus?

*F. Applying the Biblical Truth*

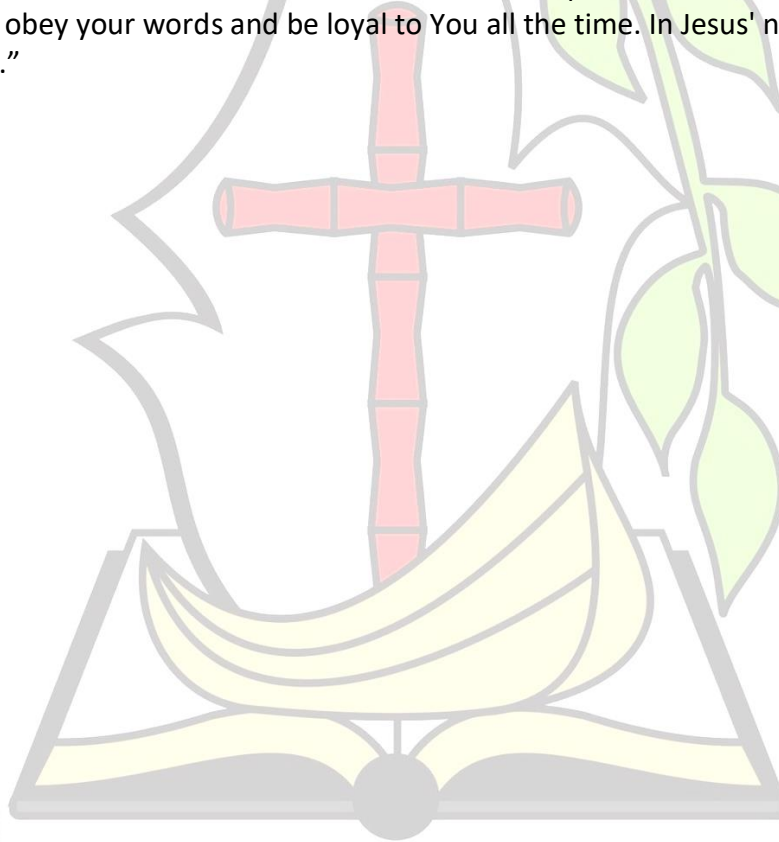
1. Discuss the memory verse: "Whoever wants to become my follower, let them deny themselves, and take up their cross and follow me." (Mark 8:34)
2. **For ME: Think-Pair-Share.** Discuss how the class can demonstrate obedience to Jesus at home, in the church, or in school. Pair the learners and ask them to discuss their answers. Give them 5 minutes to talk and discuss their answers. Conclude by coming back together as a whole group and have each pair share their answers.
3. **For OE: Banner making.** Tell the children to look for a partner. Discuss how the class can demonstrate obedience to Jesus at home, in the church, or in school. Tell each pair to make a banner showing how they can demonstrate loyalty and



obedience to Jesus.

*G. Closing Worship*

1. Request the children to stand by partners and show their output. Ask them to say the memory verse found in Mark 8:34.
2. Pledge, commitment, action: I will remember to draw from my faith in Christ the wisdom and strength I will need in times of trouble.
3. Offering: Put a basket offering at the center and instruct the kids to bring their offering as they sing together: "We're Giving Because We Love Jesus"  
We're giving. We're giving because we love Jesus.  
We're giving. We're giving because we love Him.
4. Closing song: "To Be Like Jesus"  
To be like Jesus, to be like Jesus.  
All I want is to be like Him, all through life's journey.  
From earth to glory, All I want is to be like Him.
5. Closing prayer: "Dear God, we want to be like Jesus. Help us to be faithful in You. Teach us to obey your words and be loyal to You all the time. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."



October 15, 2017

**8<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Kingdomtide**

***Humility as a Kingdom Value***

*Old Testament: Proverbs 11:2* (NRSV)

<sup>2</sup>When pride comes, then comes disgrace; but wisdom is with the humble.

*New Testament: Mark 10:35-45* (NRSV)

The Request of James and John

<sup>35</sup>James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to him and said to him, 'Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.' <sup>36</sup>And he said to them, 'What is it you want me to do for you?' <sup>37</sup>And they said to him, 'Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.'

<sup>38</sup>But Jesus said to them, 'You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?'

<sup>39</sup>They replied, 'We are able.' Then Jesus said to them, 'The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; <sup>40</sup>but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.' <sup>41</sup>When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. <sup>42</sup>So Jesus called them and said to them, 'You know that among the Gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. <sup>43</sup>But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, <sup>44</sup>and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. <sup>45</sup>For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.'

*General Concept: The church governs by humble service.*

*Key Concept: The church governs by humble service.*

### **Exegesis of the Biblical References**

Although ascribed to Solomon in the beginning of the Book of Proverbs, it is clear from later chapters that he was not the only author of the book. Proverbs was written to give "prudence to the simple, knowledge and discretion to the young" (1:4) "and to make the wise even wiser" (1:5). Its emphasis is on instructing the young and guiding them in a way of life that yields rewarding ends. Although Proverbs is a practical book dealing with the art of living, it bases its practical wisdom solidly on the fear of the Lord imbued with knowledge and lessons acquired from experience and observation on the realities and truth about life. Throughout the book, reverence for God and reliance on God are set forth as the path to life, prosperity, and security.

The two-line saying in Proverbs 11:2 clearly gives us an idea of the kind of end result that yields from two different traits. Pride will surely result to disgrace and that humility would result to wisdom. Here, the humble acknowledgment of one's worth in the face of the Giver of all that we are would result to wisdom. Indeed, humility even among the wisest and most educated and most powerful has been acknowledged as the trait that really result to

true wisdom. The truly wise are the ones who remain humble before the giver and source of such gift and would never manifest any tinge of pride and arrogance before his or her own fellows right in the community.

One important emphasis in the gospel according to Mark is on discipleship wherein Jesus would usually predict His own passion and death. His disciples would then contradict Him and so He would usually follow it with either direct or lengthy discussion on discipleship.

This material in Mark 10:35-45 is part of a narrative that took place after Jesus predicted His death. Earlier, (vv. 32-34) he tells us of an occasion wherein as they journeyed to Jerusalem, Jesus predicted His eventual suffering and death and His resurrection-this was actually the third time that Jesus predicted His death. This passage, parallel to 9:33-34, deals with true greatness and both follow a prediction of Jesus' suffering and death. Both also show how spiritually undiscerning the disciples were. Verse 45 is a key verse in Mark's gospel. Jesus came to this world as a servant-indeed, the Servant-who would suffer and die for our redemption as Isaiah clearly predicted (Isaiah 52:13-53:12). The son of Man did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as ransom for many. Thus, Jesus suffered and gave his life to release us from the bondage to sin and death.

As a Church, we have been given the opportunity to humbly discern our worth as God's children and God's representative on earth. It is therefore our task to embody that humility in doing service for the rest of God's people. If we truly believe and follow Christ, then we are to embody Christ's humility in living and in doing and most of all, in serving the people whom Jesus had always cared for.

### **Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users**

As a human virtue, humility shines most brightly in the context of a world that worships power. But it suffers abuse when it is perceived as a posture of subservience to the powerful. On the other hand, the kind of humility implanted by the Spirit already manifests something of the emerging kingdom of God-the taming of human powers in the service of the little ones. All power is from God, but it is used either to dominate others or to serve the lowly. Genuine humility is characteristic of those who use power to lift up the lowly and to bring down the high and mighty.

Humility is not a monopoly of those with high status but is equally a virtue of the lowly. The example of Christ who stooped to the level of a slave to be in solidarity with humankind in the state of sin is addressed to members who wanted to carry over to the church the privileges they enjoy in society. They ought to follow Christ's example cited by Paul in the Philippians. On the other hand, the declaration of Mary, the humble peasant girl whom God chose to be Jesus' mother, is directed to members whose low self-esteem hinders their full participation in the church.

Humility is a self-regard and an attitude towards others. Feelings of inferiority does not produce humility. On the contrary, people with a low self-regard tend to overcompensate by thinking of themselves too highly and projecting an arrogant air. Neither is humility condescending and patronizing towards those perceived to be inferior. Rather, it is not a particular trait that one tries to cultivate or force upon one's self. For humble persons are



not self-conscious in relation to others but are focused on responding to a situation without regard to their position, status or standing in society. In other words, being humble or proud is a matter of indifference to them. Genuine humility is exemplified by Jesus who looked at his enemies in the eye and regarded children and marginalized people as natural heirs of the kingdom.

**Objectives:**

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

1. explain how Jesus taught His disciples about humility;
2. identify activities of the church where the members serve others humbly; and
3. demonstrate using creative activity how to be humble.

**Materials:** The Holy Bible (preferably NRSV), worksheets, cutouts of grapes enough for all the children

**Anticipating the next lesson:** Prepare two (2) trees and label them “Good Fruit” and “Rotten Fruit”. Make several cutouts of the following Kingdom values: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility, and self-control and the opposite of these fruits: selfishness, greed, self-righteousness, pride, hatred, jealousy, discord, idolatry, anger, selfish ambition, envy, foolishness.

**Learning Experiences:***A. Opening Worship*

1. Welcome time: As the learners enter the room, greet them with a BIG SMILE.
2. Opening prayer: Lead the prayer and tell your learners to follow after you: “Dear God, thank you for the gift of life. Thank you for teaching us to obey you. We pray for your blessing and your help to enable us to serve others. This we ask in Jesus’ name. Amen.”
3. Opening song: “Be Now My Vision” (HFJ # 275) first two stanzas

*B. Getting Ready*

Distribute the grape cutouts to the learners. Instruct the learners to write on the grapes that things they are good at—things that God has gifted them. After the activity and call on each one to tell something about what they have written. Tell the class to set their work aside because they will use them later.

*C. Learning Time*

1. Prepare the class to read the dialogue. Divide the class into four groups. Assign the first group as the narrator, the second group, James and John, the third group, Jesus, and the fourth, the other disciples.
2. Let the class read the dialogue.

Jesus Taught James and John to Be Humble  
(Based on Mark 10:35-45)

Narrator: Long time ago, after Jesus was telling to his followers about his death, the two followers named, James and John, came to Him. They were sons of Zebedee. They had a special request to Jesus.

James and John: Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.

Jesus: What do you want me to do for you?

James and John: Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left hand, in your glory.

Jesus: You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup that I drink or be baptized with the baptism that I am with?

James and John: Yes, we can drink the cup you drink and be baptized with the baptism that you have.

Jesus: Oh, it's true. The cup that I drink you will drink; and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized; but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.

Narrator: While James and John were talking this thing to Jesus, the other followers who have heard their request became angry with them. They don't like what James and John did.

Other disciples: (chattering) Why they're asking such thing from Jesus?

Narrator: When Jesus saw the other disciples, he called them together and taught them a very important lesson.

Jesus: You know those who are leaders of the Gentiles have power over them. The leaders have the power to do anything for the Gentiles. But, this is not what I want for you. What I want from you is that: "If one of you wants to be great, you must be the servant of all. The first will be the last. The Son of Man came on earth to serve and not to be served, and to give His life for all."

Narrator: Jesus and His disciples were on their way to Jericho as He was teaching them about this truth.

3. Say: "Gentleness is a trait that shows humility, patience, and consideration. It is also a fruit of submission to Christ. To be gentle is to be meek because the meek will inherit the earth. Being gentle or humble is being patient in staying true to the course of Christ."

4. Tell the class to look back at the dialogue and find how humility is expressed.

#### *D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time*

Discuss the lesson.

1. Name and describe the characters of the story. (Call each group who represented the four characters in the dialogue and let them describe the role they played.)
2. Is the request of James and John reasonable? (James and John thought highly of themselves when they asked for positions of greatness.)
3. Did James and John show humility or gentleness? Why or why not? (Tell the class to give affirmative and negative points. Draw from the class answers like: We do our work in Christ's name and let Christ reward us. We are placed in a great position not because we asked for it, but because we demonstrated service for the good of others.)

4. Was Jesus' answer reasonable? Why or why not? (Jesus' response is reasonable because it is not Jesus who can decide on granting positions or seats like these because they are given to those who have been prepared for it by God.)
5. How did Jesus show humility in his response to James and John and the other followers there? (Jesus showed humility when he said to be great is to serve others.)
6. What do you think is the significance of being at the right hand or left hand of a person? (Such positions come with recognition. But there is more to it. These seats require responsibility, being willing and able to perform such responsibilities in accordance to God's will and purpose for us.)
7. How can we humbly serve others at home, in school, or in church? (Whenever we help others in need at home, in school, or in church, we serve with humility.)

#### *E. Discovering the Biblical Truth*

Ask: Which program of the church can we participate in that requires humble service for others?

#### *F. Applying the Biblical Truth*

1. Teach the memory verse: "For the son of Man came not to be served but to serve...." (Mark 10:45a)
2. **Both Groups:** Discuss ways by which we identify persons who are in need and be a friend to them. (Saying kind words, listening to someone who needs it, inviting friends to Sunday school, helping siblings with their assigned home chores or school work, running errands for the elderly or physically handicapped, etc.) Recall the grape cutouts that the class has set aside. Let them say how these talents can be of use when serving others.
3. **For ME:** Ask the class to write a prayer to a family member who can always remind him or her to serve his or her family.
4. **For OE:** *Washing of feet.* Prepare a basin with water and towel. Tell your learners that they are going to wash each other's feet. The teacher is going to wash first the feet of one learner. Then that learner is going to wash his/her Sunday school mate and the rest will follow. The washing of feet is good example to demonstrate in serving one another. After the activity, let the class say: "**Being meek is not being weak.**"

#### *G. Closing Worship*

1. Tell the class to recite the memory verse.
2. Offering: Put a basket offering at the center and instruct the kids to bring their offering as you sing together: "We're Giving Because We Love Jesus".
3. Closing song: "Make Me a Servant"  
Make me a servant, humble and meek  
Lord, help me lift up those who are weak.  
And may the pray'r of my heart always be  
Make me a servant, make me a servant



Make me a servant today.

4. Closing prayer: "Dear God, we want to grow in you. Teach us be humble by serving you and your people. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."



October 22, 2017

**9<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Kingdomtide**

***Discipline as a Kingdom Value***

*Old Testament:*

**Proverbs 29:11 (NRSV)**

<sup>11</sup> A fool gives full vent to anger, but the wise quietly holds it back.

**1 Samuel 21:1-8 (NRSV)**

David and the Holy Bread

<sup>1</sup>David came to Nob to the priest Ahimelech. Ahimelech came trembling to meet David, and said to him, 'Why are you alone, and no one with you?' <sup>2</sup>David said to the priest Ahimelech, 'The king has charged me with a matter, and said to me, "No one must know anything of the matter about which I send you, and with which I have charged you." I have made an appointment with the young men for such and such a place. <sup>3</sup>Now then, what have you at hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever is here.' <sup>4</sup>The priest answered David, "I have no ordinary bread at hand, only holy bread—provided that the young men have kept themselves from women." <sup>5</sup>David answered the priest, "Indeed, women have been kept from us as always when I go on an expedition; the vessels of the young men are holy even when it is a common journey; how much more today will their vessels be holy?" <sup>6</sup>So the priest gave him the holy bread; for there was no bread there except the bread of the Presence, which is removed from before the LORD to be replaced by hot bread on the day it is taken away. <sup>7</sup>Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the LORD; his name was Doeg the Edomite, the chief of Saul's shepherds. <sup>8</sup>David said to Ahimelech, 'Is there no spear or sword here with you? I did not bring my sword or my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste.'

*New Testament:*

**1 Corinthians 9:25 (NRSV)**

<sup>25</sup>Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable garland, but we, an imperishable one.

***General Concept: The church adheres to values and principles rather than personal interests to prevail.***

***Key Concept: The church teaches us to do what is right.***

### **Exegesis of the Biblical References**

In 1 Samuel 21:1-8, we see David fleeing to the house of God in Nob where the high priest Ahimelech is in-charge. David had to flee from the presence of King Saul because of conflict. Jonathan the son of Saul who was the best of friend of David came to help David flee for he knew that Saul has planned to kill David. When David arrived at the temple, he and his men were hungry, but there was no food in the temple except the holy bread at the altar. David and his men were given the holy bread because there was no other food to eat.

In this story, we see how David thinks primarily of the needs of his people more than the need to observe the ritual obligations of his religious tradition. He also puts the welfare and interests of his own people more than his own personal needs in his search for food to feed them. He exercises a great measure of freedom in decision-making for the sake of ensuring that the people who follow him will not go hungry. In this sense, he exudes a measure of spiritual discipline that is primarily focused on the welfare of others, even at the cost of breaking the law.

David's act of seeking food for his men at great risk to his own personal reputation is a bold act of selfless disciplined leadership that truly cares for others.

Conflict in our Church is a very well-known reality and leadership most often is at the heart of the matter. When leadership does not manifest qualities of being selfless, of caring and attending first to the needs of those who are depending on such leadership, conflict will only escalate instead of being resolved. The church today needs leaders who would reflect the qualities of such kind of spiritual discipline, putting aside one's own interests and prioritizing first and foremost the concerns, needs, and interests of those who placed him or her in such position. This is the mark of discipline of a true disciple of our Lord, one who cares and would always think of the people being led before ever thinking of one's own concerns and even of one's own future. Like David, for the sake of the people who are hungry, she/he would be willing to bend the rules, reinterpret traditions in the spirit of freedom just to meet their needs and improve their welfare.

### **Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users**

Like the widely diverse Hebrew people that went out of Egyptian slavery to become one nation, the church is an assembly of people coming from many different backgrounds. What keeps the church united as a community is church discipline, which Calvin calls the sinews that bind the church. Every member must learn to submit to the care, teachings, judgment, command, and leadership of the church.

Christian spirituality increases as self-interest loses the power to control behavior. This is accomplished through church discipline in which members gain strength in suppressing and eventually displacing self-interest from being the decisive determiner of action, which would be a turning point in the journey towards spiritual perfection.

The church's spiritual maturity may be gauged to the extent that the members subordinate personal interests in order to achieve unity for the support of the institutional and organization goals of the church. Hidden agenda and vested interest are brought to light and set aside to allow an objective and honest discussion of issues. Another mark of growth in spiritual maturity is seen in the way differences and conflicts of opinion are handled and resolved. Differences in perception and reasoning are often unavoidable but where there are fair and participatory mechanisms of sorting out the differences, the right judgment would eventually come to light. Exercise in church discipline serves as a rehearsal for citizenship in the kingdom.

### **Objectives:**

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

1. define discipline or self-control as a Kingdom value;



2. tell how the church helps in teaching her members develop discipline or self-control by doing what is right; and
3. commit to exercise self-control and to discipline oneself in doing what is pleasing to God.

**Materials:** The Holy Bible (preferably NRSV), a red flag and a green flag, worksheets, two (2) trees labeled “Good Fruit” and “Rotten Fruit”, cutouts or cards of the following Kingdom values: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility, and self-control and the opposite of these fruits: selfishness, greed, self-righteousness, pride, hatred, jealousy, discord, idolatry, anger, selfish ambition, envy, foolishness

### **Learning Experiences:**

#### **A. Opening Worship**

1. Welcome time: As the learners enter the room, greet them with a BIG SMILE.
2. Opening prayer (Lead the prayer and tell your learners to follow after you): Dear God, thank you for the gift of life. Thank you for teaching us to obey you. We pray that you bless and help us to be able to serve others. This we ask in your Son’s name, Jesus. Amen.
3. Opening song: “I am a Christian”  
I am a C-H-R-I-S-T-I-A-N.  
And I have C-H-R-I-S-T In my H-E-A-R-T,  
And I will L-I-V-E E-T-E-R-N-A-L-L-Y.

#### **B. Getting Ready**

1. Prepare a red flag and a green flag. Tell the class to look at the flag you raise. When the green flag is raised, they will stand and walk around the room and will only stop when the red flag is raised. Then they will return to their seats and sit down. Those who will be caught last in following the rules will be eliminated from the game. Do this three times.
2. After the game, ask the children the following:
  - a. How did you feel during the game?
  - b. Were the rules clear to you?
  - c. How did you feel when you were able to follow the rules?
  - d. How did you feel when you were not able to follow the rules?
3. After hearing the answers, tell them that rules are like the stop and go game. Rules will guide us if we have to go and do what is right; and stop if it is not good and right. Say, “Today, we are going to talk about another important attitude in the kingdom of God—the attitude of discipline. Having discipline enables us to follow rules. The church teaches us to do what is right.”

#### **C. Learning Time**

1. Tell the class to read in unison the following verses. Ask them which words are difficult for them to understand. Explain these words before asking the class to paraphrase the verses.
  - a. *Proverbs 29:11*: “A fool gives full vent to anger, but the wise quietly holds it

back.” \_\_\_\_\_.

(A foolish person gets angry easily but a wise person does not get angry easily.)

- b. *1 Corinthians 9:25*: “Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable garland, but we, an imperishable one.”

\_\_\_\_\_.

(Athletes discipline themselves to become physically fit to enable them to win.

Christians prepare themselves to become spiritually fit to be able to live with God in God’s kingdom.)

2. Discuss the following:

- a. Anger has a negative effect on others while controlling anger has a positive effect on others.
- b. To be physically fit, a person needs to eat the right kind of food, do exercise, and get enough sleep or rest.
- c. In order to be spiritually fit and do what is right, Christians must have discipline. There are two important things we can do to become citizens in God’s kingdom.
  - 1) *Read the Word of God*. Continue reading the word of God as found in the Bible. For the word of God will help us to do what He God wants for us and will enable us to face life and conquer temptations. Read Hebrews 4:12: “The Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edge sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow, it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”
  - 2) *Live a prayerful life*. Prayer is a powerful weapon to helping us face temptations in life because we are asking God to help us, guide and watch over us.

*D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time*

1. **For ME**: Form triads and tell each triad to talk about the process of becoming spiritually fit based on their experience. Encourage them to include the possible negative effects of not exercising self-control.
2. **For OE**: Form triads and tell each triad to list ways of becoming spiritually fit at home, in church, and in school.

*E. Discovering the Biblical Truth*

Ask: How does the church teach her members what and how to do what is right? (Exercise discipline.)

*F. Applying the Biblical Truth*

1. Tell the class to list ways of demonstrating discipline (I can exercise discipline when I tell the truth. I can show self-control when I eat the right food and avoid eating junk foods. I can show discipline when I ask for God’s guidance in making my decisions.)
2. Display the card cut-outs of bad traits: (selfishness, greed, self-righteousness, pride, hatred, jealousy, discord, idolatry, anger, selfish ambition, envy, foolishness). Ask the class to share some situations that demonstrate these traits. Draw from the learners the negative effects of these traits. Remind the class that these bad traits

can be likened to rotten fruit which cannot be eaten anymore.

3. Display the card cut-outs of good traits: (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility or gentleness or meekness, discipline or self-control). Ask the class to share some situations that demonstrate these traits. Draw from the learners the positive effects of these traits. Emphasize that ripe fruits are good to eat because they are good for the body.
4. Tell the class to choose which good trait can be used to replace the bad traits. They can use more than one good trait to replace the bad traits. Expect the following table:

| Bad Traits         | Good Traits                                     |
|--------------------|---|
| Selfishness        | Love, kindness                                  |
| Greed              | Love, kindness, goodness                        |
| Self-righteousness | Humility  |
| Pride              | Gentleness, patience                            |
| Hatred             | Love, peace, kindness, goodness                 |
| Jealousy           | Humility, peace, discipline                     |
| Discord            | Love, joy, peace, self-control                  |
| Idolatry           | Faithfulness, discipline                        |
| Anger              | Love, humility, peace, patience, self-control   |
| Selfish ambition   | Peace, patience, goodness, faithfulness         |
| Envy               | Peace, kindness, goodness, humility, discipline |
| Foolishness        | Discipline, goodness, faithfulness              |
| Fear               | Joy, peace, faithfulness                        |

5. Tell the class to tie the bad traits to the “Rotten Fruit” tree and the good traits to the “Good Fruit” tree.

#### G. Closing Worship

1. Offering: Put a basket offering at the center and instruct the children to bring their offering as you sing together: “We’re Giving Because We Love Jesus”.
2. Closing song: “Jesus Wants Us to Follow”  
(Words: Iris Tibus, Tune: Jesus Loves Me)

Jesus wants us to follow  
 Rules in the church we should know  
 Kingdom value of the Lord  
 Discipline is what we hold.  
 Yes, Jesus wants us (3x) to follow His commands.



3. Closing prayer: Dear God, we thank you for the church, for teaching us to do what is right so that we can live a life of discipline. Help us to follow rules as our way of honoring you. This is our prayer in the name of Jesus, your son. Amen.



October 29, 2017

**10<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Kingdomtide**

***Continuing Transformation of the Church as a Kingdom Value***

*Old Testament:*

**2 Kings 22:11-20; 23:1-3 (NRSV)**

<sup>11</sup>When the king heard the words of the book of the law, he tore his clothes. <sup>12</sup>Then the king commanded the priest Hilkiah, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Achbor son of Micaiah, Shaphan the secretary, and the king's servant Asaiah, saying, <sup>13</sup>'Go, inquire of the LORD for me, for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that has been found; for great is the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our ancestors did not obey the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us.' <sup>14</sup>So the priest Hilkiah, Ahikam, Achbor, Shaphan, and Asaiah went to the prophetess Huldah the wife of Shallum son of Tikvah, son of Harhas, keeper of the wardrobe; she resided in Jerusalem in the Second Quarter, where they consulted her. <sup>15</sup>She declared to them, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Tell the man who sent you to me, <sup>16</sup>Thus says the LORD, I will indeed bring disaster on this place and on its inhabitants—all the words of the book that the king of Judah has read. <sup>17</sup>Because they have abandoned me and have made offerings to other gods, so that they have provoked me to anger with all the work of their hands, therefore my wrath will be kindled against this place, and it will not be quenched. <sup>18</sup>But as to the king of Judah, who sent you to inquire of the LORD, thus shall you say to him, Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Regarding the words that you have heard, <sup>19</sup>because your heart was penitent, and you humbled yourself before the LORD, when you heard how I spoke against this place, and against its inhabitants, that they should become a desolation and a curse, and because you have torn your clothes and wept before me, I also have heard you, says the LORD.

<sup>20</sup>Therefore, I will gather you to your ancestors, and you shall be gathered to your grave in peace; your eyes shall not see all the disaster that I will bring on this place.' They took the message back to the king.

**Josiah's Reformation**

<sup>1</sup>Then the king directed that all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem should be gathered to him.

<sup>2</sup>The king went up to the house of the LORD, and with him went all the people of Judah, all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the priests, the prophets, and all the people, both small and great; he read in their hearing all the words of the book of the covenant that had been found in the house of the LORD. <sup>3</sup>The king stood by the pillar and made a covenant before the LORD, to follow the LORD, keeping his commandments, his decrees, and his statutes, with all his heart and all his soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. All the people joined in the covenant.

*New Testament:*

**Romans 14:17 (NRSV)**

<sup>17</sup>For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

**General Concept: The UCCP as heir of the Reformation believes in the continuing transformation of the church.**

**Key Concept: The church teaches us our faith in God.**

### **Exegesis of the Biblical References**

1 and 2 Kings were actually one literary book called in Hebrew simply as "Kings". There is no clear statement of purpose or theme. Although a reflection on its contents reveals that it seemed to have been arranged as a sequel to the history that we can read in 1 and 2 Samuel - a story of kingship regulated by covenant. Now, these books suggest that it was written to explain to a people in exile that the reason for their condition of humiliation was their stubborn persistence in breaking their covenant with God.

2 Kings 22:11-20, 22:1-3 would tell us of a narrative wherein the king (Josiah) took heed of the call to repent and be transformed from being sinful in breaking the covenant that their fathers before them have done. As a symbol of his remorse, he tore his kingly robe and gathered everyone to renew the covenant. The response of the Josiah by tearing off his robe as an expression of repentance was a step for them to be spared from the wrath of God that awaits his people. And God saw the repentant heart and allowed renewal in their covenant making between God and His people (Kings 23:1-3). This event was followed by a nationwide movement for reformation and renewal of the covenant faith in Yahweh alone. This is in reaction to the growing influence of foreign gods and idols that had proliferated all over the land of Judah. The faith of Israel had actually been quite compromised with the entry of other religious traditions coming in from more advanced nations and civilizations that had imposed colonial domination upon them for many years already including the current superpower then, Assyria.

In reality, the call to reform in the time of Josiah may be seen as a radical step towards a major renewal movement that has also a strong political implication. In reasserting their original covenant faith in Yahweh as the only God for Israel to worship and serve, the nation in effect, was launching a strong nationalist movement led by the king, a movement popularly participated in by the people intending to reclaim their freedom from colonial masters from any religious and even political control of any superpower. A new religion or religions representing foreign gods and deities with distinct and different religious traditions and assumptions have sprouted and have become popular with the people in Judah. Such religions may actually be serving as representatives of more powerful and dominant nations or civilizations giving and proclaiming very impressive messages that may actually be distorting the very message of the original faith of the people leading them to divert their attention away from the real issues of life and concrete issues about survival, justice and righteous and ethical living to a rather different focus and direction towards a more abstract, ritualistic, materialistic and personal understanding of religion. This has been called and denounced by the prophets as plain idolatry, the worship of or giving allegiance to deities other than Yahweh and adopting perspectives and values in life contrary to the original Yahweh or covenant ideals. This has always been a major threat to any society being dominated by more powerful and more advanced cultures and civilizations. This is what the prophets, priests and leaders of the faith always to guard always in leading their people



towards real faith renewal even and especially in times like these.

The Letter of Paul to the Romans. Paul in this letter begins to survey the spiritual condition of all people. He sees the Jews and Gentiles alike are sinners and in need of salvation. But salvation from being condemned has been provided by God through Jesus Christ and his redemptive work on the cross. This, however can only be achieved and received through faith—a principle with which God has always dealt with humankind starting with Israel. And thus, receiving and experiencing salvation must be seen in practical ways, both in the church and in the world. As we have learned in the previous lesson, Paul in this letter aims for all the believers to know that restoration to God's graciousness and reconciliation of this world with its creator God is achievable when Christians will open their doors to the real gospel, be immovable and unashamed bearers of that gospel proclaiming and not condemning others who also opened their doors to the reality and power of the righteousness of God.

Romans 14:17 gives us an idea of the kind of kingdom that Paul was talking about. This kingdom (which may now also be reinstated as "kingdom") of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, for to be concerned with those trivial matters is to miss completely the essence of Christian living - righteousness and justice in living one's life and in relating with others. Paul's concern for moral and ethical dimension of the Christian life stands out in all his letters: righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

These passages remind us as a church that the road to real transformation is the acceptance of our weaknesses and limitations as mere creatures and from there, to move on to the realization of our creator God's aim for real and holistic transformation. The Church, being God's representative here on earth then, has the responsibility to take the first step in the call for transformation having caught sight of this gospel of transformation and redemption through Jesus Christ and is now being given the opportunity to do better as it strives to be continuously reformed and live as a truly reforming and transforming church.

### **Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users**

The Spirit renews life. The Spirit vivifies everything that suffers from corruption and decay. The Spirit is God's power to transform the church of Jesus Christ into a new creation. Although the church is a spiritual community, it is a human institution that's given to weaknesses and will remain so until Jesus' return in glory. Like everything earthly, the church is also subjected to corruption and decay. The Spirit's presence in the church is a given but it must constantly breathe in the power of the Spirit in order to constantly revitalize itself.

The Reformation motto, "The church reformed, always reforming" has both a historical and theological explanations. Underlying the medieval church's corrupt practices and moral bankruptcy was a grievous fundamental error in its doctrines of faith. The protest movement to cleanse the institutional church attacked the theological roots of its very existence. The reactionary church countered that the church does not err when it speaks from its chair as teacher of the faith, *ex cathedra*, because it is the holy body of Christ. The split became inevitable when the Reformers developed a doctrine that totally rejected the church's claim of infallibility and replaced it with the idea that the church, like an individual Christian, is both just and sinner, *simul justus et peccatur*. Hence, the church's journey in sanctification

requires continuing reform and renewal.

This Protestant teaching has served as a perpetual critique to check the church from veering away from the norms set by Christ himself. Christ has sent his Spirit, the Paraclete, to the church to intercede for God's forgiveness and to guide it to truth. In response to the Spirit, the church should install practical mechanisms that would forestall the fossilization of its institutions and the subordination of freedom to hierarchical arbitrariness. If and when this happens, the Reformers' revolutionary and iconoclastic fervor should be released to set the church free from a self-imposed bondage.

**Objectives:**

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

1. describe how the faith teachings of the church help her members have a new life in Christ;
2. state the role of the Holy Spirit in make the believers' life new in Christ; and
3. demonstrate the changes in one's new life in Christ.

**Materials:** The Holy Bible (preferably NRSV), worksheets

**Learning Experiences:****A. Opening Worship**

1. Welcome time: As the learners enter the room, greet them with a BIG SMILE.
2. Opening prayer: "Dear God, we praise your name. We thank you for the new life you have given to all of us. We thank you for the church for teaching us Your truth. Help us now, as we learn from Your words through this Sunday school class. In Your name, we pray. Amen."
3. Opening song: "They'll Know We Are Christians" by Carolyn Arends  
We are one in the Spirit, we are one in the Lord (2x)  
And we pray that all unity may one day be restored  
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love,  
They will know we are Christians by our love.  
We will work with each other, we will work side by side (2x)  
And we'll guard each one's dignity and save each one's pride  
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love  
They will know we are Christians by our love, by our love,  
They will know we are Christians by our love.  
We will walk with each other, we will walk hand in hand (2x)  
And together we'll spread the news that God is in our land  
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love  
They will know we are Christians by our love  
By our love, by our love.  
And they'll know we are Christians by our love, by our love  
They will know we are Christians by our love

**B. Getting Ready**

1. Prepare the class to play a relay game. On one corner of the room, put some

building blocks. Divide the class into two teams. Call the first team the building group. Tell the first team to stay on one side of the room. On your signal, tag the first pupil to get one block and put it on the table. As the child goes back to the line, let him or her tag another child who will get a block and put it on the table to start building a structure. Let the children continue doing this until they have built a structure. Give this group two minutes to do this.

2. Tell the second team to take turns in taking away one block at a time to take apart the structure. Give this group two minutes to do this.
3. Give the first team one minute to rebuild the structure followed by the second team who will remove the blocks one by one. Give each group one minute to do this.
4. Process the activity by asking each group about their feelings of accomplishment or disappointment when they were doing the activity.

### *C. Learning Time*

1. Explain to the class that Josiah became a king at age 8 when his father Amon died. His grandfather king Manasseh was the father of Amon. The scriptures say that both Manasseh and Amon were corrupt rulers and God was not pleased with them when they built altars of other gods. When Josiah became king, the people celebrated the Passover and the Scripture was read. This is the background of the lesson.
2. Let the class to read in unison 2 Kings 22:11-20; 23:1-3.
3. Tell the class to study the highlights of Josiah's reformation to prevent the anger of God who declared punishment to Judah by discussing the following verses carefully.
  - a. 2 Kings 22:11-12. Hearing the word of God and personal grief of King Josiah
  - b. 2 Kings 22:13-14. Inquiring from God through a prophetess about what God desires
  - c. 2 Kings 22:15-19. Declaration of God to punish Judah because of the wicked ways of the people
  - d. 2 Kings 22:20. 23:1-3. Rekindling of God's love because of the humility demonstrated by King Josiah and his plan of reformation as an act of gratitude and a promise to God to keep the covenant by Josiah and his people
4. Finish the lesson by reading Romans 14:17. Explain that the kingdom of God is characterized with righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

### *D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time*

1. Go back to the activity of building and taking apart of the structure. Compare this with idolatry of God's people and how Josiah destroyed these altars to please God. Emphasize to the class that this activity describes the cycle of sin committed by God's people and how God's people should make reforms for a continuing transformation. Remind the class that we are celebrating today Reformation Sunday.
2. Discuss the lesson to understand better the meaning of reformation.
  - a. The people of God did wrong in the eyes of God. They needed a light to reform them. How did Jesus use the **Word of God** to be the **Light** of the people? (Following what Jesus did as mentioned in the Scriptures will enlighten God's people. Josiah is an example of doing what was right in the eyes of God.)



- b. When Josiah heard the Scriptures, he started the process of cleansing because **God's Word cleanses**. How does the Scripture cleanse God's people? (Tell the class to share their personal experience.)
  - c. What is the assurance of God's people of God's everlasting love and faithfulness to God's people? (The **Word of God is eternal**.)
  - d. As we read the Scriptures, what do we learn related to **our response to God's love and faithfulness**? (Discuss the responses made by the church through its programs and the individual and collective response of her members. Emphasize the continuing reforms made by the church to be able to do what is right in the eyes of God.)
3. Draw from the class the importance of studying God's Word by reading the Bible regularly.

#### *E. Discovering the Biblical Truth*

Ask: How does the church teach her members about our faith in God?

#### *F. Applying the Biblical Truth*

1. Teach the memory verse: "For the kingdom of God is not food and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." (Romans 14:17)
- 2 Ask the children to list as many words as they can to describe a person who has a new life in Christ. Tell them to choose from the words in the metacards or those written on the board.  
Obedient Prayerful Loving to others  
Truthful Caring Submissive
3. **For ME:** Tell the class to play the game "Wheel of Life". Make a wheel and write sentences that characterize a new person in Christ. Ask a pupil to spin the wheel. If the wheel stops with pointed arrow, he or she will demonstrate what the sentence says before the class. After he or she does it, give something as a reward.
4. **For OE:** Tell the class to reiterate their covenant commitment to God by making a creative key holder. Provide the class with the needed materials: wire, scissors, key shaped board paper where the memory verse is written punched at the upper center of the board. Ask them to assemble the key holder and hang it on their bag to remind them of their covenant made to God. Remind the class with safety measures.

#### *G. Closing Worship*

1. Tell the class to recite the memory verse.
2. Offering: Tell the class to offer themselves as servants of God.
3. Closing song: "Wonderful Grace of Jesus" (HFJ # 212)
4. Closing prayer: "Dear God, we thank you for your unfailing love. You never stop loving us. Continue to change us for the better. Release your blessing upon us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."

November 5, 2017

**11<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Kingdomtide**

***Pastoral Formation: Its Role in Kingdom Building***

*Old Testament:*

**1 Samuel 3:1-19 (NRSV)**

Samuel's Calling and Prophetic Activity

<sup>1</sup>Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. The word of the LORD was rare in those days; visions were not widespread. <sup>2</sup>At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; <sup>3</sup>the lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of the LORD, where the ark of God was. <sup>4</sup>Then the LORD called, 'Samuel! Samuel!'<sup>\*</sup> and he said, 'Here I am!' <sup>5</sup>and ran to Eli, and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' But he said, 'I did not call; lie down again.' So he went and lay down. <sup>6</sup>The LORD called again, 'Samuel!' Samuel got up and went to Eli, and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' But he said, 'I did not call, my son; lie down again.' <sup>7</sup>Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. <sup>8</sup>The LORD called Samuel again, a third time. And he got up and went to Eli, and said, 'Here I am, for you called me.' Then Eli perceived that the LORD was calling the boy. <sup>9</sup>Therefore Eli said to Samuel, 'Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, "Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening."' <sup>10</sup>So Samuel went and lay down in his place. <sup>11</sup>Now the LORD came and stood there, calling as before, 'Samuel! Samuel!' And Samuel said, 'Speak, for your servant is listening.' <sup>12</sup>Then the LORD said to Samuel, 'See, I am about to do something in Israel that will make both ears of anyone who hears of it tingle. <sup>13</sup>On that day I will fulfil against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. <sup>14</sup>For I have told him that I am about to punish his house for ever, for the iniquity that he knew, because his sons were blaspheming God,<sup>\*</sup> and he did not restrain them. <sup>15</sup>Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be expiated by sacrifice or offering forever.'

<sup>16</sup>Samuel lay there until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD. Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. <sup>17</sup>But Eli called Samuel and said, 'Samuel, my son.' He said, 'Here I am.' <sup>18</sup>Eli said, 'What was it that he told you? Do not hide it from me. May God do so to you and more also, if you hide anything from me of all that he told you.' <sup>19</sup>So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. Then he said, 'It is the LORD; let him do what seems good to him.' <sup>20</sup>As Samuel grew up, the LORD was with him and let none of his words fall to the ground.

*New Testament:*

**2 Timothy 1:11-14 (NRSV)**

<sup>11</sup>For this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher, <sup>12</sup>and for this reason I suffer as I do. But I am not ashamed, for I know the one in whom I have put my trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that day what I have entrusted to him. <sup>13</sup>Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. <sup>14</sup>Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.

**General Concept: The church is served by a ministry that grows with the congregation under the guidance of ecclesiastical leaders.**

**Key Concept: The church is served by the church workers.**

### **Exegesis of the Biblical References**

1 Samuel 3:1-19 narrates the calling of the young boy Samuel who was then under the supervision of Eli, at that time, the priest in charge of the sanctuary in Shiloh. The monarchy was yet to be set up under Saul, c. 1020-925 B.C. At this time Eli was already not physically well, because of his old age, his vision was already getting dim but still he continues to perform his duties as a priest and judge, and the little boy Samuel was serving as his assistant. Samuel was called by God, through a call—a vision many times that evening, a voice was calling out his name but he could not grasp what it meant. This is why every time he hears the voice calling his name, he would run to Eli asking if he had called him. However, Eli the priest eventually discerned that Samuel was being called by God. Samuel had to accept the call and obey the voice no matter how difficult was the task given to him, to be the one to replace his ageing and weak teacher Eli. He had to be stronger as a leader than Eli in spirit and in his faith in leading his people Israel for the rest of his life.

Christians, too, are recipients of a calling from God which we have to take seriously and obey with all our hearts. We need to heed and follow the voice of God according to His purpose and plan, and whatever gifts of the Spirit we do have, we should use it to serve and glorify God. Then, we too, can become stronger and effective in our ministry just like Samuel who walked and obeyed the will of God for his life even if he had to be involved in a radical replacement of leadership in his own community.

2 Timothy 1:11-14 is a letter of Paul to Timothy which emphasizes the need for the disciple to remain faithful in holding on the "standard of sound teaching," guarding well the "good treasure" entrusted to him and to others who will follow Timothy for the proper nurturing, equipping and empowering of the people of God, enabling them to respond in faith and obedience and in a way that is fit to the needs and demands of their context, encouraging them always to remain faithful to their calling. It is a reminder to pastors, lay workers, lay leaders and members of the church who are all called to remain faithful as a household of God. Considering that we are called by God and not men, we ought to follow the standard ordinances and statutes of God as proclaimed and taught in His church. It is required for those in the household of God even if they believe they are already doing the will of God, we always need to be faithful to Him even in the little things that are entrusted to us in doing the ministry, work, and mission of the church.

### ***Companion Guide for the Teachers and other End-users***

The Spirit pours out spiritual gifts, charismata, to the church to be apportioned to the members for building up the body of Christ. Among the various gifts is that of leadership which is exercised by members who are set-apart for that special ministry. There are distinctions in roles and functions within this special ministry (refer to the UCCP Manual for Church Workers).

The clergy constitutes the leading aspect of the special ministry. Members of the clergy



provide leadership to individual congregations in all aspects of their life and work. The clergy is set apart so that they may be able to devote their mind, time, and energy in the service of the congregation. On the other hand, the members have the duty to provide for their material security so that their pastors may not be distracted to the material cares of the world. Both sides must aim for a full extent of this reciprocal relationship. Furthermore, the relationship between pastor and congregation yields mutual benefits at another plane: the pastors grow in faith and in their capacity to serve as they lead and care for them. The older members have a vast reservoir of experience for the pastors to learn from. The members' generous willingness to bare their hearts to the pastor opens up windows to the soul that reveal the mysteries of life, thereby enhancing their pastoral capabilities.

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### **Objectives:**

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

1. tell that church workers are called by God similar to how God called Samuel;
2. name the church workers in their local church;
3. identify how church workers prepare themselves to serve the church;
4. express one's appreciation to the church workers through creative ways.

**Materials:** The Holy Bible (preferably NRSV), worksheets, materials needed in the activities

### **Learning Experiences:**

#### **A. Opening Worship**

1. Welcome time: As the learners enter the room, greet them with a BIG SMILE.
2. Opening prayer: Lead the prayer and tell your learners to follow after you: "Dear God, thank you for bringing us into this place of worship. Today, we celebrate Church Worker's Sunday. We pray to bless your word as we listen and learn from it

together with our teacher. This we ask in Jesus' name. Amen."

3. Opening song: "I Will Make You Fishers of Men"

I will make you fishers of men. Fishers of men, fishers of men.

I will make you fishers of men if you follow me.

If you follow me, if you follow me

I will make you fishers of men if you follow me.

*B. Getting Ready*

1. Prepare the class to play the "Mirror" game. Let the class form dyads.
2. Tell the pairs that one will play mirror and the other one will do what the mirror exactly does. If the second one makes a mistake in doing the same thing as the mirror, their turn is over. Instruct each pair to stand face-to-face about 4 feet apart.
3. After all the dyads had a chance to play the game, process the activity. Ask the class which role is easy to do, being a mirror, or imitating the mirror. Let the children share their experiences.

*C. Learning Time*

1. Tell the class how God played mirror and how the main character played his part.
2. Ask the class to open their Bibles and read 1 Samuel 3:1-19 silently. Assign children who will play narrator, Samuel, Eli, and God.

God Calls Samuel  
(Based on 1 Samuel 3: 1-19)

Narrator: Long time ago, in a town of Ramah, a couple named Elkanah and Hannah had been longing for a child. Hannah kept on praying to God. God heard the prayer of Hannah and God gifted Hannah and her husband a handsome boy named Samuel. Samuel's parents were so thankful to God that they offered Samuel to grow in the temple and serve God. Samuel was given to the priest Eli to be taught by the priest. One evening, when Eli and Samuel were sleeping in a separate place, God called

Samuel: God: (soft voice) Samuel! Samuel!

Narrator: Samuel heard the voice calling him and so he ran to priest Eli.

Samuel: Here I am. You called me.

Priest Eli: I did not call you. Go back to your bed and sleep.

Narrator: Samuel went back to his bed and slept. Again, God called Samuel.

God: Samuel! Samuel!

Narrator: Samuel woke up again and ran to priest Eli.

Samuel: Here I am. You called me.

Priest Eli: I did not call you. Go back to bed and sleep again.

Narrator: Samuel went back to his bed. At that time, he did not know yet about the Lord. For the third time God called Samuel and he went to Eli:

Samuel: Here I am. You called me.

Narrator: Eli understood that it was the Lord, who was calling Samuel.

Priest Eli: If God calls you again, say this: "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening." Now lie down and sleep again.

Narrator: God came and called Samuel again.

God: (soft voice) Samuel! Samuel!

Samuel: Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.

God: I am about to do something for the people of Israel that will make both ears of anyone who hears of it tingle.

Narrator: Then, God was with Samuel as he grew up, Samuel obeyed God's word.

3. Tell the class to read in unison 2 Timothy 1:11-14. Emphasize that Paul is leaving a legacy to Timothy to strengthen his faith and consider sound teaching as his source in continuing his ministry especially to the Gentile world. Timothy is urged to take care of what he learned and consider it as his good treasure in proclaiming the truth of God's plan for God's people.

#### *D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time*

1. Discuss the lesson.
  - a. How did God show the plan for Samuel? (Samuel was a gift to Hannah and Elkanah upon the incessant prayer to God by Hannah. Samuel was reared and prepared by Eli in the Temple to serve God. God called Samuel to do great things for Israel.)
  - b. How did Samuel react to God's call? (Samuel listened to God. Samuel expressed his willingness to serve God. Samuel obeyed God.)
2. Tell the class to play a guessing game. Identify some church workers or leaders in the church. Write each name into a paper strip. Divide the class into two groups. Ask a representative from each group to act out the person shown to them in the paper strip. The group will guess the person. The group who can guess first gets the score.
3. After the game, ask the children if they found the game easy or difficult. Let them share their opinions. (Expect the children to say that the persons written on the paper strips are familiar to them so it was easy to imitate what they were doing.)
4. Relate the story about Samuel when he was called by God to the characters they portrayed in the activity. Tell them that these church workers were also called by God for the unique task of serving the church. Ask: How can you compare Samuel's calling to a pastor's calling? [Samuel was called by God to do great things for God's people in Israel. Samuel was trained by Eli in the temple. God calls pastors and other church workers to set apart their lives to proclaim God's word in building God's Kingdom. These church workers need to study God's word (sound teaching) and keep this teaching (good treasure) to heart.]

#### *E. Discovering the Biblical Truth*

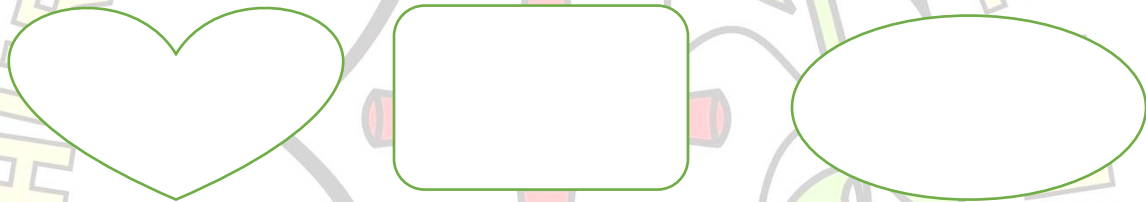
Ask: How do our pastors serve the church?

#### *F. Applying the Biblical Truth*

1. Teach the memory verse: "Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us." (2 Timothy 1:13-14)



2. Say: Our pastors are called by God to serve the church, to lead and guide God's people to worship and live in accordance to God's will. Let the class share ways by which they can express appreciation and demonstrate respect and love for them.
3. **For both groups:** *Cookies of Appreciation.* Distribute 5 pieces of cookies and plastic cellophane to each child. Tell them to put the cookies inside the plastic and tie it with ribbon. Give them sheets of paper where they can write five things that they want to thank their pastors. Tell them to give these cookies to their pastors.
4. **For OE:** Tell the class to show appreciation for church workers. Display some figures. Let the children choose one and write a sentence inside the figure addressed to a pastor or any of the church workers in their local church expressing their commitment to participate in the church ministry. Instruct them to decorate the figure and color the figure using this legend.  
Something pink to participate in worship ministries  
Something blue to participate in thanksgiving activities for blessings received  
Something green to participate in outreach programs  
Something red to participate in teaching ministries



#### G. Closing Worship

1. Tell the class to recite the memory verse.
2. Offering: Put a basket offering at the center and instruct the kids to bring their offering as you sing together: "We're Giving Because We Love Jesus."
3. Closing song: "The More We Work Together" (Tune: The More We Get Together, Words: Iris H. Tibus)  
The more we work together, together, together  
The more we work together, God's kingdom is built.  
Church workers and members are working together  
When we do our part together, God's glory is served.
4. Closing prayer: "Dear God, we thank you for sending your church workers to serve your church. Bless them with wisdom. Clothe them with humility that you may find them faithful in guiding God's people. This is our prayer in Jesus' name. Amen."

12 November 2017

**12<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Kingdomtide**

***Lay Formation: Its Role in Kingdom Building***

*Old Testament:*

**I Kings 17: 8-16 (NRSV)**

The Widow of Zarephath

<sup>8</sup> Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, <sup>9</sup> “Go now to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and live there; for I have commanded a widow there to feed you.” <sup>10</sup> So he set out and went to Zarephath. When he came to the gate of the town, a widow was there gathering sticks; he called to her and said, “Bring me a little water in a vessel, so that I may drink.” <sup>11</sup> As she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, “Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.” <sup>12</sup> But she said, “As the Lord your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of meal in a jar, and a little oil in a jug; I am now gathering a couple of sticks, so that I may go home and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it, and die.” <sup>13</sup> Elijah said to her, “Do not be afraid; go and do as you have said; but first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterwards make something for yourself and your son. <sup>14</sup> For thus says the Lord the God of Israel: The jar of meal will not be emptied and the jug of oil will not fail until the day that the Lord sends rain on the earth.” <sup>15</sup> She went and did as Elijah said, so that she as well as he and her household ate for many days. <sup>16</sup> The jar of meal was not emptied, neither did the jug of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord that he spoke by Elijah.

*New Testament:*

**Luke 10: 25-37 (NRSV)**

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

<sup>25</sup> Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he said, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” <sup>26</sup> He said to him, “What is written in the law? What do you read there?” <sup>27</sup> He answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” <sup>28</sup> And he said to him, “You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.” <sup>29</sup> But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” <sup>30</sup> Jesus replied, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. <sup>31</sup> Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. <sup>32</sup> So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. <sup>33</sup> But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. <sup>34</sup> He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. <sup>35</sup> The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, ‘Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.’ <sup>36</sup> Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?” <sup>37</sup> He said, “The one who showed him mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

***General Concept: Empowered lay leadership helps the church grow as it serves God’s people.***

**Key Concept:** The church grows and serves God's people through its members which includes children.

### Exegesis of the Biblical References

I Kings 17: 8-16. This text tells about the story of a woman of Zarephath in the time of Elijah the prophet. The rains had not come and there was drought and famine in the land. Very soon, the food supply of the widow's family would run out but despite this she shared the last of what they had with Elijah. The Zarephath widow, belonging to the poorest of the poor segment of society, gave all of what she had out of faith. The promised steady supply of meal and oil surely did not run out and her family survived the drought until finally the rains came. This story is a very good example of how God empowers people to be of service in God's ministry.

Luke 10: 25-37. Jesus is asked by a lawyer what he must do in order to inherit eternal life. Jesus asks the lawyer what the Torah says. The lawyer gives the correct answer: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." Jesus commands the lawyer to do just this so he will live. Still, the lawyer needed to justify himself and had more questions: he wanted to know who his neighbor was. Jesus replies through a parable that highlights the reciprocity of being a neighbor: our neighbors are the people who are in need and the only way to respond to them as a neighbor is through compassion, mercy and kindness.

These two stories show how it is in the Reign of God. Under God's reign, people share, people think of others first, people care. Under God's rule, the modus operandi is serving others. This is how it is to be church. In the church, the lay people take leadership. They are empowered to be leaders of the church as they do the three-pronged tasks of the church, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Let us be empowered members of the body of Christ, the church, doing God's mission, from the youngest child to the most senior citizen.

### Objectives:

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

- Articulate that they are part of the church
- List the things that they can do to show that they are part of the church
- Demonstrate what they can do as children of God

**Materials:** Holy Bible, song chart, memory verse chart

### Learning Experiences:

#### A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time
2. Opening prayer: "Dear God, thank you for bringing us to Sunday School to learn more about you. Thank you for teaching us how to be good children and how to be good disciples of Jesus. Teach us what we need to do as members of the body of Christ. Teach us, your church, how to serve others. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."



3. Opening song: "Ako, Ikaw, Tayo ay ang Iglesia" (*Children Praise God*, p.5)  
Ako, ako, ako ay ang iglesia (3x) Ako ay ang iglesia, lalala!  
Sumayaw-sayaw at umindak-indak, sumayaw-sayaw katulad ng dagat (2x)  
[Change ako to ikaw, then tayo, repeating the whole song 2 more times]

**B. Getting Ready**

Ask the children what they think the song means. Discuss with them what church means. Let each one articulate their answers. Remind them that the church is not just the building; it is importantly the people that comprise the church. Stress that everyone is part of the church: you, me, all of us.

**C. Learning Time**

Prepare the children to listen to the story.

The Good Neighbor  
(Based on Luke 10: 25-37)

A lawyer asked Jesus, "Teacher, what must I do to get eternal life?"

Jesus answered, "What does the Torah say?"

The man said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself."

Jesus said, "You're right! Do this and you will live."

But the man wanted to show that the way he was living was right so he asked, "Who is my neighbor?"

To answer, Jesus told a story:

A man was walking down the road. Suddenly, robbers attacked him, tore off his clothes and beat him. Then they left him lying on the road, almost dead. A Jewish priest walked down the road, but when he saw a man lying on the road, he walked by on the other side. Then a Levite came and saw him too, but he also walked by on the other side. Then a Samaritan came. He saw the man and pitied him. He put oil and wine on his wounds and bandaged them. Then he put the man on his donkey and brought him to an inn where he took care of him. The next day, the Samaritan gave the innkeeper money and told the innkeeper to take care of the man. If the innkeeper spent more than what the man gave him, he promised to pay the innkeeper when he came back.

Jesus asked the lawyer, "Who among the three was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by robbers?"

The lawyer answered, "The one who showed him mercy."

Jesus said, "Go and do the same thing."

**D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time**

Discuss the story.

Ask:

1. What must we do to have eternal life?
2. In the story Jesus told, what happened to the man walking down the road?
3. Who were the three other people who walked down the road? What did they do when they saw the beat-up man?

*E. Discovering the Biblical Truth*

Ask: Who among the three people in the story should we imitate? Why?

*F. Applying the Biblical Truth*

1. Have the children read I Kings 17: 8-16.
2. Discuss how the faith of the woman of Zarephath help her to trust in God and to share of her dwindling resources with the man of God.
3. Ask: If you saw someone who needed our help, what would you do?
2. Have the children list down what they can do to show others that they are part of the church.
4. In groups, have the children demonstrate through dramatization what they can do to serve others as children of God.

*G. Closing Worship*

1. Let the class recite the memory verse in unison. Luke 10: 27: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself."
2. Offering
3. Closing song: "We are the Church Together"  
The church is not a building, the church is not a steeple,  
The church is not a resting place, the church is people.  
I am the church, you are the church, we are the church together  
All who follow Jesus all around the world, yes, we're the church together!
5. Closing Prayer: "Dear God, thank you for always being with us today in Sunday School. Thank you for teaching us who we are as a church and guiding us what to do as your children. May we copy what the Zarephath woman and the good Samaritan did. Teach us always how to be a good neighbor by serving others. Bless us, our families, our friends, and all the world. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."

November 19, 2017

**13<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Kingdomtide**

***Ministering to the Migrant Workers and their Families***

*Old Testament:*

**Psalms 137: 1-6 (NRSV)**

Lament over the Destruction of Jerusalem

<sup>1</sup>By the rivers of Babylon-there we sat down and there we wept when we remembered Zion.

<sup>2</sup>On the willows\* there we hung up our harps. <sup>3</sup>For there our captors asked us for songs, and our tormentors asked for mirth, saying, 'Sing us one of the songs of Zion!'

<sup>4</sup>How could we sing the LORD's song in a foreign land? <sup>5</sup>If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither! <sup>6</sup>Let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you, if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy.

*New Testament:*

**Acts 28: 2 (NRSV)**

<sup>2</sup>The natives showed us unusual kindness. Since it had begun to rain and was cold, they kindled a fire and welcomed all of us round it.

**General Concept: The church undertakes special ministries to the migrant workers and their families.**

**Key Concept: The church prays for and responds to people working in other countries.**

**Exegesis of the Biblical References**

The Book of Psalms is for the most part a book of prayer and praise. Here, individually or collectively, the psalms speak to God in prayer and in praise. But there are also psalms that are clearly instructional passages that teach the way of godliness. This would only suggest that the main purpose was instruction in the life of faith. It speaks as well of Israel's faith journey as they express it in prayers and praises without forgetting their experiences both joyful and sorrowful.

The whole chapter of Psalm 137 is actually a plaintive song of lament of the exile, expressed when they have just been brought back from Babylon. Even as they are back in Jerusalem there still lingers the bitter memory of the years in a foreign land and of the cruel events that led to their enforced stay. Verses 1-3 relate to us the remembered sorrow that is beyond measure and the painful, traumatic torment in the face of the mocking and jeering of their captors, while vv.4-6 is an oath of total commitment to Jerusalem and the people's unwavering devotion to worshipping their God only in their holy city. These lines are expressions of deep mourning in a foreign land where they had lived as captive foreigners and treated as second class citizens without any rights and their constantly intense burning desire to be back in their homeland and be vindicated by the power and grace of their God before their enemies. For a people who have become foreigners in a land where they need to survive even as second class citizens, surviving even in the midst of a foreign and intimidating culture becomes a real struggle to maintain one's sanity, integrity, and even



one's faith. To be uprooted and forced by circumstances to leave one's loved ones and homeland can be a very traumatic and disorienting experience. Without any strong spiritual foundation to hold on to, a people can succumb to the wiles of religious and cultural temptations. It is the role of the community of faith to ensure that its people remain rooted in the very foundations of their faith which have been bequeathed to them by their ancestors.

One of the purposes of The Acts of the Apostles apparently is to depict the triumph of Christianity in the face of bitter persecution. Acts 28:2 is a clear manifestation that the Holy Spirit uses even the natives of foreign lands who were commonly called as "barbarians". Kindness and a welcoming spirit can also be experienced even from other peoples who may not actually be sharing the faith of the believers in Jesus. The natives of the island of Malta have built a fire to keep warm the prisoners including Paul who were stranded there when their boat sunk in the midst of the storm, and it was raining and cold then.

As a church entrusted with a special ministry to the migrant workers and their families, we should realize the migrant workers' situation in foreign lands and the loneliness and worries that the families go through in enduring the longing and painful absence of their loved one. It is a sad reality sometimes that the church would even put pressure on the migrant workers by asking too much from them monetarily as contribution to certain church projects. They may just be assuming that they have acquired wonderful lives already in such foreign lands, and because they were paid higher, they must be rich. They, however, are forgetting the church's pastoral responsibility to care for them and their families. To live a life away from each loved one is not easy; it is not all the time that one parent's presence alone would be enough for the children to fill their needs in their growing years. They would always need the guiding presence of both father and mother through those years. Thus, the church must be there to give that comfort and spiritual nurture that would somehow provide the warmth and pastoral presence that they need. Just like what happened to Paul and the rest of the prisoners in Malta who may not be directly related and could even be strangers to the families of concerned migrant workers, we can be the islanders who would provide fire and warmth for the family of the migrant workers and a more sympathetic understanding of the situation of the migrant workers who have been working in foreign lands just to provide for their respective families.

### **Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users**

Migrant workers and their families compose a unique sector in Philippine society. Having found employment in foreign lands, they have opportunities to experience the best and the worst conditions in life. They are able to give a measure of prosperity to their families they never had before. The new circumstance affords them economic security and a higher social status in the future. At the same, it brings in new perils that are destructive of family cohesiveness, stability, and loyalty. All the while, the migrant worker-provider suffers from untold loneliness, insecurity, powerlessness, and loss of identity. This state of mind makes migrant workers gravely vulnerable to acts of indiscretion, misconduct, and even crimes of opportunity.

In this unusual state of vulnerability, the church should discover new ways of providing pastoral care to migrant workers and their families. In addition to traditional means of care, new programs such as support networks for OFW families, counseling, financial advice,

etc. need to be set up.

More than that, however, the church is needed to contribute to an on-going wider critique of the government's development strategy that fosters overseas employment as a major locomotive of economic development. It is a strategy prescribed by powerful foreign governments to resource-rich but underdeveloped countries, which in reality serves the greed of giant transnational capital at the expense of the local populations. This strategy drives landless and small farmers to the cities where job-generating local manufacturing industries are abandoned in favor of the more lucrative economic activities like infrastructure projects, import-export, finance and banking, information and communications and entertainment. These types of industries may raise the nation's Gross National Product but makes only a minimal dent on a populous nation's massive problem of unemployment. This is the basic reality behind the mass exodus of Filipinos to find employment overseas.

Justice for the nation, for all sectors of Philippine society and for the OFWs in particular is for the church a matter of faith and loyalty to the Lord.

### Objectives:

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

1. identify the families with parents or relatives working abroad
2. tell the things that the families left behind can do to support their relatives working abroad; and
3. list ways of showing care to the workers working abroad

**Materials:** The Holy Bible (preferably NRSV), worksheets

### Learning Experiences:

#### A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time
2. Opening prayer: "Thank you, God, for allowing us to study your word. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to care for others. We need to pray for them and show our concern for their well-being. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."
3. Opening song: "With Christ in My Vessel"

With Christ in my vessel, I can smile at the storm,  
Smile at the storm, smile at the storm,  
With Christ in my vessel, I can smile at the storm,  
Until he takes me home.

Sailing, I am sailing home (2X)

With Christ in my vessel, I can smile at the storm,  
Until he takes me home.

Note: Tell the class to repeat the song and replace the words **my** with **your**, **I** with **you**, and **I am** with **you are**. Then ask the class to sing the song again and replace the words **my** with **our**, **I** with **we** and **I am** with **we are**.

#### B. Getting Ready

1. Prepare the class to play the game "If You Really Knew Me". Have the class form

dyads. Tell them how the game is played. One of the partners will share something about himself or herself. The other partner will listen attentively to what the partner is saying. Listening attentively includes facing the person who is speaking, making eye contact, nodding or other physical responses to what is being said, taking notes, etc. After the first partner finishes talking, he or she will say, "If you really knew me, then say something about me (family information, school information, favorite/ least favorite things that they heard from the partner or something more they know about their partner). After the first encounter, reverse the role using the same procedure.

2. Ask the class how they felt during the activity and how important attentive listening is.

### C. Learning Time

1. Tell the class to read the biblical references.

2. After reading Psalm 137:1-6, teach the song "By the Rivers of Babylon"

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down.

Ye-eah we wept, when we remembered Zion.

When the wicked carried us away in captivity, required from us a song.

Now how shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land .

Let the words of our mouth and the meditations of our heart,

Be acceptable in thy sight here tonight.

3. After reading Acts 28, present the following story and let the the class share their thoughts about each paragraph as they understood it.

Paul Welcomed by the Malta Natives

(Based on Acts 27:1-6, 39-44, 28:1-2)

Paul was imprisoned. He faced his trial before King Agrippa of Judea. But the king found nothing wrong with Paul. He decided to send Paul to Rome to speak before Caesar.

Thoughts : \_\_\_\_\_

When Paul set sail to go to Rome, there came a great storm. It rained hard. The wind was so strong. The waves were so high. The ship was wrecked.

Thoughts: \_\_\_\_\_

All the people in the ship had to leave the ship to survive. Finally, they saw the island of Malta and decided to go there. So they landed in Malta.

Thoughts: \_\_\_\_\_

When the natives of Malta saw them, they took pity on them because they were wet and tired and hungry. It was raining hard and the weather was cold. They welcomed Paul and the other prisoners. They started a fire to keep them warm. They gave them food and shelter.

Thoughts: \_\_\_\_\_

(God took care of Paul and his companions. Indeed, God takes care of God's people in many ways whatever time and wherever they are.)



*D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time*

1. Ask the class to relate the song “By the Rivers of Babylon” with the Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs). Compare the longings of the Israelites to go back to Jerusalem when they were taken captives in Babylon and the longings of migrant workers to be with their families back home. Let them share if they have friends or neighbors whose family workers work abroad and let them think of ways by which they can comfort them.
2. Let the class talk about the kindness of the natives of Malta when they welcomed Paul and his companions. Encourage them to use this story when they treat new acquaintances or classmates. Ask them if kindness can help them in treating others that they have just met or introduced to.

*E. Discovering the Biblical Truth*

Ask: What are the programs of the church for migrant workers and their families? (The church can pray for and respond to the needs of migrant workers and their families.)

*F. Applying the Biblical Truth*

1. Teach the memory verse: “The natives showed us unusual kindness. Since it had begun to rain and was cold, they kindled a fire and welcomed all of us round it.” (Acts 28:2)
2. Prepare a Kindness Bulletin Board (including friends and classmates whose family members are migrant workers). Let the class display their thoughts or artworks on the bulletin board. Call on each child to explain briefly his or her work. These are some sample things that they can do.
  - a. Read to a child.
  - b. Smile at a stranger.
  - c. Tutor immigrants.
  - d. Be a pen pal.
  - e. Tell a joke.
  - f. Start a community garden.
  - g. Send a thank you note.
  - h. Give clothes at a shelter.
  - i. Tend abused children.
  - j. Plant a tree.
  - k. Recycle.
  - l. Visit a sick neighbor.
  - m. Write friendly notes.
3. Emphasize that when we show kindness to others, we do not expect any favor or kindness from them.
4. Let this bulletin board be on display for a long time so that it becomes a reminder for children to express kindness any place and time.

*G. Closing Worship*

1. Tell the class to recite the memory verse.
2. Offering
3. Closing song: "By the Rivers of Babylon"
4. Closing prayer: "Dear God, help us to be kind always not only to our friends but to all who are in need. We pray for our classmates whose parent works abroad. Bless our classmates and their parents. Keep them safe and under you care always. In Jesus' name, this is our prayer. Amen."



November 26, 2017

**14<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Kingdomtide**

***Gathering the Fruit of the Spirit***

*Old Testament:*

**Isaiah 57:14-16 (NRSV)**

A Promise of Help and Healing

<sup>14</sup>It shall be said, 'Build up, build up, prepare the way, remove every obstruction from my people's way.' <sup>15</sup>For thus says the high and lofty one who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with those who are contrite and humble in spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite. <sup>16</sup>For I will not continually accuse, nor will I always be angry; for then the spirits would grow faint before me, even the souls that I have made.

*New Testament:*

**Ephesians 5:17-21 (NRSV)**

<sup>17</sup>So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. <sup>18</sup>Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, <sup>19</sup>as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts, <sup>20</sup>giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Christian Household <sup>21</sup>Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ.

**2 Peter 1:5-7 (NRSV)**

<sup>5</sup>For this very reason, you must make every effort to support your faith with goodness, and goodness with knowledge, <sup>6</sup>and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with endurance, and endurance with godliness, <sup>7</sup>and godliness with mutual affection, and mutual affection with love.

**1 Corinthians 12:1-11 (NRSV)**

Spiritual Gifts

<sup>1</sup>Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. <sup>2</sup>You know that when you were pagans, you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak. <sup>3</sup>Therefore I want you to understand that no one speaking by the Spirit of God ever says 'Let Jesus be cursed!' and no one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit. <sup>4</sup>Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; <sup>5</sup>and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; <sup>6</sup>and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. <sup>7</sup>To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. <sup>8</sup>To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, <sup>9</sup>to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, <sup>10</sup>to another, the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. <sup>11</sup>All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.



**General Concept: The ministries of church reflect the presence of the Spirit in its life and work.**

**Key Concept: The Spirit of God is reflected through the works of the church.**

### **Exegesis of the Biblical References**

The text of Isaiah 57:14-16, a text from the post exilic era, signifies God's assurance to the contrite and the humble in spirit. The text reiterates the truth of God's steadfast compassion and love for His people always showing mercy to those who remain humble and contrite even in the face of various temptations they have experienced in their history. Verse 16 says; "For I will not contend for ever nor will I always be angry; for from me proceeds the spirit, and I have made the breath of life." God's compassion and graciousness will always overrule divine anger and even the demand for divine justice for those who fall short of God's expectations. For how could God contend with His own creation and remain angry with His own people whom God created from His own image and likeness?

God created all of creation and have blessed it all and described it all as good. Creation, including humanity are all bearers of the mark of the divine creator having been blessed by God. However, because of the gift of freedom given also by the creator, the human being has been tempted on major occasions to decide in favor of what is wrong and lived lives that are completely against the will of the creator. Thus, the spirit of wickedness and selfcentered stubbornness of God's people emerged and the people led by their ruling elite started committing evil against each other and forgot and ignored their ethical covenant obligations before God.

The people become unholy and ungodly before the presence of God with acts of injustice and social abuse especially against the poor and the powerless of the land and idolized the wealth and politics of foreign powers. They then suffered the consequences of their wicked ways and went through the pain and agony of the exile experience. There in Babylon they became so desperate and began to realize the gravity of what they have done, how far they have strayed from the way of the Lord, and with the help of their religious leaders who were exiled with them, they began the arduous task of humbling themselves in deep repentance and contrition, returning to the faith of their ancestors, pleading once more to their God for forgiveness and restoration.

On the other hand, God who remains holy and merciful remembered His promises to their ancestors who had also shown weaknesses in various ways but have learned to humble themselves before God and have always tried to walk according to God's just and righteous will. Being faithful to His covenant promises to them God would always remain compassionate to those who indeed humble and contrite themselves before the Lord, for our God is a God of life and love and not a God of cruel vengeance.

Ephesians 5:17:21 reminds us therefore, in response to what God has done for us not to be foolish in the way we live our daily lives, but to live always in accordance with the ethical and moral demands of a life transformed and forgiven by God, to always discern and know the will of God for the good of the community, to be filled with the spirit of God in

everything we do as a body united by one faith and to always give thanks to the Lord with hymns and spiritual songs whenever and wherever we worship God. This will be our distinct witness before the rest of the world as we carry on with our mission as a household, a fellowship called by God. According to 2 Peter 1:5-7, we are to exert every effort to manifest our faith with all the virtues that will shape the life of the community as one that has been molded ultimately by the spirit of love, God's love for all of us and our love for each other as fellow children of one creator. This is what will make us strong as a body of believers, able and empowered to carry on the task of continuing Christ's mission for the transformation of our society and of the whole creation itself.

### **Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users**

The various ministries display a rich harvest of the fruit of the Spirit from the orchard of a church which is faithful and loyal to Christ. The Greek word ministry, *diakonia*, means service. The forms of service will vary according to the social circumstances where the church or a congregation is located. The needs in a rural context, for example, may be few but very basic. Due to a severe lack of cultural opportunities in the area, the task of educating and equipping the members to effectively respond to the needs of the members and the community should be a top priority. At the other end, highly urbanized areas pose a different set of challenges to the church, such as the diminished physical presence of parents aggravated by the pervasive influence of computer gadgets on the minds of children and youth. The integral functions of the church—worship, preaching, teaching, pastoral care, fellowship, stewardship, community service, social concern—should take into account the particularities of the social context.

The various ministries of the church introduce to the wider society futuristic images of the reality of the kingdom that is to come. The church's witness to the wider world is its life and work which is sustained, animated, and governed by the Spirit.

More than that, however, the church is needed in contribute to an on-going wider critique of the government's development strategy that fosters overseas employment as a major locomotive of economic development. It is a strategy prescribed by powerful foreign governments to resource-rich but underdeveloped countries, which in reality, serves the greed of giant transnational capital at the expense of the local populations. This strategy drives landless and small farmers to the cities where job-generating local manufacturing industries are abandoned in favor of the more lucrative economic activities like infrastructure projects, import-export, finance and banking, information and communications and entertainment. These types of industries may raise the nation's Gross National Product but makes only a minimal dent on a populous nation's massive problem of unemployment. This is the basic reality behind the mass exodus of Filipinos to find employment overseas.

Justice for the nation, for all sectors of Philippine society and for the OFWs in particular is for the church a matter of faith and loyalty to the Lord.

### **Objectives:**

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

1. list the spiritual gifts received from God;
2. describe how these gifts are used to help others;

3. commit to thank God for these gifts and use them to serve others; and
4. explain how the Spirit of Christ is reflected in the work of the church.

**Materials:** The Holy Bible (preferably NRSV), worksheets, materials needed in the activities

**Learning Experiences:**

**A. Opening Worship**

1. Welcome time
2. Opening prayer: Dear God, thank you for many blessings that you have given to us. Thank you for the sunshine and the rain, for trees and flowers around us, and for birds and other animals. But most of all, we thank you for loving us and bringing us here in Sunday school. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.
3. Opening song: "This Little Light of Mine"  
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.  
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.  
This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine.  
Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!  
Hide it under a bushel, NO! I'm gonna let it shine.  
All around the neighborhood, I'm gonna let it shine.  
Don't let Satan put it out! I'm gonna let it shine.  
Let it shine 'til Jesus comes. I'm gonna let it shine.

**B. Getting Ready**

1. Prepare the class to do the activity "Every Job is Important!" Tell the class to list the things they do at home and in school. Make sure that each learner has listed at least two jobs. Let them read what they have written.
2. Ask the pupils what could happen if they fulfill the job or fail to do the job assigned to them. Encourage them to talk about the importance of fulfilling one's responsibility.

**C. Learning Time**

Divide the class into three groups. Assign each group any of the following biblical references. After they have read the verses, let them paraphrase each verse. Expect the sentences under each biblical text.

1. Ephesians 5:17-21
  - a. To be wise is to understand God's will.
  - b. There are many ways of demonstrating being filled by the spirit: not to be drunk with wine; sing praises to God in our hearts, giving thanks to God for everything, and helping one another in reverence for Christ.
2. 2 Peter 1:5-7
  - a. Exert all efforts to grow in godliness.
  - b. Be diligent in demonstrating your faith in Jesus Christ by using knowledge in Christ to show goodness, self-control, endurance, mutual affection and love for others.



## 3. 1 Corinthians 12:1-11

- a. Refrain from worshipping idols because this is the work of those who do not know God.
- b. God's gift to us is our faith in his begotten Son, Jesus Christ and through his Holy spirit has gifted each of us spiritual gifts to be used to serve God and others for unifying the body of Christ and for building up God's Kingdom.
- c. The Holy Spirit has given a variety of gifts, services, and activities.
- d. These gifts are given for the common good.
- e. To God's believers, these gifts are given: wisdom, faith, healing, performing miracles, discernment of spirit, and proclaiming Christ.
- f. All of these gifts, services and activities are activated by the Spirit of God just as God wills.

*D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time*

Discuss the lesson. Ask these questions.

1. Read 1 Corinthians 12:1. Why did Paul give the Corinthians advice about spiritual gifts? (Paul does not want the Corinthians to be uninformed.)
2. Read 1 Corinthians 12:2. Describe the people of Corinth when Paul wrote this. (Some of them were pagans who have been enticed to worship idols.)
3. Read Ephesians 5:17. How can we avoid being foolish? (By understanding the will of God)
4. Read 1 Corinthians 12:3. Why can someone speaking by the Spirit of God not say, "Jesus be cursed"? (The Holy Spirit will not allow it. The Holy Spirit is the only one who can say, Jesus is Lord' But Satan will encourage us to curse Jesus.)
5. Read 1 Corinthians 12:4-6. Are all gifts given the same? Why or Why not? Do you agree in unity in diversity? Why or Why not?
6. Read Ephesians 5:17-20. What are the ways of living one's life wisely? (Understand the will of God. Do not get drunk with wine. Sing praises to God. Give thanks to God always in the name of Jesus Christ.)
7. Read 2 Peter 1:5-7. What is Peter's advice on growing in godliness? (Be diligent in supporting one's faith. Use the knowledge of Jesus Christ in serving others.)
8. Read 1 Corinthians 12:7. Who is given the manifestation of the Spirit? (To everyone whose motive is to serve God and others for the common good.)
9. Read 1 Corinthians 12:8-10. Enumerate the spiritual gifts described by Paul. Of these spiritual gifts, which gift do you think you have received?
10. Read 1 Corinthians 12:11. Who determines how the gifts are distributed? (The Holy Spirit)

*E. Discovering the Biblical Truth*

Ask: How does the church reflect the presence of the Holy Spirit in the church?  
(Through the church's programs and ministries)

*F. Applying the Biblical Truth*

1. Teach the memory verses: "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and

there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.” (1 Corinthians 12: 4-6, 11)

2. **For ME:** Tell the class to tell the difference between presents as rewards and presents as tools for service. Have them recall the things they receive as recognition for their good work. Emphasize that these presents are rewards. Let them realize that the presents in the form of spiritual gifts are the tools they will use to serve God and others. Have them make individual plans of using their spiritual gift to be of service to others in bringing joy and peace. Let them end their plan with this prayer: Father, I thank you for giving me the gift of Jesus. Thank you for letting the Holy Spirit give me the special gift of \_\_\_\_\_ (state the gift). I pray for your guidance in using this gift to serve \_\_\_\_\_ (name the recipient) according to your will. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.
3. **For OE:** Divide the class into four groups. Tell each group to make a gratitude tree. Provide the necessary materials. Give them the following insights that will help them in making the tree. We thank God for blessings of food, clothing, shelter, and other needs in life. We thank God for the talents and spiritual gifts we received. Have them prepare leaves of varied colors and write the blessings they have received. Then have them prepare different fruits and label them according to the spiritual gift received and how they can use them to serve others. Have them decorate their tree with these leaves and fruits. Call on each group to explain their work.

#### G. Closing Worship

1. Tell the class to recite the memory verses.
2. Offering: Instead of passing the offering plate, let the children line up to bring their offering to the front.
3. Closing songs: “Give Thanks” and a good-bye song  
“Give Thanks”  
Give thanks with a grateful heart, give thanks to the Holy One.  
Give thanks for what the Lord Jesus Christ has done.  
And now let the weak say, “I am strong.”  
Let the poor say, “I am rich.”  
Because of what the Lord Has done for us, give thanks.
4. Closing prayer: Dear God, thank you for all the blessings you have given to each of us—food, shelter, clothing. Help us to use this to be kind, gentle and good to others. This is our prayer in Jesus’ name. Amen.