



Quadrennial Theme: **SPIRITUALITY FOR THESE CRITICAL TIMES**Season: **Kingdomtide**Age Level: **Nursery, Kindergarten, Younger Elementary**

August 27, 2017

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

⁵ 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)**

¹³And 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 is a loving 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: Greet the children warmly as they arrive.
2. Opening prayer: "Loving God, we are gathered today to offer to you our thanksgiving and praises. We ask you to be with us as we learn more about you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen."
3. Opening song: "It's Love that Makes the World Go Round"

B. Getting Ready

1. Teach the song: "I Love My Jesus"
I love my Jesus, deep down in my heart. (2X)
Let's talk about deep, deep, down, down
Deep, down in my heart. (2X)
2. Ask the children why they think Jesus loves them. Lead the class to realize that everything that is done in the church is motivated by love because God is love. Tell the children to say in unison and individually "God is love."

C. Learning Time

1. Show the children pictures showing different expressions of love: a group of people hugging, kissing on cheeks, shaking hands, talking, laughing, smiling, etc. Ask: "What do you see in the pictures? What are they doing? What do you think are they saying to each other?" Then show the sentence: "I love you" and let them read and repeat it.
2. Tell the story.

I Love to Go to Church
(by Karis and Ethel Ronquillo-Burgos)

One early Sunday morning, little girl Thea woke up at 5:00 o'clock. She went to the kitchen and saw her mother cooking breakfast. She then approached her with a kiss. Thea: Good morning Mama! How much time do you need to finish cooking? Her mother wondered. Then she asked her. Mother: Why are you asking about the time? Are you hungry? Thea: Actually, I'm not. I am just wondering if we can go to church early today. Mother: Honey, it's still early. Church will still be at 9:00 o'clock. And why do you want to go to church early? She asked her with a smile. Thea: I already miss my friends, my teachers and all of them. I love them because I can play with them, pray and sing with them. And... we even share our food together. I love them and I know

they all love me too! Mother: Sounds good, honey! It seems that you are very excited. Thea: Yes, I am! I always love to go to church, don't you Mama? Mother: Of course, honey! Mama is so happy for you. Mother felt so proud and thankful as she hugged her daughter very tight.

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

Ask these questions:

1. Why did Thea wake up early? (She was excited to go to church early.)
2. Why was she excited to go to church? (She already missed her friends, teachers and everyone else in the church.)
3. What else did she miss from them? (She missed playing with them, praying and singing with them. and even sharing food together.)
4. Why does she always love to go to church? (She always loves to go to church because they all love her and she loves them too.)
5. Say: We said earlier that God is love. Ask: Who first love us? (God) Why do we love others? (We love others because God loved us first.)

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: Why is the church a loving community? (The church is a loving community because people there love one another as God loved us first.)

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Teach the biblical verse: "And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love." (1 Corinthians 13:13)
2. Display a picture of the local church on the board. Prepare heart-shape cutouts enough for all the children. Cut them so that each heart will have a definite partner. On one half, write the words faith, hope, and love. Give the other half to each child. Hide the other halves around the room.
 - a. Tell the class to decorate their cutouts. Let children decorate the second heart any way they desire, using available materials. Let the **YE** class choose someone he or she would like to show his or her love and write a short note to him or her.
 - b. Point to a heart cutout and say, "God loves us first because God is love (Put up a Bible and say, "The Bible tells us so.")). God wants us to love others, too. Your decorated halves and your love notes is like Gods' heart and love note to us."
 - c. Ask the class to look for their matching heart. When they find the missing half, let them write their names on the missing half. Let them glue the whole heart on the picture of the local church. After pasting it, let them say, "This heart is my love design/letter for God. I will show my love for God by helping the church."

G. Closing Worship

1. Tell the class to recite the memory verse.
2. Pledge, commitment, action:
3. Offering
4. Closing song: "Yes I Love You with the Love of the Lord" and goodbye songs

5. Closing prayer: Loving God, thank you for loving us always. Teach us to love one another like the way you have loved us. Help us to love by sharing what we have to the people who need it most. This is our prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.



September 3, 2017

2nd Sunday in Kingdomtide

Joy as a Kingdom Value

Old Testament:

Psalms 100 (NRSV)

All Lands Summoned to Praise God

A Psalm of thanksgiving.

¹Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth. ²Worship the LORD with gladness; come into his presence with singing. 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. 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.

Habakkuk 3:17-18 (NRSV)

Trust and Joy in the Midst of Trouble

¹⁷Though 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, ¹⁸yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will exult in the God of my salvation.

New Testament:

Philippians 4:4-7 (NRSV)

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. ⁵Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. ⁶Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And 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 is a joyful community.

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 selfcentered 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. sing songs and recite verses of praise joyfully;
2. tell that God wants us always to rejoice; and
3. begin to discern the values of being joyful as part of the mission of the church.

Materials: The Holy Bible (preferably NRSV), song/verse chart, two small plates for each child, dry beans, glue, stapler, a hole punch and thin, colorful ribbon.

Learning Experiences:

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time: Greet the children warmly as they arrive.
2. Opening prayer: "We are grateful to you Lord for allowing us to come together today. We rejoice in the thought that you will always love us no matter what. Teach us O God to be joyful in all circumstances. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."
3. Opening song: "Rejoice in the Lord Always"

Rejoice in the Lord always
And again I say, rejoice. (2X)
Rejoice, rejoice and again
I say rejoice. (2X)

Rejoice in the Lord always and again I say, rejoice.

B. Getting Ready

1. Prepare the children to worship the Lord by making a noisemaker. Provide two small plates for each child, dry beans, glue, and thin, colorful ribbons. Tell the children to put some beans on one of the plates. Then put some glue or paste at the rim of the plate. Then put the other plate on top of the plate with glue. Press the rims to glue the two plates together. As they dry, staple along the rims. Punch some holes along the rim and put thin ribbons as tassels. These noisemakers are ready for use. (Note: The teacher can make use of available materials in their locality to make other versions of the noisemakers.)
2. When the noisemakers are ready, tell the children to shake them and say, "Make a joyful noise unto the Lord."

C. Learning Time

1. Prepare the class by doing some finger exercises.
2. Tell the class that they will listen to a song of thanksgiving. This song is found in Psalm 100. Read the verses one by one and discuss each verse.
 - a. ¹ *Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth.* The word joyful comes from the word joy which means happy. God wants us to be joyful when we praise God. Let the class say, **"We praise God with a joyful heart."**
 - b. ² *Worship the LORD with gladness; come into his presence with singing.* The Lord wants us to sing joyfully while we worship because we acknowledge God's love for us. Tell the children to sing songs of praise with gladness that they already know. Let the class say, **"We praise God with a joyful heart."**
 - c. ³ *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.* We are joyful because God created us in God's image. Let the class say, **"We praise God with a joyful heart."**
 - d. ⁴ *Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him, bless his name. 5 For the LORD is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.* The Hebrew people used a gate when they entered Jerusalem. Today, we use the church door as we enter into God's presence. We come to God because God is good. God's love for us endures forever. Let the class say, **"We thank God for God's goodness. We praise God with a joyful heart."**
3. Let the class use their noisemakers and say, "We praise God with a joyful heart."
Ask: Did you feel joyful also upon coming here to church today?

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

Let the children answer these questions:

1. According to the psalmist, what does God want us to make? (A joyful noise)
2. Who does the Lord want to make a joyful noise? (All of us.)
3. What is the psalm telling us? (The psalmist is telling us to be joyful.)
4. Why do we have to be joyful? (Because it is God who made us and we are God's)

children. We believe and trust God. God, through Jesus Christ saved us.)

5. How can we show our joyful acts to God? (We should go to church to give thanks to God and praise God's name. We should be part of a joyful community.)
6. Why do we have to show joyful praises and thanksgiving to God? (Because God is good, God's love endures forever, God is faithful.)
7. When are we joyful? Is it only when we get what we want or should we always be joyful? Why?

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: As a church, why do we have to be joyful always? (God wants us to be joyful always because God loves us and God will always be with us in times of joy and in times of sorrow.)

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. **For N/K:** Call on each pupil to say what they thank God for. As they go back to their seats, let them say, "I'm joyful in the Lord always."
2. **For YE:** Tell the class to do the following:
 - a. Find a partner. Let them talk about two things that they are happy receiving and two things that they are not happy receiving. Assist them to say that they thank God for everything that they receive because they trust God. Let them end their talk by saying, "I'm joyful in the Lord always."
 - b. Complete these sentences.
 - 1) God teaches us to be joyful _____ (always, sometimes)
 - 2) In church, I feel joyful whenever I see _____ (name of the person)
 - 4) When we praise and worship God together, God will be _____ (joyful)

G. Closing Worship

1. Memory verse: Psalm 100:1
2. Offering: Let the children use their noisemakers in praising God while giving their offerings.
3. Closing Song: "I've Got Joy Down In My Heart"

I've got joy down in my heart, deep, deep down in my heart.
J-O-Y down in my heart, deep, deep down in my heart.
Jesus gave it to me and no one can destroy it. Destroy! Destroy! Oopss!!!
I've got joy down in my heart, deep, deep down in my heart.
J-O-Y down in my heart, deep, deep down in my heart.
4. Closing prayer: "We are thankful O God for teaching us always to be joyful as a church. Help us to teach others that through your love and faithfulness, we can always be joyful all the time. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen."

September 10, 2017

3rd Sunday in Kingdomtide

Peace as a Kingdom Value

Old Testament:

Isaiah 32:16-18 (NRSV)

The Peace of God's Reign

¹⁶Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness abide in the fruitful field.

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

New Testament:

Matthew 5:9 (NRSV)

⁹Blessed 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 is peace-loving community.

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 is a peace-loving community; and
4. participate in 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/verse charts, bond papers, coloring materials

Learning Experiences:**A. Opening Worship**

1. Welcome time: Give a warm welcome to children through a hug or by asking 'How are you today?' (You may play a welcome song as the children arrive.)
2. Opening prayer: "With praises and thanksgiving in our hearts, O God, we welcome you in our gathering today. We thank you for all the marvelous things that you have done to us. We ask you to bless these children as they now listen to your teachings. Grant us all wisdom to know you more. In the name of Christ whom we pray. Amen."
3. Opening song: "I've Got Peace like a River" (Note: If the song is not familiar to the class, teach it first.)

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. **For N/K:** Prepare cutouts of doves enough for all the children. Tell them to decorate their doves.
2. **For YE:** Prepare selected children who will present the following role plays. After the activity, discuss the role plays and ask the children which plays they like best and tell them to explain their choice.
 - a. Two children sharing snacks
 - b. Two children fighting for a toy
 - c. Two children planting trees in a vacant lot
 - d. Some children singing songs to disabled children

C. Learning Time

1. **For N/K:** Introduce the lesson by doing the following:

- a. The word **peace** and tell the class that it is symbolized by the dove.
 - b. Tell the class that the **source of peace is God** and that the persons who believe in peace are called **peacemakers**.
 - c. Read Matthew 5:9 slowly. Let the children realize that being a peacemaker has a reward—becoming a child of God.
 - d. Read the verse again and ask the children to say it after you.
2. **For YE:** Introduce the lesson by doing the following:
- a. Write the word **PEACE** on the board. Let the class give their ideas about peace.
 - b. Tell the class that the **source of peace is God** and that the persons who believe in peace are called **peacemakers**. Relate this concept with the earlier activity of the dove. Ask them who played the role of peacemakers.
 - c. Read Matthew 5:9 slowly. Let the children realize that being a peacemaker has a reward—becoming a child of God.
 - d. Read the verse again and ask the children to say it after you.

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

Ask these questions. Note: Some questions may be difficult for the lower group, the N/K group. It is suggested that the teacher chooses the questions that can be understood by the lower group.)

1. What is peace? (Peace is a fruit of the Holy Spirit.)
2. Who is the source of peace? (God is the source of peace. Through Jesus Christ, peace is made known to us. Through the Holy Spirit, this peace is made available to us.)
3. What do you call the persons who promote peace? (Peacemakers)
4. What do you think Jesus wants us to be? (Jesus wants us to be peace-loving children. Jesus does not want us to fight.)
5. Why do we have to be peace-loving children/people? (God calls us to live in peace with others.)
6. How do we experience peace? (Peace comes from God. We experience peace when we pray. When we praise God, we experience peace. Peace happens when we are not in conflict with others. Peace can happen when there is justice.)
7. What does the verse "Blessed are the peacemakers..." mean? (God blesses the peacemakers.)
8. What does "... for they will be called children of God" mean? (God makes a promise to peacemakers. They will be called children of God. They will be with God.)

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: As children of God/members of the church, why do we have to be a peace-loving community? (The church is an instrument of God to make her members peacemakers as they promote peace for everyone.)

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. **For N/K:** Say: Listen to what I will say. Stand and clap two times if the action promotes peace and cover your face if the action does not promote peace.

- a. I will speak gently to everyone. (Stand and clap because a gentle person is a peacemaker.)
- b. I will listen to my friends if they have something to say. (Stand and clap because I respect that person.)
- c. I will help others only when I am asked to do so. (Cover face because a peacemaker is ready to help others always.)
- d. I will be a friend to all my classmates. (Stand and clap because a peacemaker is friendly.)
- e. I can hurt anyone when I am hurt. (Cover face because a peacemaker does not hurt anyone.)
- f. I can speak bad words when I am mad. (Cover face because a peacemaker does not speak bad words.)
- g. I will share my toys only with my friends. (Cover face because a peacemaker share his or her blessings to everyone.)
- h. I can make fun of others by teasing them. (Cover face because a peacemaker is not a bully.)
- i. I will help my siblings in doing household chores even if it is not assigned to me. (Stand and clap because a peacemaker is always willing to help.)
- j. I will listen to my parents' instructions. (Stand and clap because a peacemaker is a good follower.)

2. **For YE:** Tell the class to complete these sentences as peacemakers.

- a. I will speak gently to (others).
(A gentle person is a peacemaker.)
- b. When other persons have something to say, I will (listen).
(A peacemaker respects persons.)
- c. I will help others (always).
(A peacemaker is a helpful person.)
- d. I will be a friend to (all).
(A peacemaker is friendly.)
- e. When somebody hurts me, I will (find out why).
(A peacemaker seeks understanding.)
- f. When I am mad, I will be (slow) to speak bad words against him or her. (A peacemaker does not speak bad words.)
- g. I will (share) my toys to those who need it.
(A peacemaker is kind.)
- h. I will (obey) my parents' instructions.
(A peacemaker is a good follower.)
- j. To be a peacemaker, I will study (God's word),
(sing praises to God), and I will (pray to God always.)

G. *Closing Worship*

1. Tell the class to recite the 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.

4. Closing prayer: "We thank you dear God for teaching us how to be peace-loving children. We know that you want us to always be gentle to all. That is why we should always follow you as our guide because your ways are always peaceful. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."



September 17, 2017

4th Sunday in Kingdomtide

Patience as a Kingdom Value

Old Testament:

Isaiah 40:28-31 (NRSV)

²⁸Have 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. ²⁹He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. ³⁰Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; ³¹but 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)

²⁶It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.

New Testament:

Luke 8:15 (NRSV)

¹⁵But 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), pictures, fruits with seeds, worksheets

Learning Experiences:**A. Opening Worship**

1. Welcome time: Warmly greet the children and usher them to their seats.
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 values. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."
3. Opening songs:
 - a. "Read Your Bible, Pray Every Day"
Read your Bible, pray every day, pray every day, pray every day
And you'll grow, grow, grow (twice).
Read your Bible, pray every day and you'll grow, grow, grow.
 - b. "With Christ as My Vessel"
With Christ as my vessel, I can smile at the storm,
Smile at the storm, smile at the storm.
With Christ as my vessel, I can smile at the storm until He guides me home.
Chorus: Sailing, I am sailing home (twice). With Christ as my vessel,
I can smile at the storm, until He guides me home.

B. Getting Ready

1. Prepare the class to play the games.
 - a. **For N/K:** *Can You Rush It?* Prepare ice cubes, preferably of the same size. Put them in a platter and provide each child a platter and an ice cube. Record the time that each child received the materials. Let them say something about their set of materials. Tell them that the game is a race to see which ice cube will melt the fastest. They can blow or breathe on them, but they cannot touch the ice cube. They can cheer on their ice cubes. Lead them to agree to set aside their materials and continue with the lesson. Go back to the materials every now and then to check if the ice cube melted and record the time.
 - b. **For YE:** *How Patient Are You?* Prepare slices of unripe bananas. Make available other green bananas enough for each child. Tell the children to get a slice and

taste it. Let them describe their observation. Expect the children to dislike the taste. Give each child an unripe banana. Tell them to bring it home and wait for the banana to ripen. Let them eat it as it ripens. Let them compare the taste of the unripe banana and ripe banana. Instruct the children to report about their experience during the next session.

2. Discuss the activity.

- a. **For N/K:** Lead the class to realize that there are things that cannot be rushed because they take time to complete them.
- b. **For YE:** Use the previous experience of the children to imagine the difference between unripe fruits and ripe fruits. Remind them that there are things in life that require waiting time. Ask the children if it is worth waiting for things to be ready.

C. *Learning Time*

1. Prepare fruits with seeds (watermelon, guavas, guyabano, jackfruit, etc.) that are available in your locality. Slice the fruit into smaller pieces and distribute to the children. Let them describe the fruit before tasting them. As they eat the fruit, tell the children to put the seeds in a container and have them guess how many seeds they have collected.
2. Say: Imagine that this fruit started with one seed planted into the soil. Why do you think the seed grew into a plant and produced fruits like this? Draw from the class possible responses like: The rain helped the seed to grow. The soil is good so the plant grew. The sunshine made the plant grow. The air is clean and it helped the plant to grow. The weeds near the plant were removed to help the plant grow. Lead them to say that God caused the plant to grow because God gave us the sun, the rain, the air, and the soil. These are the combined forces that made the seed grow.
3. Tell the class that they will learn about the seed that fell on good soil. Read 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."
4. Relate the seed of the fruit that they ate by telling them that the **seed is like the word of God**. The **good soil is like a person who heard the word of God**. The **fruit is like the person who does good things for others** because it is God's will. We are like the good soil. As Christians, we study God's word patiently to know God's will. We trust in God's timing as we patiently pray and wait for God's blessings. Like the seed that grew into a plant and produced fruits, we, too, can **do good deeds for others in God's name**.

D. *Deepening Activity/Sharing Time*

Discuss the lesson.

1. What does the seed represent? (The word of God)
2. Where did the seed fall? (Good soil)
3. What does the good soil represent? (The hearers of God's word)

4. What did the hearers of the word of God do? (The hearers told everyone about the Good News of God's love and God's plan of salvation for God's believers.)
5. What does the fruit represent? (The good deeds of the hearer of God's word)
6. How does the falling of the seed on good soil compare to us being Christians? (As Christians, we patiently study God's word, we patiently do things in accordance to God's will, and we patiently wait for God to do God's will in God's time.)
7. What good deeds do you think you can do? (Live a life pleasing to God. Study God's word and share it with your family, friends, and neighbors. Attend Sunday School. Trust in God's timing when asking for blessings. Pray for all your plans and wait patiently for God's answer.)

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. To test the patience level of the children, let them play this interrupting game. Tell the children that they will learn how to interrupt politely. Have four role plays showing two parents talking and a child who wants to interrupt the conversation. Ask the children to choose which situation is the best and discuss their choice after watching the role plays.
 - a. Situation 1: The child keeps on asking the parents about something while they are conversing.
 - b. Situation 2: The child stands near the parents to show that he or she wants to interrupt.
 - c. Situation 3: A child taps the shoulder of one parent and says, "I want to say something." Then the child stands still waiting for a response.
 - d. Situation 4: A child touches the shoulder of one parent and does not remove his or her hand and stands still waiting for a response.
2. **For N/K:** Prepare pictures of the four situations and let the children choose who among the children showed patience in doing the action.
 - a. Waiting for the green light to cross the street
 - b. Learning how to tie one's shoes
 - c. Covering one's ears when a parent is talking
 - d. Doing one's homework cheerfully
3. **For Y/E:** Let the class read each statement. Let them show a smile when the children show patience and a frown when the children do not show patience in doing the actions.
 - a. I can wait for my turn to buy my snacks in the canteen.
 - b. I get tired listening to my parent's instructions.
 - c. I am always having a hard time to be silent inside the library.
 - d. I calmly ask for assistance when I find my task difficult to do.

- e. I love to help my younger siblings in their school assignments.
- f. I keep praying for the things I want and I wait for their answers.

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

5th Sunday in Kingdomtide

Kindness as a Kingdom Value

Old Testament:

Micah 6:8 (NRSV)

⁸He 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:

1 Timothy 2:1-7

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone, ²for kings and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity. ³This is right and is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴who desires everyone to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. ⁵For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human, ⁶who gave himself a ransom for all-this was attested at the right time. ⁷For 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

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

²⁷He 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.'

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

³⁰Jesus 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.

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

when he saw him, he was moved with pity. ³⁴He 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. ³⁵The 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.'

³⁶Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?' ³⁷He 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 be kind.

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, tube of toothpaste, small bowl

Learning Experiences:**A. Opening Worship**

1. Welcome time: Greet each child and lead them to their seats.
2. Opening prayer: "Compassionate and kind God, we acknowledge your presence with us today. We come to you asking you to teach us lessons and values that we can always remember in life. Help us to be kind in our words, in our thoughts, and in our deeds. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen."
3. Opening song: "Jesus' Hands Were Kind Hands" (*Children Praise God*, 36)
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. Prepare the class to observe the activity Kind or Unkind Words. Get a small toothpaste and a small bowl. Call some children to squeeze the paste out of the tube and put it in a bowl until the toothpaste has been squeezed totally. Then let some try to put back the toothpaste inside the tube. Expect the difficulty in putting back the toothpaste into the tube and the failure to do so.
2. Discuss the activity. Ask the children why it is not possible to put the toothpaste back into its container. Tell them that the toothpaste is like words. When you say kind or unkind words to people, the words can no longer be taken back. The kind words can make others happy while the unkind words can hurt others. We can apologize to those we hurt but the damage has already been done.
3. Let the children decide which words they would like to use and have them explain their choice.

C. Learning Time

1. Recall the previous activity and find out from the children if kind or unkind deeds can also affect others.
2. Tell the story.

The Kind Man
(Adapted from Luke 10:25-37)

One day, a man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho. While on his way, a group of robbers stripped him, beat him, and left him half dead.

While on the road, people passed by him. The first was a priest. Upon seeing the dying man on the ground, the priest passed by on the other side of the road.

The second was a Levite. Likewise, when he saw the dying man, he passed by on the other side of the road.

The third was a Samaritan. Upon seeing the dying man, he was moved with pity

and came near him. He poured oil and wine on his wounds and bandaged them. Then, he carried him and put him on his animal. He brought him to the nearest inn and took care of him. The next day, the Samaritan had to go. But before he left, he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, "Take care of him, and when I come back, I will repay you for whatever more you spent."

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

1. What is the story about? Clap your hands if you agree with the sentences. (For the **N/K**, read the sentences, for the **YE**, ask the children to read them.)
 - a. It is about a man who was robbed.
 - b. It is about a man who failed to help the man who was robbed.
 - c. It is about a man who helped the man who was robbed.
 - d. It is about kindness of a person.
2. There are several characters in the story. Match the character with their description. (For the **N/K**, let them point to the character after listening, for the **YE**, ask the children to read the correct answers after the descriptions are read.)

Young man Priest Levite Samaritan

 - a. He was the first man to see the dying man.
 - b. He was robbed and left half dead by the robbers.
 - c. He was the third man to see the dying man
 - d. He was the second man to see the dying man.
3. Who is the kind man in the story, the priest, the Levite, or the Samaritan? Explain your choice.

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: As children of God, why is it good to be kind to others?

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 **N/K**: Tell the children to recall the activity on saying kind or unkind words. Let them go around and choose a classmate and think of a particular description about him or her. Then let them say it using kind words. After doing that, let them look for another classmate until all the classmates have been spoken to. Ask the children what kind words they have told to their classmates. Emphasize being truthful and being kind when talking about others. Let them complete the sentence: It is good to be kind to _____ because _____
3. For **YE**: Let the children recall the activity on saying kind or unkind words. Challenge them on how they can show kind deeds. Let them complete the following table.

How do you show kindness?

In the Playground	At Home	In Church
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Example: I will share the swing to someone who would like to play on it.	Example: I will help my mother prepare the table during mealtime.	Example: I will smile and say hello to everyone in our Sunday School class.

G. Closing Worship

1. Ask the children to recite the memory verse.
2. Offering
4. Closing song: "Be Kind"

Words: Based from Eph.4:32/Music: Cecilia Williams

Be kind, be kind, be kind to one another.

Be kind, be kind, be kind to one another.

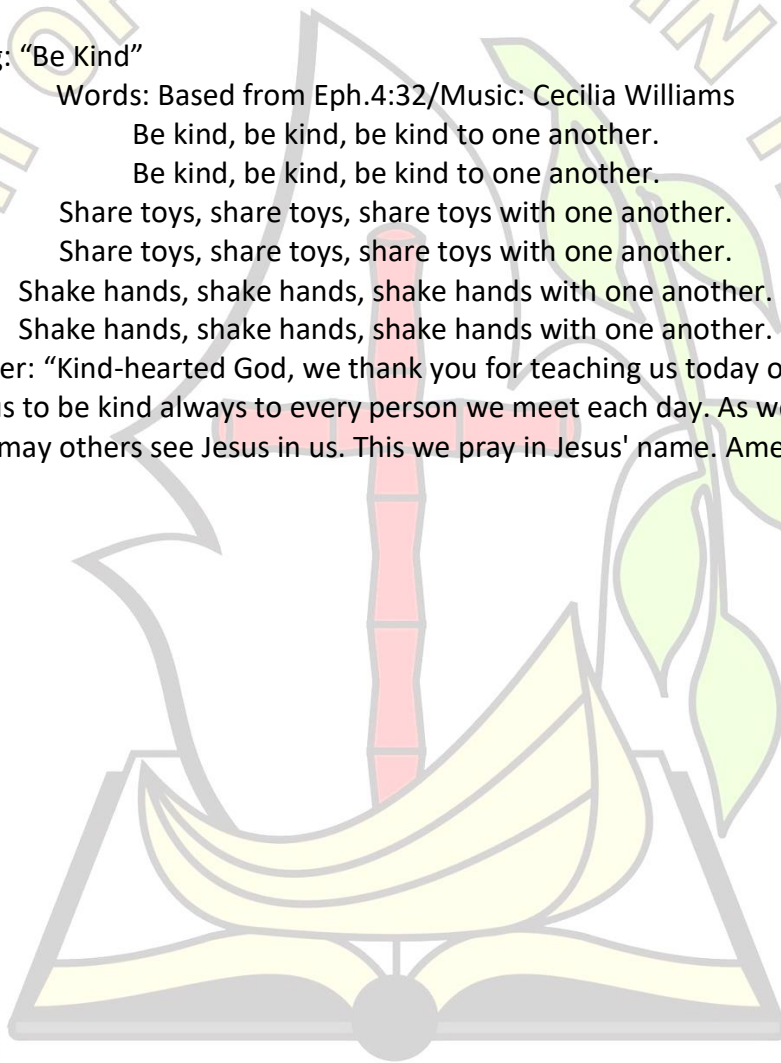
Share toys, share toys, share toys with one another.

Share toys, share toys, share toys with one another.

Shake hands, shake hands, shake hands with one another.

Shake hands, shake hands, shake hands with one another.

5. Closing prayer: "Kind-hearted God, we thank you for teaching us today on how to be kind. Help us to be kind always to every person we meet each day. As we do acts of kindness, may others see Jesus in us. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen."



October 1, 2017

6th Sunday in Kingdomtide

Goodness as a Kingdom Value

Old Testament:

Psalms 23:6, 31:19 (NRSV)

⁶Surely 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.

¹⁹O 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)

²Do 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 loves to do good for others.

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 with God as their life's center;
2. support the fact that being good to others pleases God;
3. demonstrate acts of goodness at home, in school, and in the church.

Materials: The Holy Bible (preferably NRSV), worksheets, song sheets, materials and pictures in the lesson

Learning Experiences:*A. Opening Worship*

1. Welcome time: Arrange the chairs in a circle. As the children arrive, let them sit there.
2. Opening prayer: "Eternal God, we give you thanks for this day. We thank you for bringing us together to once again learn more about Jesus. 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.

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 values.

C. Learning Time

1. Say: "In today's lesson, find out how Jesus showed the Kingdom values especially kindness and goodness."
2. Present different pictures showing the things Jesus did: Jesus healing the sick; Jesus making a blind man see; Jesus telling people about the Good News of salvation; Jesus feeding many people; Jesus healing a demon-possessed man; Jesus letting children come to him; Jesus calling Zacchaeus from the tree; Jesus

calling his believers as his sheep and protecting them; etc. (If the church has illustrated Bibles, the teacher can show this to the class. If there no illustrated Bibles, the teacher can download some pictures from the Internet.)

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

1. When Jesus healed the blind, the sick, and the demon-possessed, what kind of a healer was Jesus? (Jesus was a kind and good healer.)
2. When Jesus fed many people, what kind of a person was Jesus? (Jesus was a kind and good provider.)
3. When Jesus called Zaccheaus from the tree, what kind of a person was Jesus? (Jesus was a kind and good Savior.)
4. When Jesus protects us as his own sheep, what kind of a shepherd was Jesus? (Jesus is a kind and good shepherd.)
5. When Jesus told the people about the news of salvation, what kind of a person was Jesus? (Jesus was a kind and good teacher.)
6. How can we describe Jesus when Jesus called the children to come to him? (Jesus is kind, loving and good.) Ask the class to sing the following:
Jesus loves the little children, All the children of the world.
Red, brown, yellow, black, and white, All are precious in His sight,
Jesus loves the little children of the world.
7. Is it right to say: "Jesus went about doing good." Why or why not? Can we tell ourselves "I went about doing good."?
8. David calls God as the Good Shepherd. What promise is given to him as long as he trusts God and remain as God's sheep? (Read Psalm 23:6) What does God promise to us if we remain faithful to God? (Goodness and mercy. Kindness is sometimes called mercy.)

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: Why does the church teach young children how to do good to others? (The church teaches young children to do what is right because that is showing goodness.)

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Teach the 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. **For N/K:** Prepare an outline of pictures that show any of the following: a child helping a crippled classmate carry some of his or her things; a child helping the Sunday School teacher prepare the classroom; a child helping a classmate read the story. Below the drawing, write the sentence God wants me to be good. Tell the class to decorate the picture and copy the sentence below the picture on their notebooks.
4. **For YE: Dramatization:** Divide the class into three groups. Tell them to dramatize a situation where they can show goodness in different places. Assign the first group, to dramatize a situation in the home, the second group, a situation in the playground, and the third group, a situation in church. After they have presented

their dramatization, tell the first group to complete the sentence: I can be good at home when I _____, the second group, I can be good in the playground when I _____, the third group, I can be good in church when I _____.

G. Closing Worship

1. Tell the class to recite the memory verse.

2. Offering

3. Closing song:

“Jesus Went about Doing Good” (Tune: Kum Ba Yah, *Children Praise God*, 30)

Jesus went about doing good, Jesus went about doing good

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

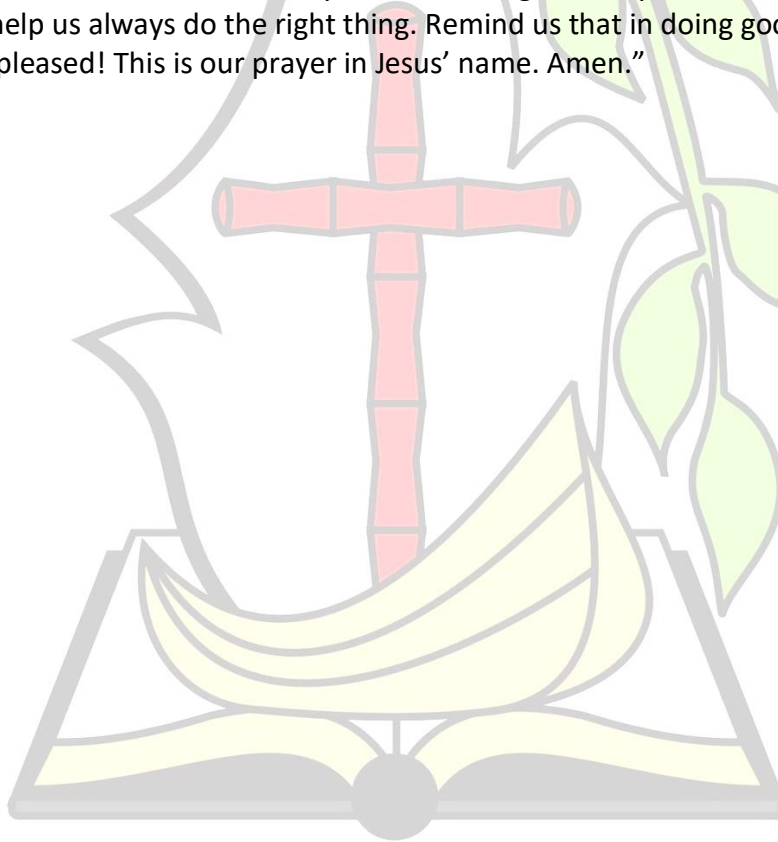
Jesus went about doing good, Jesus went about doing good

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."

3. Closing prayer: “Dear God, we thank you for teaching us today how to be good. We ask you to help us always do the right thing. Remind us that in doing good to others, you will be pleased! This is our prayer in Jesus’ name. Amen.”



October 8, 2017

7th Sunday in Kingdomtide

Faithfulness as a Kingdom Value

Old Testament:

Ruth 1:16-17 (NRSV)

¹⁶But Ruth said, 'Do not press me to leave you or to turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God. ¹⁷Where 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)

¹⁹And 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.

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

New Testament:

Mark 8:34 (NRSV)

³⁴He 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 always obeys 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 to God is to obey God;
2. show pictures that show obedience to God; and

3. demonstrate obedience through a poster.

Materials: The Holy Bible (preferably NRSV), a paper crown, cut-out letters of "O-B-E-Y", stick puppets of Jesus and Peter, pictures that show obeying Jesus (loving each other, serving one another) and disobeying Jesus (fighting against each other, not sharing), poster on "I WILL OBEY JESUS"

Learning Experiences:

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time: As the learners enter the room, the teacher wears the paper crown and greets them with a BIG SMILE.
2. Opening prayer: Dear God, thank you for this beautiful Sunday. Thank you for bringing us to this place and learn from you. Teach us to follow you. This we ask in Jesus' name. Amen."
3. Opening song: "It's a Great Thing to Praise the Lord"
It's a great thing to praise the Lord
It's a great thing to praise the Lord
It's a great thing to praise the Lord
Walking in the light of God.
Walk, walk, walk in the light (3x).
Walking in the light of God.

B. Getting Ready

1. Let the children sit together. Point to the crown and ask the children what it is. Ask them who they know wears a crown (a king or queen) and why a crown is worn. (A crown is a symbol of power.)
2. Prepare the class to play the game "Bring Me". Tell the pupils that you will play the king in this game. The teacher gives instruction and the children obey. Ex. Bring me a Bible. Continue asking the children other things available in the classroom.
3. After the game, ask the children.
 - a. What did the king make you do in the game?
 - b. How did you feel when you were able to follow the king?
 - c. How did you feel when you were not able to follow the king?
 - d. Who is the king in our life? (Jesus is the king in our life.)

C. Learning Time

1. Tell the children to sing "Follow the Leader"
Do a little motion one, two, three (3x).
Everybody follow me.
Follow, follow, follow me (3x).
Everybody follow me
2. Say: "In the story, find out what Jesus, the king, said to his followers."
3. Tell the story.

Jesus Scolds Peter

(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

Prepare and use stick puppets of Jesus and Peter when asking and answering these questions.

1. What did Jesus say to his followers? ("I must suffer and die.")
2. Who wanted Jesus dead? (The elders, the priests, and the writers in the temple who do not like Jesus. They wanted to kill Him.)
3. Why did they want Jesus dead? (The elders, the priest, and the writers in the temple cannot accept Him as their king.)
4. Why did Peter scold Jesus? (Peter did not like what he heard that Jesus will die.)
5. What did Jesus say to Peter? ("Go away from me, Satan! You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of humans.")

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: At home, who do we obey? (Mom, dad, lolo, lola, ate and kuya) Why do we have to obey them? (We get into trouble or get hurt if we don't. We do good when we obey.) Say: We obey Jesus for the same reason. We obey to show that we are good. We follow Jesus because following Jesus will keep us out of trouble.

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Teach the memory verse found in Mark 8:34.
(NK) Jesus says, "If anyone wants to be my follower, one must follow Me."
(YE) Jesus says, "If you want to be my follower, deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Me."
2. **For N/K: Show and tell.** Give the children show cards showing a happy face and a sad face. Say some things when children obey or disobey. Let the class react by showing how they feel using their show cards.
3. **For YE: Human acrostic.** Before doing this, prepare cutout letters of O, B, E, and Y and cutout illustrations. Select some children who will decorate each letter: for O, a boy and a girl smiling; for B, a boy and a girl with their forefingers in their temples to show that they believe; for E, a boy and a girl enjoying their exercise; and Y, a boy and a girl doing the Y position happily. Show the letters and guide the children to say

the following. As they say the acrostic, have the learners use their body to form the letters O-B-E-Y.

Obey Jesus. (Jesus wants us to be good always.)

Believe. You will be called. (Jesus calls all of us to follow Him.)

Enjoy it. (We follow Jesus with a happy heart.)

You can do it. (We all can obey Jesus.)

- 4 **For both groups:** *Poster making.* Give each child a poster showing the words: "I WILL OBEY JESUS" and let them make it colorful. Let the children write the memory verse in their posters.

G. Closing Worship

1. Request the children to stand and hold their poster. Let them repeat after you. "I WILL OBEY JESUS." (We, the Church always obey Jesus. We obey Jesus because He is our master and king.)
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"
We're giving. We're giving because we love Jesus.
We're giving. We're giving because we love Him.
3. Closing song: "Read Your Bible, Pray and Obey"
Read your Bible, pray and obey (3x).
Read your Bible, pray and obey
And you grow, grow, grow (3x).
Read your bible, pray and obey.
And you grow, grow, grow.
4. Closing prayer: "Dear God, we want to grow in You. Help us to read your word. Teach us to obey your word. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."

October 15, 2017

8th Sunday in Kingdomtide

Humility as a Kingdom Value

Old Testament: Proverbs 11:2 (NRSV)

²When pride comes, then comes disgrace; but wisdom is with the humble.

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

The Request of James and John

³⁵James 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.' ³⁶And he said to them, 'What is it you want me to do for you?' ³⁷And they said to him, 'Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.'

³⁸But 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?'

³⁹They 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; ⁴⁰but 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.' ⁴¹When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. ⁴²So 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. ⁴³But it is not so among you; but whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave of all. ⁴⁵For 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 likes to serve others.

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. describe the characters in the bible lesson that showed humility;
2. observe humble acts of the persons in the church; and
3. demonstrate how to be humble through creative activity.

Materials: The Holy Bible (preferably NRSV), stick for limbo rock, cup filled with juice for each learner, color paper cut into pieces, string

Anticipating the next lesson: Prepare a tree and label it "Good Tree". Make several cutouts of the following Kingdom values: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility, and self-control. fruit of the Holy Spirit. Attach strings for each value to enable the children to tie them to the tree.

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 songs: "It's A Great Thing to Serve the Lord"

It's a great thing to serve the Lord (3x).

Walking in the light of God.

Walk, walk, walk in the light (3x).

Walking in the light of God.

"Serve Him"

Serve Him, serve Him.

Serve Him in the morning, Serve Him in the noontime,
Serve Him, serve Him. Serve Him when the sun goes down.

B. Getting Ready

1. Prepare the children to play limbo rock. Have them fall in line. Have two children facing each other hold the stick horizontally at waist level. Let each child pass through the stick without touching it. After all the children have passed successfully under the stick, bring the stick to the knee level. Tell the children to pass under the stick again. The children can crawl.
2. After the game, ask the children.
 - a. How do you feel the game?

- b. What did you do to pass through the stick?
- c Why did you go down?
- 3. After hearing their answers, tell them that you are going to talk about one important attitude in the kingdom of God—the attitude of humility

C. Learning Time

1. Say: "To be humble is to go down in order we can serve others. This is what Jesus wants us to do—to serve others. We will find this out in our story today."
2. Tell the story.

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

James and John came to Jesus to ask for a special request.

"Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you."

Jesus said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?"

"Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left hand, in your glory."

Jesus refused to grant the request of James John. Instead, Jesus said, "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 baptized with?"

James and John answered, "Yes, we can drink."

Jesus told them, "It's true, the cup that I drink, you will drink and the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized. But I do not have the right to choose who will sit at my right hand or at my left hand. It is for them who have been prepared for it by God. Whoever wishes to be great must be your servant. The first will be the last. The Son of Man came on earth to serve, not to be served."

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

Discuss the lesson.

1. Who are the characters in the story? (Jesus, James, and John)
2. What did James and John request Jesus to do for them? (They asked Jesus to sit them one at his right hand and the other at his left hand.)
3. What did Jesus answer them? (Jesus cannot grant their request.) Why? (The seats are prepared for those people whom God chose.)
4. Do you think James and John were right in asking Jesus to be at his right hand and at his left hand? (No) Why or why not? (We are placed in a great position not because we asked for it, but because we demonstrated service for the good of others.)
5. What lesson did Jesus teach his disciples? (If we want to be great, we have to serve others.)
6. Who do you think showed humility in the story? Was it James, John, or Jesus? (It was Jesus who showed humility when he said to be great is to serve others. James and John thought highly of themselves when they asked for positions of greatness.)
7. Do you agree that Jesus wants us to be humble? Why? (Accept varied answers of the children)
8. How can we show humility at home, in school, or in church? (Whenever we serve

others in need at home, in school, or in church, we show humility.)

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: As members of the church, how can we serve others?

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Teach the biblical verse: "For the son of Man came not to be served but to serve...." (Mark 10:45a)
2. **For N/K:** Prepare cookies and fruit juice enough for the children. Tell the children that they are going to serve others with snacks. Before asking them to get the snacks and serve them to their classmates, let them tell who they want to serve and why. Make sure that everyone is able to serve and receive a juice. Ask those who served about how they feel when serving others. Then ask those who were served about how they feel being served. Finish the activity by asking the class to say: **"We love to serve others."**
3. **For YE:** Distribute worksheets to each learner. Tell them to follow the directions: Study the set of jumbled letters. Rearrange the letters and write the words.

Sample: eb	be
a. e w	(we)
b. o S n	(Son)
c. n a M	(Man)
d. t n o	(not)
e. e r s e v	(serve)
f. e m a c	(came)
g. o l e v	(love)
h. t e a r g	(great)
i. s r o h t e	(others)

Tell the class to complete the following sentences using the words that they have rearranged. Then let them read each of these sentences.

- a. "For the (Son) of (Man) (came) (not) to be served but to (serve)."
- b. "To be (great) is to (love) serving (others)."
- c. "We (love) to (serve) (others)."

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

9th Sunday in Kingdomtide

Discipline as a Kingdom Value

Old Testament:

Proverbs 29:11 (NRSV)

¹¹ 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

¹David 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?' ²David 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. ³Now then, what have you at hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever is here.' ⁴The priest answered David, "I have no ordinary bread at hand, only holy bread—provided that the young men have kept themselves from women." ⁵David 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?" ⁶So 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. ⁷Now 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. ⁸David 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)

²⁵Athletes 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 follow rules.

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. observe the rules at home, in school and in the church;

2. tell the importance of following rules; and
3. express one's appreciation for following rules as a form of discipline.

Materials: The Holy Bible (preferably NRSV), a tree labeled "Good Tree", cutouts or cards of the following Kingdom values: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility, and self-control, strings attached to each value for tying it to the tree, picture of a traffic light

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, we honor you and we thank you for your love and care. Give us understanding as we learn your word today. Help us to value and follow rules at home, in school, and in the church. This we ask in the name of Jesus. Amen..
3. Opening song: "Walking with Jesus"
Walking with Jesus, walking every day, walking all the way.
Walking with Jesus, walking with Jesus alone.
Walking in the sunshine, walking in the shadow,
Walking every day, walking all the way.
Walking with Jesus, walking with Jesus alone.

B. Getting Ready

Decorate the classroom. Put the "Good Tree" in one of the corners and distribute the values cards to each of the children as they come in. Let the children read their cards. Help those who cannot read by explaining what the card means.

C. Learning Time

1. Say: "Today, we are going to talk about another important attitude in the kingdom of God. the attitude of discipline. Discipline is also called self-control."
2. **For the N/K:** Show a picture of a traffic light to the children. Ask them to name the three colors that they see in the traffic light. Let the children say what each color means.
Green: Go Yellow: Ready Red: Stop
3. After hearing their answers, tell them that rules are like a traffic light. Rules will guide us if we have to go and do something good; and stop if it is not good.
4. Ask the children what rules at home or in school they follow. Let them share why following rules is important to them based on their experience. Emphasize that God is pleased when children obey rules.
5. **For the YE:** Tell the children to name some athletes in their locality. If there are not known athletes in their place, ask the children what sports they are involved in. Let them share the things they do to prepare themselves physically.
6. Read to the class: "Athletes exercise self-control in all things; they do it to receive a perishable garland, but we, an imperishable one." (1 Corinthians 9:25) Tell the class

that a garland is also called wreath. Explain it using the following points:

- a. Athletes train themselves physically to make their bodies strong and healthy. Ask the class what things can make athletes healthy and strong. (They eat the right kind of foods. They drink plenty of water. They practice. They sleep at least 8 hours a day.) This training is called discipline. They are focused on their objective—to be physically fit.
 - b. Athletes who compete in games may or may not win.
 - c. Christians are like athletes. They should have discipline. Aside from their physical food, they also need spiritual food. (Draw from the class how they can have spiritual food: study the word of God, attend Sunday school, share the Good News to others.). Christians, like athletes, need to rest. Draw from the call that we need spiritual rest by observing the Sabbath, by keeping ourselves away from media distractions, etc.). Like athletes whose focus is physical fitness, Christians focus on becoming Christ-like. (Draw from the class how to be Christlike: doing the right thing, manifesting the fruit of the Holy Spirit.)
 - d. According to Paul, Christians who have discipline or self-control will be rewarded by God “to live with God in God’s kingdom”.
7. Tell the class to share their experience where they were made safe by following rules.

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

Ask: Do you agree that telling the truth is an example of following God’s rules? Why or why not? What will happen if we don’t follow rules at home, in school or in church?

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: How does the church teach us how to follow rules? (Through listening to the pastors and teachers, reading of the Bible, singing, reciting memory verses, playing games, and helping others.)

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

Tell the children to sit beside the “Good Tree”.

1. **For the N/K:** Let each child show the Kingdom value card that he or she holds. Call on a pupil who will show this value by acting out. (You may coach the children in acting out the values.) Then if the card holder says, he or she agrees, he or she will tie the value card to the tree. Let the class recall the songs that they have learned related to these values.
2. **For the YE:** Give situations that will help the children choose which Kingdom value they will tie to the tree.
 - a. What do you show when you share food to your classmate or a person in need? (Love, kindness) Read 1 Corinthians 13:13 and Luke 10:25-37.
 - b. What happens when children respect each other or ask permission to use the things of others? (Peace) Read Matthew 5:9.
 - c. Continue giving situations until all the Kingdom values are tied to the tree. You may ask the class to share other situations where the Kingdom values can be

used as guide or reminder to them.

3. Refer to the following verses when talking about the Kingdom values:

- a. Love: 1 Corinthians 13:13
- b. Joy: Luke 8:15
- c. Peace: Matthew 5:9
- d. Patience: Luke 8:15
- e. Kindness: Luke 10:25-37
- f. Goodness: Romans 12:2
- g. Faithfulness: Mark 8:34
- h. Humility or gentleness or meekness: Mark 10:35-45
- i. Discipline or self-control: 1 Corinthians 9:25

G. Closing Worship

1. 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".

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 teaching us the importance of rules.

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

10th Sunday in Kingdomtide

Continuing Transformation of the Church as a Kingdom Value

Old Testament:

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

¹¹When the king heard the words of the book of the law, he tore his clothes. ¹²Then the king commanded the priest Hilkiah, Ahikam son of Shaphan, Achbor son of Micaiah, Shaphan the secretary, and the king's servant Asaiah, saying, ¹³'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.' ¹⁴So 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. ¹⁵She declared to them, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel: Tell the man who sent you to me, ¹⁶Thus 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. ¹⁷Because 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. ¹⁸But 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, ¹⁹because 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.

²⁰Therefore, 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

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

²The 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. ³The 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)

¹⁷For 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. tell that the church teaches her members about the Christian faith;
2. state that the Holy Spirit, as taught by the church, makes life new; and
3. demonstrate the changes in one's new life in Christ.

Materials: The Holy Bible (preferably NRSV), offering plate, biblical verses with the pictures used in the past Sundays

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, we thank you for this day. We thank you for our friends and teachers. We thank you for the church. Help us to know your word today. In Jesus' 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.

B. Getting Ready

1. Prepare the class to play the game "Revival Tag". Choose a child who will play king, Instruct the king to tag a child and tells him or her to serve the Lord. The tagged schild will say, Yes, I will the Lord!" Then that child will tag another child and together they will say, "We will serve the Lord!" Continue this until they are able to tag the rest of the class. When everyone is part of the line, the king will ask them what they stand for and together, they will all say, "We will stand for what is right in the sight of the Lord!" Then the king will say, We are now revived in the eyes of the Lord."
2. Ask the children how they felt when they were all together in one line and saying about their desire to serve God. Tell them that the feeling of being revived is to live again.

C. Learning Time

1. Tell the children to share their experience in doing house chores. When they mention cleaning the house, ask them if they have experienced finding something that they have been looking for.
2. Ask: "What did the King Josiah find from God regarding himself and his people?"
3. Tell the story.

Josiah's Commitment to Serve God

(Based on 2 Kings 22:11-20; 23:1-3)

Josiah was eight years when he became king of Judah. Although he was young, he was a good king. He did what is right in eyes of the Lord. He did not follow the evil ways of his father and grandfather who were kings before him. And God was happy with him.

One day, King Josiah heard the Book of Law. He tore his robes and felt sad because the people who were before him did not obey the words of the Book of Law. So, King Josiah commanded Hilkiah, the priest and some of his people in the palace to inquire from God what they will have to do. King Josiah knows that God is angry with him and his people.

Hilkiah and his companions went to the prophetess Huldah in Jerusalem. Huldah said, "I am going to bring disaster on this place and punish its people who have not obeyed me and worshipped other gods. Because your heart was responsive and you humbled yourself before the Lord and you have heard my word, you will not see all the disaster that I am going to bring on this place."

They returned to the king and reported to him what the prophet of the Lord has told to them. So, King Josiah gathered all the people of Judah and Jerusalem at the temple. He informed them what God has told. He instructed the people to obey God and God's commands with all their hearts and souls.

The people promised themselves to be true to the covenant and live in accordance to God's will. King Josiah led his people well for 31 years and the people obeyed God.

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

1. Discuss the lesson.
 - a. Who was King Josiah? (King of Judah)
 - b. How old was Josiah when he became king? (8 years old)
 - c. What did King Josiah hear? (He heard about the Book of Law.)
 - d. Although Josiah was young, what did he do after learning about the Book of Law? (He asked the priest and other officials to know more about the Book of Law.)
 - e. As a young member, what can you do when you hear the Word of God? (Obey the Word of God.)
 - f. Why do you think God became angry with the people of Judah? (The people did not obey God and worshipped other gods.)
 - e. How will God punish the people of Judah? (God will destroy the people of Judah.)
 - g. What did Josiah promise to do to soften the anger of God? (King Josiah

promised to make him and his people obey God's commands and honor God's covenant to God's people with all their hearts and with all their souls.)

h. Did Josiah keep his promise to God? (Yes) Did God have a change of gear?

(Yes. God did not punish the people of Judah.)

i. What will happen to us if we obey God's commands? (God will be pleased with us.)

2. Explain to the children that when they stand up for what is right God can use their lives to influence others to what is right also; just like Josiah.

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: "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." (2 Kings 23:3a)
2. **For N/K:** Ask the children to color the parts of the **wheel fan** that show a changed life in Christ.. Refer to the sample but make efforts to include



situations in the local church. Then, cut the parts of the circle and paste them to a popsicle stick and have it as their fan. Request the children to stand and hold their fan. Let them say, "Jesus is changing me."

3. **For YE:** Ask: Do you believe Jesus can change your life? Let the children tell ways to show that their lives have been changed. (Expect answers like: They can obey God's commands. They can love and serve others.)

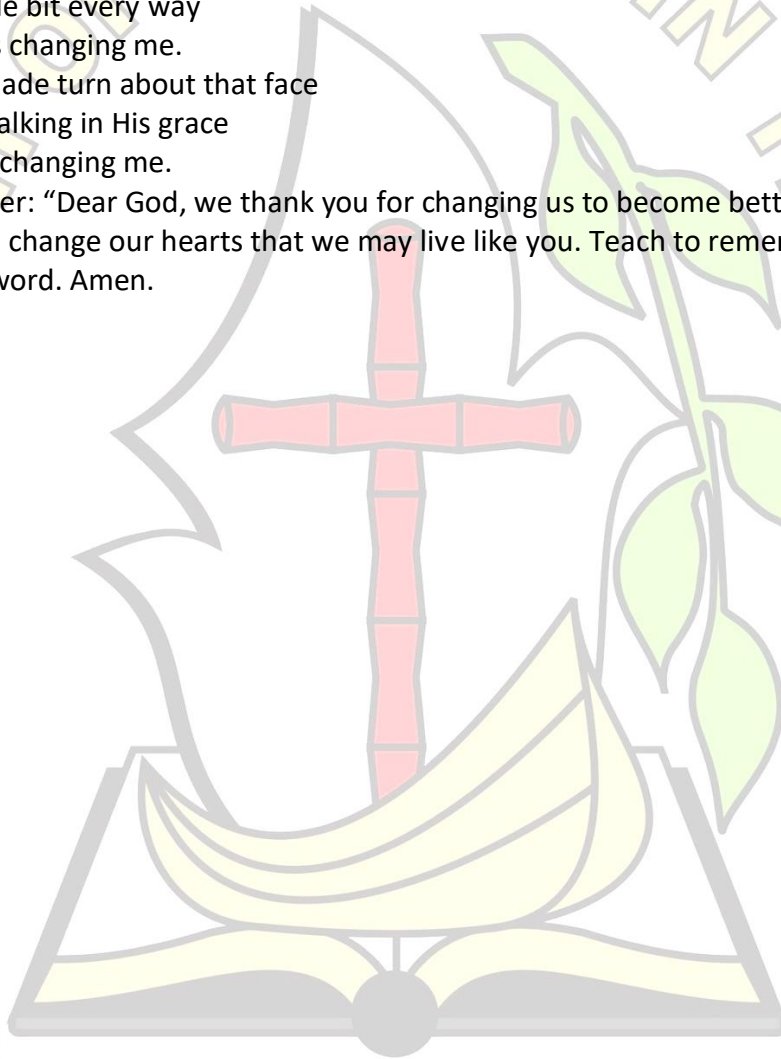
Tell the class to make a box of truth. Ask them to write on a strip of paper Christian ways we should do as Jesus has change our lives. Put it inside the box. Ask a student to get one strip from the box. The teacher will read what it says and the student will do it. These are some samples.

- a. Hug someone to show your love for Jesus.

- b. Say kind words to other children.
- c. Say, "I can be honest."
- d. Share your food to someone.
- e. Extend your hand to others and say "I want to be your friend"

G. Closing Worship

1. Offering: Put a basket offering at the center and instruct the children to bring their offering as they sing together: "We're Giving Because We Love Jesus".
2. Closing song: "Little by Little Bit"
Little by little bit everyday
Little by little bit every way
Yes, Jesus is changing me.
Since I've made turn about that face
I've been walking in His grace
My Jesus is changing me.
3. Closing prayer: "Dear God, we thank you for changing us to become better children. Continue to change our hearts that we may live like you. Teach to remember and obey Your word. Amen."



November 5, 2017

11th Sunday in Kingdomtide

Pastoral Formation: Its Role in Kingdom Building

Old Testament:

1 Samuel 3:1-19 (NRSV)

Samuel's Calling and Prophetic Activity

¹Now the boy Samuel was ministering to the LORD under Eli. The word of the LORD was rare in those days; visions were not widespread. ²At that time Eli, whose eyesight had begun to grow dim so that he could not see, was lying down in his room; ³the 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. ⁴Then the LORD called, 'Samuel! Samuel!'^{*} and he said, 'Here I am!' ⁵and 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. ⁶The 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.' ⁷Now Samuel did not yet know the LORD, and the word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him. ⁸The 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. ⁹Therefore Eli said to Samuel, 'Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, "Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening."' ¹⁰So Samuel went and lay down in his place. ¹¹Now the LORD came and stood there, calling as before, 'Samuel! Samuel!' And Samuel said, 'Speak, for your servant is listening.' ¹²Then 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. ¹³On that day I will fulfil against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. ¹⁴For 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,^{*} and he did not restrain them. ¹⁵Therefore I swear to the house of Eli that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be expiated by sacrifice or offering forever.'

¹⁶Samuel lay there until morning; then he opened the doors of the house of the LORD. Samuel was afraid to tell the vision to Eli. ¹⁷But Eli called Samuel and said, 'Samuel, my son.' He said, 'Here I am.' ¹⁸Eli 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.' ¹⁹So Samuel told him everything and hid nothing from him. Then he said, 'It is the LORD; let him do what seems good to him.' ²⁰As 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)

¹¹For this gospel I was appointed a herald and an apostle and a teacher, ¹²and 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. ¹³Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴Guard 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 to serve;
2. identify the church workers in their local church;
3. tell how these workers serve the members of the church; and
4. express one's appreciation to the church workers through creative ways.

Materials: The Holy Bible (preferably NRSV), offering plate, outline of the left ear and right ear, headband, materials for the greeting card, pictures of activities in the local church

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, we give you praise for this wonderful Sunday. Today, we thank you for the lives of our church workers who teach us and lead us into your path. Be in our place and in our heart as we study your word. This is our prayer in Jesus' name. Amen."

3. Opening songs: Are You Sleeping? (Revised Words by Iris Tibus)

Are you sleeping? Are you sleeping? Samuel! Samuel!
God is calling to you (2x). Wake up now, Samuel, Samuel.
Here I am Lord, Here I am Lord, I heard you, I heard you.
Speak to me, my Lord now (2x). I will do, I will do.

B. Getting Ready

1. Divide the class into two groups. Tell each group to form a circle and sit down. Whisper to one child, "God called Samuel." Let this child whisper it to the next child until all the children in the group have heard the whispered message. The last child will whisper back to the teacher the message.
2. Do the same procedure with the other group. This time whisper to one child, "Samuel said, "Here I am." Congratulate each group when they have delivered the correct message. Then let the first group say the message aloud followed by the second group. ("God called Samuel." "Samuel said, "Here I am.")
3. Process the activity and elicit from the class what makes it easy or difficult to transfer a message. Draw from the class the importance of listening well.

C. Learning Time

1. Say: In our lesson today, we'll find out how listening well helped Samuel.
2. Read the story.

The Lord Calls Samuel
(Based on 1 Samuel 3: 1-19)

Once a mother named Hannah prayed to God to have a child. God heard Hannah and God gifted Hannah and her husband Elkanah a son named Samuel. When Samuel was young, his parents brought him to the priest Eli to grow and serve in the Temple.

One evening, when Eli and Samuel were sleeping, the Lord called, "Samuel, Samuel."

Samuel heard a voice calling him. He thought it was Eli, So ran to Eli and said: "Here I am. You called me."

Eli said: "I did not call you. Go back to bed and sleep."

Samuel went back to his bed and slept. Again, the Lord called Samuel. Samuel woke up again and ran to Eli and said: "Here I am. You called me."

Eli said: "I did not call you. "Lie then again."

For the third time, the Lord called Samuel. Samuel went again to Eli and Eli realized that it was God who was calling Samuel.

Eli said, "If you hear your name being called, you answer and say, "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening." Samuel went back to sleep.

The Lord came and called him again, "Samuel! Samuel!"

"Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening." Samuel responded.

And the Lord said to Samuel about the things that Samuel will do for Israel.
Then, the Lord was with Samuel as he grew up. Samuel obeyed God's word.

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

1. Discuss the story.
 - a. How many times did God call Samuel? (Four times)
 - b. Who did Samuel think was calling him? (The Priest Eli)
 - c. What did Samuel tell Eli? ("Here I am. You called me.")
 - d. Who realized that God was the one calling Samuel? (The Priest Eli)
 - e. What did the Priest Eli teach Samuel to say to God? ("Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening.")
 - f. Why was God calling Samuel? (God wanted to tell Samuel the things Samuel will do for Israel.)
 - g. How will you answer God when God calls you? Let them recall their first activity. Let a member of the first group to stand away from the group. Ask the other members to call out the name of the child twice. Instruct the child to say, "Here I am Lord. I'm listening." Do this with the second group.
2. Show pictures of different workers or prepare some children who can role play what each worker does (teacher, doctor, street sweeper, traffic officer). the work. Ask the children to say something about each worker. Let them follow the action of each worker using body language.
3. Present last the picture of a pastor (preferably the picture of the pastor in the local church). You may include other church workers in the local church. Say: "A pastor is a spiritual person called by God and set apart to spread God's word."

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: Who is the spiritual person called by God to serve the church? How can we show our respect to the pastor or other church workers?

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. **For N/K:** Provide each child an outline of a left ear and a right ear and a headband. Tell the class to cut the ears and attach them to the headband. On the headband write "I will listen to the Lord!"
2. **For YE:** Tell the class to complete the sentence below each picture to show respect to the church workers for their work in spreading God's word and one's willingness to help these church workers.

Note: Choose pictures of activities done by children in the local church and post them to elicit the responses in the sentences below each box.

(Greeting the pastor on his or her birthday)

(Listening carefully to the pastor while he or she is telling a story)

I show respect to my pastor by
C _ R _ ING.. (CARING)

(Praying with eyes closed with
clasped hands)

I show respect to my pastor by
L _ ST _ NING.. (LISTENING)

(Participating in preparing gifts for
the needy children)

I show respect to my pastor by
PR _ Y _ NG. (PRAYING)

I show respect to my pastor by
H _ L P _ NG. (HELPING)

3. **For both groups:** Provide each child the materials for making a greeting card. Tell them to decorate the card and write a thank you note to the pastor. For the N/K, tell them to copy the greetings. Ask the other group to write their own thoughts. Remind them to say a particular experience with the pastor. After the class has finished doing the activity, accompany the children when they give their cards to the pastor.

G. Closing Worship

1. Teach the memory verse and ask the class to recite it: "The Lord was with Samuel as he grew up." (Samuel 3:19a)
2. Offering:
3. Closing song: "Building up the Church"
(Tune: Building up the Temple, Words by Iris Tibus)
Building up the church (2x)
Building up the church of the Lord
The Lord is calling workers, the Lord is calling workers
To guide God's people in the church.
Building up the church (2x)
Building up the church of the Lord
Members care for pastors, Members help the pastor
We are one body of the Lord.
4. Closing prayer: "Dear God, we thank you for calling workers to serve, guide, and lead your people in the church. Bless our pastor and guide them as they serve your church with love and care. This is our prayer in Jesus' name. Amen."

12 November 2017

12th Sunday in Kingdomtide

Lay Formation: Its Role in Kingdom Building

Old Testament:

I Kings 17: 8-16 (NRSV)

The Widow of Zarephath

⁸ Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, ⁹ “Go now to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and live there; for I have commanded a widow there to feed you.” ¹⁰ 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.” ¹¹ As she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, “Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.” ¹² 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.” ¹³ 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. ¹⁴ 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.” ¹⁵ She went and did as Elijah said, so that she as well as he and her household ate for many days. ¹⁶ 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

²⁵ Just then a lawyer stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he said, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” ²⁶ He said to him, “What is written in the law? What do you read there?” ²⁷ 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.” ²⁸ And he said to him, “You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live.” ²⁹ But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” ³⁰ 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. ³¹ Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. ³² So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. ³⁴ 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. ³⁵ 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.’ ³⁶ Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?” ³⁷ 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 serves through children like us.

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
- Mention 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 followers of Jesus. Teach us what we need to do as members of your church in serving others. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."

3. Opening song: "Ako, Ikaw, Tayo ay ang Iglesya" (*Children Praise God*, p.5)

Ako, ako, ako ay ang iglesya (3x) Ako ay ang iglesya, 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. 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. Allow the children to verbalize this.

C. *Learning Time*

Prepare the children to listen to the story.

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

A man asked Jesus, "Teacher, what must I do to get life forever?"

Jesus answered, "What does the Bible say?"

The man said, "Love God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind. Love your neighbor as yourself."

Jesus said, "You're right! Do this and you will have life forever."

The man asked some more, "Who is my neighbor?"

So 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 medicine 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, "Who among the three was a neighbor to the man who was attacked by robbers?"

The man answered, "The one who showed him kindness."

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

D. *Deepening Activity/Sharing Time*

Discuss the story.

Ask:

1. What must we do to have life forever?
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?

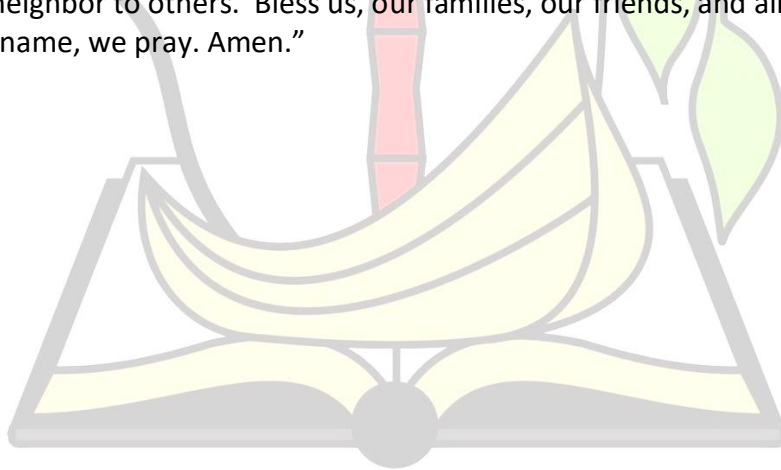
F. Applying the Biblical Truth

Discuss:

1. If we saw someone who needed our help, what would we do?
2. As part of the church, what can we do to show others that we are children of God?
3. Have the children dramatize their answers.

G. Closing Worship

1. Let the class recite the memory verse in unison. Luke 10: 29b and 37a: "Who is my neighbor? The one who shows mercy."
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, teaching us who we are as a church and guiding us what to do as a church. Teach us always how to be a good neighbor to others. Bless us, our families, our friends, and all the world. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."



November 19, 2017

13th Sunday in Kingdomtide

Ministering to the Migrant Workers and their Families

Old Testament:

Psalms 137: 1-6 (NRSV)

Lament over the Destruction of Jerusalem

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

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

⁴How could we sing the LORD's song in a foreign land? ⁵If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither! ⁶Let 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)

²The 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 cares for 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 something about the families with overseas Filipino workers (OFWs); and
3. list ways of how the church can show care and kindness to the OFWs and their families left behind in the country.

Materials: The church cares for people working in other countries.

Learning Experiences:

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time
2. Opening prayer: "Dear God, we praise and thank you for our parents who brought us to Sunday school today. Thank you for our teachers, our classmates and friends. Help us to listen carefully to your word. This is our prayer in Jesus' name. 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

Tell the class to share what their parents do for a living. Call as many children as

possible who will describe the work of their parents. Emphasize acceptance of their parents' work and express their respect for them regardless of their work. If there are OFWs among their parents, ask them some details such as when did they leave, what country do they work, and how they went there, by air or by sea.

C. Learning Time

1. Instruct the class to make paper boats. After making them, ask the class to say something about their paper boats. Provide each pupil a small wooden cross and have them paste it on their boat as they sing again the song "With Christ in My Vessel".
2. *Picture study.* Download pictures to tell the story on how Paul and his companions were welcomed by the natives of Malta based on Acts 27:1-6, 39-44, 28:1-2.

Picture showing Paul being tried before King Agrippa

Paul was tried by King Agrippa of Judea because of his work for Christ.

The King sent him to Rome to face Caesar.

Picture showing Paul in a ship sailing to Rome when a great storm came and the ship was wrecked

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.

Picture showing Paul and everyone else in the ship leaving the ship and landing in the island of Malta

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.

Picture showing the natives of Malta welcoming Paul and his companions

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.

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

1. Discuss the lesson.
 - a. What happened to Paul? (He was imprisoned.)
 - b. Where did Paul face his trial? (Before King Agrippa)
 - c. What was the decision of King Agrippa? (Paul had to be sent to Rome to speak before Caesar.)
 - d. What happened to Paul when they set sail? (Their ship was destroyed because of the great storm.)
 - e. Which island did they go to when their ship was destroyed? (Island of Malta)
 - f. How did they welcome Paul and his companions? (They started a fire to keep Paul and his companions dry. They gave them food and shelter.)
 - g. Why do you think the natives accepted Paul and his companions? (The natives were kind and thoughtful even to strangers.)
2. Recall the first activity related to OFWs. Tell the children about the programs of the local church in helping families of OFWs. If there are no church programs for migrant workers and their families, suggest ways by which these families can be helped by the church.

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: How does the church care for people working in other countries and their families?

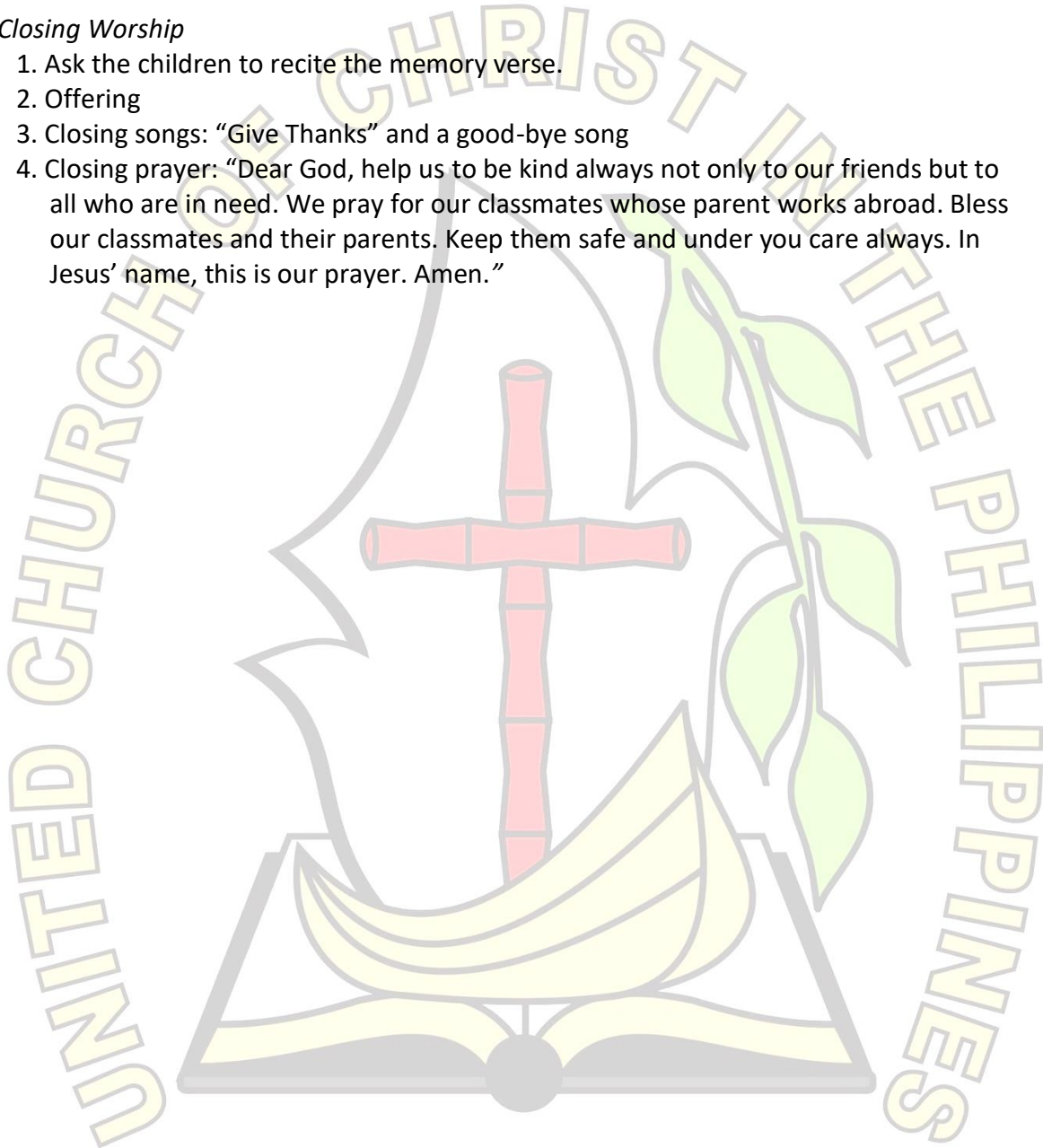
F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Teach the memory verse: "The natives showed us unusual kindness..." (Acts 28:2a)
2. **For N/K:** Give each child a red heart-shaped figure. Tell them to choose a classmate or any one whose family member is a migrant worker. Let them copy this: From (Name of child) to (name of receiver). Ask the children to decorate their hearts and be ready to share it with the person they have chosen.
3. **For YE:** Tell the children to make a book mark to a friend or a person whose family member is a migrant worker. Provide each child board cards, crayons. markers or other materials needed to decorate their book mark. Present the following sentences that they can choose from.
 - a. I can always be kind to you!

- b. Being kind goes a long way!
- c. I can be kind to someone today!
- d. I'm kind to you. You are kind to me. We're two of a kind!
- e. A kind heart does not age!
- f. Kindness begins with me!

G. Closing Worship

- 1. Ask the children to recite the memory verse.
- 2. Offering
- 3. Closing songs: "Give Thanks" and a good-bye song
- 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 your care always. In Jesus' name, this is our prayer. Amen."



November 26, 2017

14th Sunday in Kingdomtide

Gathering the Fruit of the Spirit

Old Testament:

Isaiah 57:14-16 (NRSV)

A Promise of Help and Healing

¹⁴It shall be said, 'Build up, build up, prepare the way, remove every obstruction from my people's way.' ¹⁵For 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. ¹⁶For 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)

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

2 Peter 1:5-7 (NRSV)

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

1 Corinthians 12:1-11 (NRSV)

Spiritual Gifts

¹Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. ²You know that when you were pagans, you were enticed and led astray to idols that could not speak. ³Therefore 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. ⁴Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; ⁶and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. ⁷To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. ⁸To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, ⁹to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, ¹⁰to 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. ¹¹All 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 present in us.

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 self-centered 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. explain the presence of the Holy Spirit in us;
2. name the spiritual gifts received from God;
3. tell how these gifts are used to help others; and

4. commit to thank God for these gifts and use them to serve others.

Materials: The Holy Bible (preferably NRSV), materials used 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 small transparent bags with candies of different colors, shapes, and sizes. Give each child a bag. Let them taste two or three candies. Then ask them to describe their observations. Tell the class that these candies are like the talents that we have.
2. Tell the class to say some of their talents. You may ask the class to mimic their talents and let the other children guess these talents. As they mention these talents, write them on the board for later use.

C. Learning Time

1. Wrap nine boxes. Prepare posters of the nine spiritual gifts (love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control). Put inside box each of the posters of nine spiritual gifts.
2. **For N/K:** Paul talks about the spiritual gifts that we have just finished talking about. He says that these gifts are like the boxes. To know the gifts is to open the boxes and accept all the gifts.
3. **For YE:** Say: Paul writes to the Christians at Corinth that God has given each Christian two vitally important gifts. The first is the **gift of faith in Jesus Christ, his work of redemption, and thus forgiveness of sin.** The second is the **gift of one or more special abilities, which are to be used for the purpose of unifying the body of Christ and for the growth of God's Kingdom.** These abilities are called spiritual gifts given to us by God. Like other presents, it is impossible to fully appreciate and make use of our spiritual gifts until they have been opened.

4. Call a child to unwrap each of the nine boxes. Let the children called to unwrap these boxes stand in front of the class and together show the posters. Ask the other children to read all the nine spiritual gifts.
5. Go back to the list of talents and ask the class how of these talents are made possible by the spiritual gifts. Examples: Listening to others (patience, goodness); Singing, dancing, drawing (love, joy); Helping others in their school work (kindness, joy, love); etc.
6. Read to the class ⁴Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; ⁶and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.” (1 Corinthians 12:4-6).

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

1. As our first gift, God gave us the gift of faith in Jesus Christ. What can we do to tell others about this gift? (Any chance we have, we tell to others that we believe in Jesus Christ and we will follow him. We can sing praises. We can make artworks showing our trust in him.)
2. All of us received a special gift from God through the Holy Spirit.
 - a. How do we feel about it? (Happy, excited, thankful)
 - b. How can we show that we can we are thankful for these gifts? (We share our blessings to others. We do our work at home and in school well. We plant trees. We keep the rivers clean.)
 - c. How can we show that we are a part of the body of Christ? (We help in the programs of the church. We attend Sunday school. We join in the choir. We help the church workers by being an usher.)
 - d. How can we help in building God’s kingdom? (First, we show others that we are thankful of God’s gift of faith in Jesus Christ. We serve others.)
3. Tell the class to sing again the song “This Little Light of Mine”.

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: How do we show that the Spirit of God is present in us?

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Teach the memory verses: “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; ⁶and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.” (1 Corinthians 12:4-6) Teach only verse 4 to the N/K class.
2. **For N/K:** Give each child a sheet of paper with the nine spiritual gifts. Suggest a fruit for each of them and let the children color these fruits. Then ask them to say something about their work.
3. **For YE:** Reflect together about gifts received from parents, friends, teachers and relatives. Let them talk about these gifts and why are these given to them (They are loved). Let them recall what their parents remind them to say when they receive a gift (Thank you.) Then let them apply this to God’s gifts to them. Let the children say: “Thank you, God for the gift of _____. I will use it to serve others.”

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."

