



January 7, 2018

First Sunday after Epiphany

Jesus Observes the Rites of His Faith

Old Testament:

Genesis 17:9-13 (NRSV)

⁹ God said to Abraham, "As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. ¹⁰This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. ¹¹You shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. ¹²Throughout your generations every male among you shall be circumcised when he is eight days old, including the slave born in your house and the one bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring. ¹³Both the slave born in your house and the one bought with your money must be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant."

Leviticus 12:2-6 (NRSV)

²Speak to the people of Israel, saying: If a woman conceives and bears a male child, she shall be ceremonially unclean for seven days; as at the time of her menstruation, she shall be unclean. ³On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. ⁴Her time of blood purification shall be thirty-three days; she shall not touch any holy thing, or come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purification are completed. ⁵If she bears a female child, she shall be unclean for two weeks, as in her menstruation; her time of blood purification shall be sixty-six days. ⁶When the days of her purification are completed, whether for a son or for a daughter, she shall bring to the priest at the entrance of the tent of meeting a lamb in its first year for a burnt-offering, and a pigeon or a turtle-dove for a sin-offering.

New Testament: **Luke 2:21, 41-46** (NRSV)

Jesus Is Named

²¹ After eight days had passed, it was time to circumcise the child; and he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

The Boy Jesus in the Temple

⁴¹ Now every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the festival of the Passover. ⁴²And when he was twelve years old, they went up as usual for the festival. ⁴³When the festival was ended and they started to return, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it.

⁴⁴Assuming that he was in the group of travelers, they went a day's journey. Then they started to look for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to search for him. ⁴⁶After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.

General Concept: **The rites of the church embody its historic faith.**

Key Concepts: ME/OE: **Jesus learns the traditions of His faith.**

Exegesis of the Biblical References

The process of circumcision is the physical manifestation of the covenant entered into by God with Abraham. This is an agreement which Abraham is bound to keep in order to manifest his faithfulness to the covenant with his God. Circumcision is the cutting of the excess skin of the male sex organ which is necessary to make one clean or hygienic in the Hebrew tradition. Being clean is a requirement of the special relationship which the Jewish people had entered into with their God. This account of Abraham's circumcision and the legal provision on circumcision in Leviticus is deeply

rooted in the priestly tradition of the Jewish community. The priestly writers are very particular in the practice not just because it has become a tradition but because in the practice of circumcision itself is embodied the principle of being loyal to their covenant with God. In being loyal to the covenant through this practice, the Jewish community is also able to assert its own unique and distinct identity amidst the diversity of peoples and nations that surround them which generally do not engage in such a ritual practice. It is a practice that somehow assures them that they will always be recognized as a covenanted people of God and each individual is a valued member of this covenanted community. The mark of circumcision also provides each male member with a consciousness of their rootedness in their rich and moving history as a people specially chosen by God as initially demonstrated in the story of their great ancestor, Abraham: a person who embodied great loyalty to God and to God's promise. This particular ritual indeed, has become the mark of their covenant loyalty, the mark of their distinct identity as a people called to a special relationship with God who had been so gracious in caring for them and the mark of their being rooted in a history they can always be proud of.

The text presents Jesus undergoing the required rituals of the Jewish community. This text demonstrates how Jesus had been rooted in the community where he belongs. He has the clear mark of identity as a Jew and he also has the mark of being a member of a covenanted community having undergone the requirement in the Jewish law. Here, it is important to see that Jesus has not defied nor was he exempted from the requisites of the Jewish community, rather the story demonstrates the importance of a member going through the required rituals and practices of his community. Thus, the text also shows the reality of the Jewish people who became marginalized in other societies in the course of their practicing the requirements of the law. It could be that the understanding of those who became marginalized because of their zealous observance of the law has become different than those who are in the center and pinnacle of society. Deeper understanding of how the law was understood in this context is discussed in the following narrative when Jesus was presented in the temple, again, to fulfill the requirement of the law. It is important to understand that the text did not mention who was doing the circumcision. It could be the parents but in the case of the gospel writers, if the subject had been missing in the statement, it also implies that God himself is the one at work. Again, God remains at work as a covenant partner from the days of Abraham towards the days of Jesus. This means that the covenant has not been forgotten and neither are those in the margins forgotten by God, neither does the marginalized Jew forget God's promise for people like them. The mark of circumcision will always remind them of the gracious, loving God behind this ritual who had always stood by them even in their most critical moments of their history.

Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users

Liturgy is the employment of the church's sacred symbols— Scriptures, creeds, objects and ritualistic gestures— into forms appropriate for worship. It makes use of music, literature and the arts as vehicles for conveying the symbols with the participation of the congregation.

These symbols capture the primordial sources of faith like time capsules that release streams of meaning that are rendered in contemporary forms across time. Liturgy serves to keep the contemporary connected to its origin and the passage of time. For that reason, it contains very old elements as well as new ones just emerging in the present.

Liturgical symbols provide a unique medium of the gathered community to and from the Spirit as they have the power to communicate and evoke meanings too deep to be articulated in the common language. It is in the very nature of faith that its most profound contents can only be preserved and shared through symbols. There is something of the faith that is and will remain a mystery until its final revelation at the end of time. At the apex of the Christian mystery is the

incarnation of the Son of God in Jesus of Nazareth. Next to that is the main symbol of God, the mystery of the Trinity and then the mystery of bodily resurrection and the *eschaton*, the end of the present age and the beginning of a new one. The chief symbols of faith are deposited and reenacted in two aspects: the liturgy of the word, the reading and preaching of the Scriptures, and the liturgy of the sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Protestantism which emerged in the late medieval period and the onset of modern intellectual and spiritual culture has had an ambivalent regard towards liturgical reform. At one end, it sought to overcome the church's sacramentalism that stood as a wall separating the clergy from the laity by making worship truly an act of the whole church with emphasis on preaching and singing of hymns in the people's dialect and translation of the Scriptures into the common idiom. At the other end, there was a concern to preserve the liturgical heritage of the church accumulated up to the medieval era. This liturgical tension remains to this day in the Protestant world, including the UCCP.

I. Objectives

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

1. explain how Jesus learned about his faith aside from the teachings of Mary;
2. describe how Christians learn about the Christian faith; and
3. demonstrate one's desire to go to church.

II. Concept: Jesus learns the traditions of His faith.

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV), song chart, crayons, pencils, activity sheets

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time: Smile and greet the children as they come. Check the attendance.
2. Opening prayer: Everlasting God, we are thankful for your overwhelming love by giving us Jesus. Be with us as we learn new things today and as we listen to the story of the child Jesus. This, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

3. Opening songs

"Jesus Is a Happy Name"

Jesus is a happy name. Jesus is always the same.

Jesus is a happy name. We've got to smile when we talk about Jesus. (You may change Jesus with the name of the students)

"Praise God"

Praise God, praise God all ye little children.

God is love (thrice), love God all ye little children.

God is love (twice). Thank God (twice), all ye little children.

God is love (twice). Serve God (twice), all ye little children. God is love (twice).

"Ub-Ubbing"

Ub-ubbing a babassit ay-aywanan ni Jesus

Iturongnat sakada a mapam kapilya.

"Little Children Everywhere"

Little children everywhere, Jesus Christ is caring for them.

Loving, leading them to go to church or temple.

B. Getting Ready

1. *Sentence Completion.* Tell the class to complete these sentences: The first time I learned about Jesus was _____
I learned how to pray when _____
_____ showed me how to use the Bible.
2. *Pair and Share.* In pairs, let them talk about one's completed sentences. Have each learner share with the class what the other partner shared.
3. *Search and Tell.* Ask the class to find out in our text where Jesus and his parents journeyed to every year.

C. Learning Time

1. *Responsive Reading.* Divide the class into two groups. Have the groups read the text in the Bible responsively.
2. Then ask the class to read the verses in unison.

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

You may want to let the class answer these exercises using the activity sheets.

For ME:

1. *Search and Find Relay.* Prepare two sets of seven questions written on strips of paper. Give one set to each group. (Use the same group in responsive reading.) The objective of the relay is to search the Biblical text for the specific detail that answers the written question and to find the verse number where the detail is found. There may be items which cannot be answered in the text. Ask the groups to write, "Not found in the text."

Have each group form a line. Place a Bible and a pen in front of each line. The group that finishes first gets 3-point advantage. The group that gets the most correct answer gets a 7-point advantage. Teacher gives the signal to start the relay.

- a. In our text, what feast did Joseph, Mary, and Jesus attend?
- b. Why was Jesus' visit to the feast at age 12 especially important for Him?
- c. How did children get religious training in ancient Israel?
- d. Why did Joseph and Mary not know that Jesus had remained behind in Jerusalem?
- e. How long did it take Joseph and Mary to find Jesus?
- f. Where was Jesus found, and what was He doing?
- h. What did Jesus do that astonished the rabbis?

For OE:

2. *Paraphrase and Answer Activity*

Tell the class to read first the given verse, paraphrase it and answer the following questions.

- a. In our text, what feast did Joseph, Mary, and Jesus attend? (v41)
- b. Why was Jesus' visit to the feast at age 12 especially important for Him? (v42)
- c. How did children get religious training in ancient Israel?
- d. Why did Joseph and Mary not know that Jesus had remained behind in Jerusalem (v. 43)?
- e. How long did it take Joseph and Mary to find Jesus (vs. 44, 45)?
- f. Where was Jesus found, and what was He doing (vs. 46, 47)?

- g. What did Jesus do that astonished the rabbis? (v.47)

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Say: "Jesus was taught by his parents about the Jewish faith. Ask: "How else did Jesus learn about his faith? How do we learn about our faith?"

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Teach the memory verse: "After three days, they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions." (Luke 2:46)
- 2, Say: The Church is a community of people who worship God. The church plays a very significant role in the life of believers. The Bible also plays a very significant role in our lives. The more we grow in our relationship with Jesus, the more we desire to come to church and worship God."
3. *Creative activity.*

For ME
Tell the class to color and write something about the persons they see in the picture. Below the picture, tell them to write: "We are the church."

For OE
Tell the class to color the picture and read the label "We are the church together." Then let them decorate the rest of the page by using recyclable materials.
Using the same picture, ask the learners to underline the sentence or sentences that best describe their thoughts.

 - a. God will bless me when I am faithful to Him.
 - b. God has some surprises for me.
 - c. Learning God's word is exciting.

G Closing Worship

1. Let the class recite the memory verse.
2. Request the learners to stand and hold their commitment paper. Let them say their commitment: (I will go to church to know more about Jesus. I will go to church to learn about my faith with my friends. Expect other commitments.)
3. Offering
4. Closing prayer: Almighty God, thank you for giving us time to know more about your love for us when we go to the church. This is our prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.
5. Closing Songs
"I Surrender All"
All to Jesus I surrender all to him I freely give.
I will ever love and trust him in His presence daily live.
I surrender all (twice). All to Thee, my blessed Savior, I surrender all.
"I Was Glad"
I was glad when they said unto me, let us go to the house of our faith.
I was glad when they said unto me let us go to the house of our faith. Amen!

January 14, 2018

Second Sunday after Epiphany

Simeon and Anna: Witnesses to the Appearance of the Messiah

Old Testament:

Isaiah 40:31 (NRSV)

³¹ but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

New Testament:

Luke 2:22-38 (NRSV)

Jesus Is Presented in the Temple

²² When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³(as it is written in the law of the Lord, 'Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord'), ²⁴and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, 'a pair of turtle-doves or two young pigeons.' ²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. ²⁶It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. ²⁷Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, ²⁸Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, ²⁹ Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; ³⁰ for my eyes have seen your salvation, ³¹which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, ³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel. ³³ And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. ³⁴Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, 'This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed ³⁵so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.' ³⁶ There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband for seven years after her marriage, ³⁷then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshipped there with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

General Concept: Waiting for God's deliverance requires perseverance and patience. The Bible remains a faithful witness to the unfolding of God's plan of salvation.

Key Concepts: ME/OE: The Bible tells about our relationship with God.

Exegesis of the Biblical References

This text is part of a later edition of the Book of Isaiah which came out of the Babylonian exile. It speaks clearly of hope and strength amidst the times of hopelessness and despair. It also anticipates the coming end of their captivity. The writer speaks of an imminent historical event when the Babylonian empire would soon be defeated by the rising Persian army. The opening verse of chapter 40 already proclaims messages of comfort and assurance of restoration to the exiled people. The whole chapter 40 reflects so much the spirit of hope and excitement as it envisions the imminent fulfillment of the promise of God where they will be liberated from their captivity. There is a tone of renewed strength and revival of the spirit of being a unique covenanted people of God, reasserting and reclaiming the distinct identity of a religious community bound historically to a covenanting God. This is a powerful reassurance from the prophet addressed to a people who may have been losing their hope already of ever returning to their homeland. The prophet strongly asserts that in the midst of a growing sense of hopelessness and despair in the midst of their captors, they

should never give up their faith and their hope in Yahweh. For no matter how much the people may have gone down to the depths of sorrow, loneliness in a foreign land, and utter despair, their God remains faithful to those who will remain steadfast and loyal to their covenant God. They will be sustained even in the most difficult and trying of times until the day when the Lord will deliver them once again from their captors and restore them back to their beloved homeland. Their God remains a God who hears and responds to the cries of the despairing and the helpless. This is the faithful witness of the prophet which has become an enduring proclamation and statement of faith in the rest of the Scriptures.

Following required ritual of circumcision, it has also been the practice and tradition of the Jews to dedicate the first born. It is required in the law that every first born should be set apart (Lk. 2:23). To be set apart means being the first choice. The practice of dedicating the first born and even offering the first fruit or livestock is a clear message of giving priority to God. Simeon has discerned a strong implication of this act of Jesus being offered and presented at the Temple. With this act, Jesus becomes the expression of one who is taking in his life the prioritization of God and all matters and concerns of God now becomes the priority of Jesus when he grows up. This is what Simeon has clearly seen in this act of the child being offered and presented to God at this moment. That is why he has to tell what he has discerned to the mother of Jesus: This child is destined for the falling and rising of many in Israel and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too." This rather cryptic prophecy of Simeon will actually set the pattern for the rest of the life and ministry of Jesus, something that the rest of the gospels faithfully testifies to. After being dedicated to God, his life now becomes dedicated to a kind of ministry that will be opposed by the powers that be, but also one that will give hope and new life to the once hopeless in his society. But what eventually happens to him on the cross will certainly pierce the heart and soul of his mother Mary.

Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users

The basic posture of the Christian believer is that of waiting in hopeful anticipation of salvation. It waits upon the surfacing of the unknown to the realm of the known—the revelation. Hence, the basic virtue of Christian piety is patience and perseverance. Giving life to it is the Spirit-inspired power of discovery and discernment. If you don't have it, you have not known the joy and pain, the agony and ecstasy, of being a Christian.

For the Christian believer, this future is not simply wishful thinking which is characteristic of religious infantilism. Rather, it is based upon an objective rock of faith — the revelation of God in Christ according to the witness of the Holy Bible. There in the holy book is drawn up the architecture of a reality that is emerging from the present realities. As in music, it is the overture that carries within itself the whole symphony that is yet to unfold. This is how faith is defined: "faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1).

The personal and social consequences of faith in the Biblical sense are astounding and far-reaching. Astounding because it crosses the bounds of reason and far-reaching because it draws the believer to overcome the limits of the possible. Faith is able to explain miraculous change from one kind of personality to another, and fundamental social change that reverses the established order of a political economy into one that follows a new logic. The "assurance of things hoped for" and the conviction of things not seen" render a seemingly indestructible status quo puny and evanescent. The same holds true of personal transformation. The Apostle Paul's exhortation "not to be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds" is a testimony of faith.

I. Objectives

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

1. explain that the Bible tells about our relationship with God;
2. express one's appreciation for having known the Word of God through the Bible;
3. retell the story how Simeon and Anna witnessed the appearance of the Messiah; and
4. make a conscious effort to own a Bible and bring it to class.

II. Concept: The Bible tells about our relationship with God.

Materials: The Holy Bible (NRSV), song chart, crayons, pencils, Manila paper, Pentel pen

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time: Smile and greet the children as they come. Check the attendance.
2. Opening prayer: Dear Lord, thank you for bringing us to Sunday school to learn about Your word. Give us strength to tell others about You and Your wonderful works. This is our prayer in Jesus' name. Amen.

3. Opening song:
"Read Your Bible"

Read your Bible pray and obey, pray and obey, pray and obey
 Read your Bible pray and obey, and you'll grow, grow, grow
 And you'll grow, grow, grow, and you'll grow, grow, grow
 And you'll grow, grow, grow
 Read your Bible pray and obey, and you'll grow, grow, grow

"Jesus Loves Me"

Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so.
 Little children here below they are weak but He is strong
 Yes Jesus loves me (thrice).
 The Bible tells me so.

B. Getting Ready

1. Say: "Jesus loves us so much. This fact is written in the Bible."
2. Prepare the class for a game called "Alphabet Movement". Form two groups. Give the rules of the game.
 - a. Provide a sheet with questions and provide the choices below.
 (L-O-V-E, G-O-D, H-O-L-Y, G-R-A-C-E, P-R-O-M-I-S-E, F-A-I-T-H, M-I-R-A-C-L-E-S, W-O-R-K-S, W-O-R-D, S-T-O-R-I-E-S, O-B-E-Y, T-R-U-E)
 - 1) (3-letter word) Who is the main character in the Bible? (God)
 - 2) (7-letter word) What did Jesus perform? (miracles)
 - 3) (5-letter word) What makes us believe in God? (faith)
 - 4) (5-letter word) What book has many books? (Bible)
 - 5) (4-letter word) What shall we do with God's word? (obey)
 - b. As soon as they have finished answering the questions, they will be asked to show their answers by body movement of each letter.
 - c. The first group that has the most number of correct answers and is able to show the letters by body movement wins.
3. Process the game. Ask these questions.

- a. How did you find the game?
- b. What words have you formed?
- c. Where can you find these words?

C. Learning Time

1. Say: "Let's get ready to read an interesting story found in the Bible."
2. Present the story.

Meet Simeon and Anna
(Based on Luke 2:22-38)

Long before Jesus is born, God gave Moses laws for people to follow. One of those laws is that a firstborn will be offered to God at the temple. The family should bring a sacrificial offering when the parents present their child to God.

Joseph and Mary love God so much. They follow the law of God. It's time for them to bring Jesus to the temple. They bring baby Jesus to the temple of Jerusalem. They bring a pair of turtle doves and offered them to God.

In the temple, there is Simeon, an old man. He loves God so much. He lives a life that pleases God. God's promise to him is he will not die until he sees the Messiah. Simeon believes that and waits for the promise of God to happen.

One ordinary day, Simeon goes to the temple. Upon entering the temple, Simeon sees a young woman with a baby in her arms and young man standing beside her. The Spirit of the Lord guides to know that the baby is the promised Messiah. Simeon gets so excited and he hurriedly runs to Mary and holds the baby in his arms.

Happily, he says, "Lord, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation."

Mary and Joseph are amazed upon hearing the praises of Simeon to God. Another person is in the temple at that time. Her name is Anna, a prophet. Anna is an old widow. At 84-years old, she devotes her life to the temple. She fasts and prays there day and night. Her attention is caught upon hearing Simeon and finding baby Jesus. Like Simeon, Anna praises God for the coming of the Messiah. She begins to tell everyone in the temple about the appearance of the Messiah.

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

1. Discuss the lesson. Ask these questions.
 - a. Who is Simeon? (A good and God-fearing man)
 - b. Who is Anna? (An old prophet, a widow)
 - c. What is the promise of God to them? (They will see the Messiah before they die.)
 - d. How did God give His promise to them? (Through the Holy Spirit)
2. Tell the class to tell how similar Simeon and Anna are.
 - a. According to age
 - b. According to work
 - c. According to their mission in life

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Say: God speaks to us through the Bible. The Bible is the word of God for us. It tells us how God works with us. It tells us how human beings respond to God. Ask: Which story in the Bible tells us how God works for our salvation?

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Discuss the memory verse: "With my own eyes, I have seen your salvation." (Luke 2:30)

2. Prepare the class to play "Show and Play". Tell the children to open the Bibles in the Table of Contents. Form two groups. Tell each group to do the following:
 - a. Discuss the two major parts of the Bible. Ask them to read all the books in the Old and New Testament.
 - b. Tell them to close their Bibles. Give them Manila paper and Pentel pen and ask them to write down all the books that they can remember. Give them 5 minutes to do it as a team. After the given time, check their work. The group that remembered the most number of books wins.
3. Express Yourself! Go back to what Simeon and Anna did in the story. Ask: How can we be like Simeon and Anna in spreading the Good News found in the Bible?

For ME: Tell the class to write in their journal what they can do at their age to be like Simeon and Anna.

For OE: Tell the class to write in their journal a prayer showing gratitude to God for making Simeon and Anna witness to the coming of the Messiah. Expect them to include what they plan to do to spread the Good News.

G. Closing Worship

1. Tell the class to recite the memory verse.
2. Reflective action: Ask the class to read what they have written in their journals.
3. Offering: Everybody should offer their thanksgiving to God
4. Closing song: "The B-I-B-L-E"
 The B-I-B-L-E, Yes that's the book for me.
 I stand alone on the word of God, the B-I-B-L-E! Bible!
 The B-I-B-L-E, I'll take it along with me,
 I'll read and pray, and then obey,
 the B-I-B-L-E. Bible!
 By F-A-I-T-H, I'm S-A-V-E-D,
 stand alone on the word of God,
 The B-I-B-L-E. Bible!
5. Closing prayer: Dear God, thank you for this day. Thank you for the Bible. Thank you for Simeon and Anna who have seen and proclaimed the promise of your salvation for us. Through Jesus our Lord, this is our prayer. Amen!

January 21, 2018

Third Sunday after Epiphany

Escape to Egypt, Return to Israel

Old Testament:

Hosea 11 (NRSV)

God's Compassion despite Israel's Ingratitude

'When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son. ² The more I called them, the more they went from me; they kept sacrificing to the Baals, and offering incense to idols. ³ Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk, I took them up in my arms; but they did not know that I healed them. ⁴ I led them with cords of human kindness, with bands of love. I was to them like those who lift infants to their cheeks. I bent down to them and fed them. ⁵ They shall return to the land of Egypt, and Assyria shall be their king, because they have refused to return to me. ⁶ The sword rages in their cities, it consumes their oracle-priests, and devours because of their schemes. ⁷ My people are bent on turning away from me. To the Most High they call, but he does not raise them up at all. ⁸ How can I give you up, Ephraim? How can I hand you over, O Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I treat you like Zeboim? My heart recoils within me; my compassion grows warm and tender. ⁹ I will not execute my fierce anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim; for I am God and no mortal, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come in wrath. ¹⁰ They shall go after the LORD, who roars like a lion; when he roars, his children shall come trembling from the west. ¹¹ They shall come trembling like birds from Egypt, and like doves from the land of Assyria; and I will return them to their homes, says the LORD. ¹² Ephraim has surrounded me with lies, and the house of Israel with deceit; but Judah still walks with God, and is faithful to the Holy One.

New Testament:

Matthew 2:13-23 (NRSV)

The Escape to Egypt

¹³ Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." ¹⁴ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, ¹⁵ and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

The Massacre of the Infants

¹⁶ When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. ¹⁷ Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: ¹⁸ 'A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.'

The Return from Egypt

¹⁹ When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, ²⁰ "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." ²¹ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. ²³ There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been

spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, 'He will be called a Nazorean.'

General/ Concept: **There were powerful forces that threaten the mission of the Messiah.**

Key Concept for ME/OE: **The family took Jesus to Egypt to escape from Herod.**

Exegesis of the Biblical References

This chapter of the book of Hosea speaks of a prophet who is very concerned about the destiny of the people of Ephraim who are about to suffer the terrible consequences of their stubbornness and refusal to return to God. This prophetic pronouncement reflects the voice of a prophet who is settled in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. The tone of the Prophet Hosea reflects the time and context in the period following the death of king Jeroboam II in 745 BCE who earlier had presided over a stable and long reign of about 40 years. After him, there were a series of kings who succeeded one after the other usually in a very violent fashion of bloody takeovers and assassination.

Hosea sees the situation as sliding into chaos and near anarchy. This is just a few more years before its capital Samaria will fall into the hands of its conqueror Assyria in 721 BCE. Hosea describes this situation as a result of the greed for power among so many of those in the ruling elite of the land. In their lust for power they have all but ignored and forgotten their responsibility and accountability before God. According to Hos. 7:7, "All of them are hot as an oven, and they devour their own rulers. All their kings have fallen; none of them calls upon me", says the Lord." In Hosea 8:4, he also states: "They made kings, but not through me; they set up princes, but without my knowledge. They made idols with their silver and gold for their own destruction."

Now the prophet expresses God's own extreme sadness and frustration over what is happening to God's own people whom he had been nurturing like a parent since they were brought out of Egypt. God had loved Israel so much like a deeply caring parent, nurturing them like a child so as to make them a people enjoying the life of freedom and prosperity in the Promised Land. But God was so frustrated over what God had been seeing about the ongoing state of affairs in the nation where their return to a seemingly enslaving experience this time under the Assyrians is now inevitable. They will suffer the logical consequence of their abandoning the Lord and God's ethical covenant demands. Yet God feels the pain and agony of such imminent disaster for God's people. "My heart recoils within me, says the Lord" (v. 8). Even God, like an ordinary loving parent just cannot bear the thought of the imminent death of the nation God created and gave birth to. God was in pain and there was divine hesitancy to proceed with such punishment and desire not to destroy anymore God's people Ephraim. "For I am God and no mortal, the Holy one in your midst, and I will not come in wrath" (v. 9).

Hosea reveals the most distinct and unique character of God being Holy, that this unique Holiness of God is revealed most perfectly in God's remaining so full of compassion and pity even to a people who deserves to be punished and even destroyed. This God feels what it feels like to suffer destruction in the hands of a foreign tormentor.

God knows and feels the pain of being uprooted from one's homeland, from the security of one's home and then brought to a completely strange land, powerless, nameless as a people. God always intends for God's people to live the lives intended for them right at the very beginning, a people living in freedom, abundance, stability, security, with joy and a sense of fulfillment under the

protection of their covenant God.

This divine will of God continues to be God's will for all other peoples. God desires nothing but the good of everyone and of all creation. It is never God's intention to punish and destroy a people and their world whom God had so lovingly created and blessed. God will be in pain seeing the disastrous consequences of people's foolish and irresponsible and unjust ways. This is a most amazing truth about our God which should always drive us towards a life of humility, repentance and continuing commitment to share this powerful and truly transforming good news.

The narrative in Matthew 2:13-23 is about the escape of the family of Jesus from Judea to Egypt to escape the wrath of Herod. But they returned to Nazareth right after the death of the king. This story may be paralleled by the story of the massacre of the Israelite babies during their time in Egypt where Moses was protected by escaping through the basket and the river thus reaching the palace of the Egyptian princess who raised him until such time when he decided to return to his Israelite roots. Matthew also used other prophetic books to point the validity of Jesus' action to fulfill the necessary narrative of a Savior. Herod carried out an evil and unwelcoming action to the One who is now seen and interpreted by the church community as the Messiah long awaited by the Jews; the one who was to bring forth change and a challenge to the social and cultural values of the Roman empire. Herod's action represented a hostile reaction to those who are about to fulfill the task of a Messiah who had been awaited for so long by the people; to serve and proclaim their liberation and salvation.

In this story, we see the real agenda of those who are in power and who always desire to stay in power so that they can continue enjoying the perks and prerogatives of their power while abusing and exploiting to the hilt their own people. They will resort to all means, even the most violent ones just to try to eliminate those who will represent an alternative order and who will proclaim and witness to an alternative message. This story, rooted also in the story of Moses and the Exodus, will provide the template for the kind of mission and ministry that Jesus will carry out in the name of God who wills nothing but the liberation and transformation of God's people and the rest of creation. This is the mission for which he will also lay down his life, for which he will also be experiencing the most extreme of pain and suffering just like His loving Father in heaven.

Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users

In Greek drama, the plot takes a sudden twist through the operation of a *deus ex machina* whereby a totally unconnected event descends from above in order to bring a resolution to an otherwise insolvable situation. This is not how God's messiah accomplishes his mission. The messiah must face human obstacles and finds ways of overcoming them through human efforts without the benefit of a *deus ex machina*. The evil King Herod could have nipped in the bud Jesus' mission if not for the wily Wise Men whose warning persuaded Joseph to hurriedly escape to Egypt. The road to the kingdom of God is not smooth and straight for easy travel. There are always Herods and other dark forces that are opposed to God's reign of justice and will not spare any means to thwart God's plan. God works out our salvation by partnering with us under the conditions of freedom taking into account our weaknesses and limitations. There are no magical shortcuts to the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth. Fanatical beliefs that God's warriors against evil are invincible would only give the Herods of history opportunity to decimate the forces of righteousness.

In partnering with God to establish a reign of justice via the conquest of the reign of wickedness, we grow in wisdom, courage and strength even as we mature in the faith and grow in holiness. This is the way by which we shed off the outer layer of wickedness to the end that we may shine forth with the brightness of the new life. This kind of change is a prefiguration of the resurrection that is yet to come.

I. Objectives

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

1. tell the circumstances surrounding the flight of Joseph, Mary, and Jesus to Egypt through a role play;
2. relate the warning made by the wise men with the order of the angel of the Lord;
3. realize that God gives warnings to protect His people; and
4. make a commitment to listen to God's warning through the reading of the Bible and the guidance from significant adults.

II. Concept: The family took Jesus to Egypt to escape from Herod.

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV), song chart, crayons, pencils, scissors cartolina, Pentel pens, ballpens, pencils

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time: Greet each child with a smile and a welcoming heart. It is important to start the lesson with a warm and caring atmosphere.
2. Opening prayer: To be led by a child (pre-assigned)
3. Opening songs:

"What a Mighty God"

- O what a mighty God we serve 4x
- O let us sing and praise the Lord 4x
- O let us shout and praise the Lord 4x
- O let us dance and praise the Lord 4x
- O let us jump and praise the Lord 4x

"O What a Great, Big, Wonderful God"

- O what a great, big, wonderful God, a great, big, wonderful God
- A God who is always near to us guiding and protecting us.
- A great, big, wonderful God.

"God is so Good"

- God is so good, God is so good.
- God is so good, God is good to me.
- God answers prayer (thrice), God is good to me.

B. Getting Ready

Guided Game- "Message Relay"

1. Use this game to start the lesson. It is good start the morning right and saying what is right.
2. Objective of the game. Learn and appreciate the importance of listening and comprehending messages.
3. Process: Divide the children into two teams and let them form one line each. Give the message to the first player. He then passes it to the next player behind him without looking back and turning around. When the message reaches the last player, the player runs to you and shouts the message. It should be the exact words of the message. The first team to do this is the winner.
4. After the game, have a short reflection. Ask the children how they felt when they transmitted

the message to others. Ask them how they feel during the game. Say: "Listening and comprehending is one of the virtues or skills in discerning the message of God to us."

C. Learning Time

1. Tell the class to close their eyes and imagine being told by their parents to do something that looks difficult to do. After opening their eyes, ask the children their thoughts about it. Say: "We will find out in the story about the circumstances that led to the flight of Joseph and his family to Egypt and back to Israel."
2. Form three groups. Assign each group with some verses. Tell each group to read the verses and retell the story in their own words. Then ask each group to do a role play before the class one after another.

Group 1: **The Escape to Egypt** (verses 13-15). ¹³ Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.' ¹⁴ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, ¹⁵ and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, 'Out of Egypt I have called my son.'

Group 2: **The Massacre of the Infants** (verses 16-18). ¹⁶ When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. ¹⁷ Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: ¹⁸ 'A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more.'

Group 3: **The Return from Egypt** (verses 19-23). ¹⁹ When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, ²⁰ 'Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead.' ²¹ Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. ²² But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. ²³ There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, He will be called a Nazorean.'

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

Ask the following questions.

1. Who are the characters of the story? (Joseph, Mary, Jesus, Herod)
2. Who is Joseph? (Father of Jesus)
3. Who threatens Joseph's family and forced them to their escape to Egypt? Why? (Herod wants to kill Jesus.)
4. How did God protect Josephs' family? (Through the message of the angel of the Lord)
5. How did Joseph show his obedience to God? (Joseph obeyed God's message.)
6. Why do you think Joseph is a responsible husband and father? (Answers may vary.)
7. How can people show that they are responsible? (Answers may vary.)
8. Do you agree that God spoke to Joseph and instruct to escape from Egypt? Why or why not?
9. Do you agree that we live in a broken and sick world? Why or why not?
10. What prophecies were fulfilled in Matthew 2:13 to 23?

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Say: "There are many obstacles in our way as Christians. But we need to use our listening and

comprehending skills in order to discern the message of God to us. As God helped Joseph to overcome danger, I believe God is also with us to protect us as long as we trust God." Ask: "How does God protect us from harm?"

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Teach the memory verse:

For ME: "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt." (Matthew 2:13)

For OE: "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel. (Matthew 2:30)

2. **For ME:** Let the class play the game "Show and Tell". Say: "King Herod threatens the mission of Jesus by trying to kill him. But God through the angel appeared to Joseph and helped them escape from that danger. Joseph hid the messages and obey God." Make two groups. Tell each group to show and tell their answers to these questions:

- a. "How can we listen to God's message to us to protect us from danger through the following persons?

- 1) parents
- 2) teachers
- 3) grandparents

- b. What can we read to help us discern the message of God?

For OE: Present the creative activity "Making Footprints of Obedience". Let the children trace their shoes or slippers or feet (both right and left) on a cartolina. Cut these out. On each footprint, write their resolutions or promise to continue to obey their parents, teachers and other significant persons. Tell the class to choose from these examples:

- a. My feet will follow Jesus!
- b. I say, "I follow Jesus!"
- c. My feet will go where Jesus goes!

G. Closing Worship

1. Call selected pupils who will recite the memory verse.

2. Reflective action:

For ME: Tell the class to present any one of their presentations.

For OE: Call on the pupils to read their footprints of obedience.

3. Offering
4. Closing song: "Good Christian Friends, Rejoice"
5. Closing prayer: Dear God, thank for everything. Thank you for teaching us always! Thank you for leading us. We pray for your continuous guidance! As we offer our footprints of obedience, help us to live out our promises. Amen!

January 28, 2018

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

John the Baptizer: Preparing the Way of the Lord

Old Testament:

Isaiah 40:3-5 (NRSV)

³A voice cries out: In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

⁴Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain.

⁵Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.'

New Testament:

Luke 3:1-20 (NRSV)

The Proclamation of John the Baptizer

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, ²during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness. ³He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, ⁴as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, 'The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. ⁵Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; ⁶and all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

⁷John said to the crowds that came out to be baptized by him, 'You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, "We have Abraham as our ancestor"; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ⁹Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.' ¹⁰And the crowds asked him, 'What then should we do?' ¹¹In reply he said to them, 'Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise.' ¹²Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, 'Teacher, what should we do?' ¹³He said to them, 'Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you.'

¹⁴Soldiers also asked him, 'And we, what should we do?' He said to them, 'Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages.' ¹⁵As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, ¹⁶John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹⁷His winnowing-fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." ¹⁸So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people. ¹⁹But Herod the ruler, who had been rebuked by him because of Herodias, his brother's wife, and because of all the evil things that Herod had done, ²⁰added to them all by shutting up John in prison.

General Concept: Like John the Baptizer preparing the way of the Lord, the church prepares the world for the coming of the Kingdom.

Key Concepts ME/OE: John the Baptizer prepares the way for the Lord.

Exegesis of the Biblical References

This prophetic proclamation is a clear announcement of the coming liberation work of God among the people who were in exile and captives of the imperial rule of Babylon. The intention of the prophetic voice is to announce a radically new act of God that is about to take place in the history of God's people. God has now decided to end their captivity and bring them back to their homeland. But in bringing this about God will now be working through a rather unexpected historical agent to become His instrument to liberate the captives in Babylon.

The Persians, led by king Cyrus is now considered as that historical instrument of God who will prepare the way of the Lord for the restoration of God's people in their homeland. The signs are now clearly manifesting such as the continuing stream of victories that Cyrus has already achieved on the way to becoming the new imperial power. His military achievements are now pointing to the imminent collapse and destruction of the once mighty Babylonian empire (cf. Is. 41:2-4, 25; 45:1-3).

Clearly, this prophetic proclamation is a sign of hope to those who are held captives. It is a clear sign of God's working out the liberation of God's people right through the events of history and using concrete and powerful but unexpected historical agents. This act is very consistent with the nature of their God who is also their liberator in the time of their slavery in Egypt and now in their captivity in Babylon. It also echoes the voice of the prophets that God is with those who are in need of salvation and freedom from whatever captivity they may be suffering from. Luke presents a clear and vivid picture of a prophet, John the Baptizer. Being a cousin of Jesus, he is presented with his being part of Israel not just by blood but by the faith tradition that is rooted in the Mosaic laws and interpretation (vv.10-14). John the Baptizer serves as the preparation or prelude to the Messiah. John's presence and appearance comes as a clear call for the people to prepare for the Messiah's arrival. This may be parallel to the Isaiah account in using an instrument to prepare the way. In the case of Isaiah, it is the Persians led by Cyrus, but in the case of our Lukan text which reveals a context where the Judean community is completely dominated and ruled by the Roman Empire through local puppets such as Herod, it is John the Baptizer. The preparation also gives an abstract of what Jesus will do in his public ministry. This becomes a message to the Church to prepare the way of Jesus Christ in the same way that John has reminded his own people what to do. This is exactly what the Church is also being asked to do.

Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users

God called John the Baptizer to prepare for Jesus ministry. The message of repentance that John preached was to prepare the people for the imminent coming of the kingdom of God. Following John the Baptizer's execution, Jesus came out to the public preaching exactly the same message. But Jesus' message wasn't simply a repeat of John's but only to introduce himself to the public scene. In relation to the message of repentance and the imminent arrival of the kingdom, Jesus life, work and crucifixion embodied God's judgment as well as his offer of salvation.

It can be said that even if the Lord would return today to establish God's kingdom, the people may not want to enter for lack of understanding and appreciation of it. This is illustrated in the experience of the Hebrew people during the Exodus. Fresh out from Egypt, they were worshippers of other gods. When Moses offered to them a new God by the name of Yahweh, at one crucial point in the journey they created a golden calf representing the old religions. It took the whole of forty years to mold a new community of faith to occupy Canaan.

The world needs to be prepared for Christ's return as judge so that everyone would be fit to inherit the kingdom. Otherwise, the world would in turn judge him as a harsh and unforgiving judge instead of a merciful savior. The church does not rejoice when a single soul is lost and thrown to eternal condemnation. Like Jesus, it rejoices when a sinner returns to the Lord to seek his forgiveness. It is the mission of the church to preach the message of repentance in order to prepare the people for the coming of the kingdom. Since no one knows when it will happen, every moment is a time for preparation.

One must also be prepared to believe and follow Jesus. The quick-fix, instant brand of evangelism negates the importance of preparation. During the period of the ancient church, proselytes or candidates for baptism underwent a process of preparation that included instruction in the new faith, a new ethics and responsible membership in the church. Protestant Reformer Martin Luther spoke about the harshness of the law like hammer blows to break a heart hardened by sin before grace may work out its benefits. A form of evangelism that uses gimmickry and psychological manipulation in fact does violence to the gospel. Let the gospel find in a person a ready and compliant heart.

I. Objectives

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

1. recall the family relationship of John to Jesus;
2. explain how John prepares the way of the Lord; and
3. describe the people at home, in school, and in the church who prepare the way of the Lord.

II. Concept: John the Baptizer prepares the way for the Lord.

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV), activity sheets, song chart, crayons, pencils

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time: Smile and greet the children as they come. Have them greet each other. Check the attendance.
2. Opening prayer: "Dear Lord, thank you for another Sunday. Help us to welcome each other as we learn and work together. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen!"
3. Opening song: "Living for Jesus" (Hymnal of a Faith Journey # 289)

B. Getting Ready

1. Tell the children to do the free guided play "Straight Line". Give the following instructions:
 - a. Divide the class into three groups.
 - b. In one minute's time, tell the class to remove items like belts, shoes, socks, ribbons, and arrange them in a straight line.
 - c. The winners will be the team or teams that can arrange their things in a straight line.
2. Ask: How did you feel when your things are in a straight line? Ask the teams (those that failed to do the activity) why they failed to arrange their things in a straight line.

C. Learning Time

1. Ask the group to read the story found in Luke 3:1-20.
2. Use the same three groups formed earlier. Then assign a group to each of the three parts of the story (found in the activity sheets).
- 3.

Meet John, the Baptizer

Part 1

Long time ago, an old man named Zechariah saw the Angel Gabriel. The angel declared that he and his wife Elizabeth would have a son whom they were to name John. Zechariah and Elizabeth knew that John would be special. His birth was a miracle because his parents were very old when he was born—way too old to have a baby. Only God could make that happen.

John grew up in the desert of Judea. He had to learn to eat all kinds of unusual things because there was not much to eat there. He ate bugs called locusts and dipped them in

honey. He wore unusual clothes, too! He wore animal skins instead of regular clothing. He was a good man. He obeyed God and always tried to do the right thing. God gave him a special job. John's job was to make people ready for Jesus to start preaching.

Part 2

To prepare for Jesus' coming, John wanted the people to have good hearts. So, John taught them how to soften their hearts through obedience. If they have a "soft heart" they will let God change their heart into the kind of heart that He wants. John knew that the people needed to have soft hearts so they would be ready to hear Jesus preach. If people had a "hard heart," they would never listen to Jesus and change their bad ways.

John went down to the Jordan River and preached by the water. Crowds of people loved to listen to his message. He talked about soft hearts and used the word "repent" a lot. To repent means one is sorry for doing the wrong thing and then he or she stops doing it. It also means to start doing what is right instead of the wrong thing. John said that the people must repent and to stop being selfish.

Part 3

The people ask him, "What are we do, then?"

John answered, "Whoever has two shirts must give one to the man who has none and whoever has food must share it."

The tax collector asks him, "Teacher what are we to do?" "Don't collect what is more than legal and be fair like God," he told them.

Some soldiers also asked him, "What about us? What we are to do?" He said to them, "Don't take money from anyone by force or accuse anyone falsely; be content with your pay."

Then, John told everyone that they needed to be baptized in the Jordan River. The baptism would mean that they repented or stopped their wicked ways and started doing what is right. It would show that their hearts were soft and good. People listened to John and repented of their sins. Lots of people were baptized in the Jordan River.

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

1. Talk about the story.
 - a. Who was the main character of the story? (John the Baptizer)
 - b. Who was his father? (Zechariah)
 - c. What was the work of John the Baptizer? (He preached the coming of the Messiah.)
 - d. What was his message? (Do good. Prepare the way of the Lord. Change your bad ways into good ways.)
2. Use the three groups you have formed earlier and tell each group to dramatize any of the three parts of the story.

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: "Do you agree with what John the Baptizer preached—repent and be baptized? How can you prepare the way of the Lord?"

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Teach the memory verse: "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." (Luke 3:11)

2. Do you agree that we are the John the Baptizers nowadays? Why or why not?
3. Relate the game "Straight line" with what John meant when he said, "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."
4. Write the following words in bold letters. Paste them on the board. Provide sheets of paper and pens or crayons. Tell the class to write an activity that will help prepare the way of the Lord. Have them paste these sheets under the correct heading.

HOME

SCHOOL

CHURCH

5. For ME:

- a. *Show and Tell.* Ask the class to show by way of acting out the following sentences:
 - 1) John the Baptizer preached about Jesus.
 - 2) John the Baptizer baptized the people who repented from their sins.
 - 3) Our parents can teach us to share our gifts to others.
 - 4) The pastor in the church preaches about the Good News.
- b. Tell the class to read the set of letters in the activity sheet and encircle all the words related to the story of John the Baptizer. Answers: ANGEL, BAPTISM, ELIZABETH, HEROD, JESUS, JOHN, JORDAN, LOCUST, SOLDIERS, ZECHARIAH

6. For OE:

- a. *Making Praying Hands.* Let the children trace either their right or left hands. Distribute crayons so that they will color their fingers brightly. Tell them to write on each finger ways by which they can help prepare the way of the Lord. Examples: I will not bully my classmates anymore. I will share food with the needy. I will pray for the sick.
- b. Then let them set their praying hands aside and use it during the closing worship.
- c. Ask the class to read the story of John the Baptizer again. Then let the children to unscramble the given words in the activity sheet and use them in sentences. Answers: 1. relative, 2. Jesus, 3. belt, 4. Elizabeth, 5. Messiah, 6. Zechariah, 7. crying, 8. wilderness, 9. ancestor, 10. mission, 11. John, 12. King Herod

G. Closing Worship

1. Memory verse
2. Offering:
 - a. Let the class (ME) act out one way of doing good.
 - b. Let the class (OE) read one of the ways that they have written in their praying hands. Ask them to offer them in the altar.
3. Closing song: "Living for Jesus" (Hymnal of a Faith Journey # 289)
4. Closing prayer: God of salvation, thank you for giving us love and wisdom to spread Your Word to our friends and neighbors that we care about. In your mighty Son's name, we pray. Amen.

February 4, 2018

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

The Emergence of Jesus' Christhood

Old Testament:

Isaiah 11:1-5 (NRSV)

The Peaceful Kingdom

¹A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

²The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the LORD. ³His delight shall be in the fear of the LORD. He shall not judge by what his eyes see, or decide by what his ears hear; ⁴but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked.

⁵Righteousness shall be the belt around his waist, and faithfulness the belt around his loins.

New Testament:

Matthew 16:13-16, 4:1-11 (NRSV)

Peter's Declaration about Jesus

¹³ Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' ¹⁴And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." ¹⁵He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" ¹⁶Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."

The Temptation of Jesus

¹Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ²He fasted for forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. ³The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." ⁴But he answered, "It is written, "One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God." ⁵Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶saying to him, "if you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you', and 'On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.'" ¹⁰Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'" ⁸

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor; ⁹and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me."

¹⁰Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'" ¹¹Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

General Concept: Reflecting on his religious heritage and personal history, Jesus realizes his being Christ and his messianic destiny.

Key Concepts:

ME/OE: Jesus discovers and embraces his being the Messiah.

Exegesis of the Biblical References

The account is a reflection written by the prophet during Israel's (Northern Kingdom) time of exile to Assyria where the prophet witnessed the northerners' hardship, suffering and much agony, with the exiled ruling elite of Samaria longing for their land while hopelessly living in a foreign land. The writer discerns in this tragedy of the Northern Kingdom a divine warning coming also to the people and rulers of the Southern Kingdom in Judah who were living with much air of confidence and

sense of assurance regarding their future. The prophet wanted his own people to be more conscious of their covenant responsibility. The only way for the people to remain secure is for them to humbly remember what God has done for them in the past and in the midst of present challenges, to look forward to the savior who will emerge to restore Israel's glory. The writer understands the need for the people to reaffirm the historical roots that trace their lineage to the stump of Jesse, the father of David to whom God made a promise that his descendants will rule forever to establish justice and peace all over the land. Holding on with faith and trust in this historic past as the paradigm for what will yet come in the near future is the source of assurance that God will continue to act to save and uphold God's people even in the face of the greatest crisis they may be facing both in the present and in the future.

In the Gospel texts, Jesus was asking his disciples, "Who do you say I am?" This implies that Jesus has not yet assumed his messianic identity. Jesus wanted to confirm from the persons whom he expected to know him the most who they think he is. The question needed to be raised because his claim as the messiah has always been challenged and tainted with doubts even after the many miracles he displayed because of his personal history. In fact, the book of Matthew started with Jesus' genealogy tracing his roots to the Davidic lineage, precisely to respond to this kind of doubts and questions being raised about the real identity and roots of Jesus. Thus, the opening text of Matthew aims to present Jesus as the messianic "stump" described in Isaiah 11 who will bring salvation to the people. Peter's confession "You are the Christ" validates his messianic identity, affirming his messianic destiny.

The temptations of Jesus that came after his introduction as the Son of God during his baptism suggest the onset of his messianic journey. The emphasis now shifts from his personal history to his personal destiny as the messiah. Jesus overcoming his temptations show his capability and authority over all kinds of trials and ordeals that will confront him in his journey toward the fulfillment and realization of his messianic destiny.

Jesus' understanding of his messianic identity came from his many encounters with people and from various circumstances he engaged with in different times and places. Though his messianic nature is embedded in his being, his realization of the task he needed to undertake slowly unveiled in him as he witnessed different struggles of his people starting in his own hometown. His personal history and religious heritage helped him see what he needed to do that led to his realization of his messianic destiny allowing him to endure the temptations in the wilderness, persevering amidst persecutions and to stand firm in his mission as the messiah of God. All this points to him as the awaited savior, the remnant or the stump from the Davidic lineage that will give the people hope and restore the glory of their nation.

Peter's confession "You are the Christ" affirmed his messianic identity. Though Jesus' messiahship did not require any affirmation yet he needed acknowledgment from his circle to complete his identity. After the affirmation of the disciples, they gradually began to understand the purpose and mission of Jesus as they learn and participate in his works and ministries. For this, the disciples later on were able as well to understand their own mission and realized their own destiny as they obey their master and Lord.

Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users

Jesus' messianic consciousness emerged gradually from experience. This is to say that it wasn't an idea that was implanted in Jesus right at his conception. Neither did Jesus just wake up one morning knowing that he was going to be God's messiah to save the world. Rather, it's likely that he went through a typical childhood in the specific context of his time and place, learned the traditions of his faith, took his place in society as a worker and family provider; saw what was going on around him, heard great tales about contemporary heroic figures and got involved in serious discussions and analysis with others about the situation, and weighed his various options carefully. He brooded over

them through many nights and at the end he made up his mind: he was going to leave home to become an itinerant preacher of the kingdom of God as John the Baptist was. He would start in his home town of Nazareth. It was a modest start and may have raised only a few eyebrows. The day that sealed Jesus' destiny passed largely unnoticed even by his own family and town mates.

The temptation in the wilderness may have been his moment of truth. As in Job, Satan acts as the Tempter or Teaser who seeks to win Jesus' loyalty in exchange for the things that every patriotic and devout Jew aspires for — the power to perform miracles, sovereign authority over kingdoms and physical invincibility. With all these, one can truly be Israel's liberator to restore David's kingdom in all its glory. Of course, the Devil cannot be trusted to be true to his promise but many a good man with the noblest desires are willing to parley with the Devil for a higher cause. But Jesus is not merely a good man. He is the messiah whose mission is from God. Discarding the better side of reason, he chooses to be loyal to God — to hell with the Devil!

But it's one thing to think of oneself as messiah; it's another thing to be recognized as such. In order for him to complete his messianic identity he needed to be confirmed by his followers. Jesus started like John the Baptist or the prophet Elijah when he selected and called the disciples. But as they continued to learn from Jesus and participated in his work, a new awareness came upon them. They saw him cut a different figure never revealed to them before. Peter's confession came out from a vague intimation that dawned into a decisive declaration: "You are the Christ!" That may have served as a pact that bound the disciples with Jesus in a great adventure of faith.

I. Objectives

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

1. tell the process by which Jesus discovers his being our savior;
2. read the lines that support the circumstances surrounding the discovery of Jesus as the savior; and
3. demonstrate appreciation for Jesus as our savior and to involve oneself in his salvation plan for all.

II. Concept: Jesus discovers and embraces his being the Messiah.

Materials: *The Holy Bible* (NRSV), used wrapping paper, paste, and construction paper, pictures of needy people, crayons, pen and paper for "Thank You Jesus" Card, stop watch, pen, paper

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome Time: Greet the learners with your awesome smile and your big warm hug. Choose 2 children per Sunday where you can have a brief chat concerning them.
2. Singing Time (Assign a song leader to lead the class in singing)
 - a. "Tell Me Who Is Your Jesus?"
 - Tell me who is your Jesus? Alleluia (thrice)
 - Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah (by group)
 - (Individual) My Jesus is my _____ (Redeemer, Savior, Best Friend)
 - Alleluia (thrice) Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah (twice)
 - b. "Jesus Loves Me" (by Rev. Goel B. Bagundol)
 - Jesus loves me the way I am. I love you the way you are.
 - Jesus loves us the way we are, Hallelu-hallelujah

Halle-hallelujah, halle-hallelujah halle-hallelujah,
Jesus loves us the way we are.

c. "Jesus Went About Doing Good" (by Lois Horton Young, 1954)
Jesus went about doing good, the Bible tells me so.
He healed the sick and healed the blind
To little children He was kind.
He gave some hungry people food
He said to all, "Be kind and good."
Jesus went about doing good, the Bible tells me so.

- Prayer: "We thank you, our parent God, for gathering us again to learn more about you. May your Spirit be with us and grant us wisdom to understand and apply our lesson for this day. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen."

B. Getting Ready

- Let the learners play "Charades". Charades is a game of pantomimes where the other participants guess what you are acting out without speaking by giving the correct phrase. You may pre-arrange the activity out of selected pupils.
- Form two groups preferably of equal size. Divide the slips of paper between the two teams. Select a neutral timekeeper/scorekeeper, or pick members from each team to take turns. Agree on how many rounds to play and the time allotment for answering. Review the gestures and hand signals and invent any others you deem appropriate.
- Here are some suggested phrases for the charades
 - Feeding of the 5000.
 - Healing of the 10 lepers
 - Healing of the blind man
 - Cleansing of the Temple by Jesus
 - Jesus walking by the water

C. Learning Time

- Introduce the word "Messiah" to the class. Present the following descriptions.
 - A messiah is a person who God sends to save people from their troubles.
 - Christ is a Greek word for Messiah which leads us to understand that when we say Jesus Christ, it is also means Jesus the Messiah.
 - Historically, Messiah is God's anointed one who will deliver and save Israel from foreign domination. He can be a king and who will lead the whole nation into prosperity and well-being.
 - Some Jews do not believe that Jesus was the Messiah when he came. They still await the Messiah; the one who will come again to rule over God's kingdom forever.
- Tell the class to read Matthew 16:13-16 in unison using their own Bibles. Then divide the class into four groups (narrator, Jesus, other disciples, and Peter). Then let each group read their parts.

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

Discuss the lesson. Ask these questions. Present the picture on the workbook and fill up the balloons with the answers to the questions.

- What did Jesus ask his disciples? (Who do you say I am?)
- Why do you think Jesus asked the question? (To know what others and his disciples think about him)
- How did the disciples respond? (They just answered what others said about Jesus that he

- is John the Baptist or Elijah.)
4. What was the answer of Peter to Jesus' question? ("You are the Messiah (Christ), the Son of the Living God.")
 5. What makes Peter's answer different from the rest? (He is certain the Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Son of the Living God)
 6. What was Jesus' response to Peter's answer? ("Blessed are you Peter. No one told you that. My Father in Heaven told you.)

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: "Do you agree with Peter's answer that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of the living God? Why so? Do you believe that Jesus is the Messiah sent to us by God? What can you do to show that you thank God?"

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Teach the memory verse: "Simon Peter answered, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.'" (Matthew 16:16)
2. Prepare a list of biblical passages that the children can choose from. Display the list where the children can have easy access. Let the class look for specific passages in the Bible that show Jesus doing the following:
 - a. Healing the sick
 - b. Bringing comfort to those who are mourning
 - c. Bringing hope to the hopeless
 - d. Bringing wholeness to those who are broken
3. **Creative work:** Random Act of Kindness
 - a. **For the ME:** Provide pictures of needy persons. Form four groups and distribute the pictures. Tell each group to discuss how they can help these needy persons.
 - b. **For OE:** Form dyads. Tell each group to think of a person in the community that he or she can help during the week. Remind them that when they do these activities, they need adult supervision. Assist them in making plans such as the following:
 - 1) Visiting a family at home and singing them a song
 - 2) Visiting a person in the hospital
 - 3) Calling friends and greeting them
 - 4) Giving a card to a person who needs comfort
 - 5) Others

G. Closing Worship

1. Tell the class to recite the memory verse.
2. Reflective action: Let them gather round in a circle and encourage them to complete the sentence, "I thank you Jesus for being our _____"
3. Offering: Tell the class to sing the song "We're Giving Because We Love Jesus" after the class has finished giving their offering.
4. Closing song: "Jesus, Our True Messiah" (by Rev. Goel B. Bagundol; round song) Reign love, justice and peace, Jesus our true Messiah.
5. Closing prayer: "Our loving parent God, thank you for giving us your blessings. Let our offerings be of help to those who are in need. This is our prayer in Jesus' name. Amen."
6. Goodbye song

February 11, 2018

Transfiguration Sunday

Moses, the Lawgiver and Elijah, the Prophet

Old Testament:

Exodus 19:3-6 (NRSV)

³Then Moses went up to God; the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, 'Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the Israelites: 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. 'Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine, ⁶but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the Israelites.'

New Testament:

Luke 9:28-36 (NRSV)

The Transfiguration

²⁸Now about eight days after these sayings Jesus took with him Peter and John and James, and went up on the mountain to pray. ²⁹And while he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became dazzling white. ³⁰Suddenly they saw two men, Moses and Elijah, talking to him.

³¹They appeared in glory and were speaking of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. ³²Now Peter and his companions were weighed down with sleep; but since they had stayed awake, they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. ³³Just as they were leaving him, Peter said to Jesus, 'Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah'—not knowing what he said. ³⁴While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were terrified as they entered the cloud.

³⁵Then from the cloud came a voice that said, 'This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!' ³⁶When the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and in those days told no one any of the things they had seen.

General Concept: **Moses and Elijah representing the Law and the Prophets point to Jesus as the Messiah.**

Key Concepts ME/OE: **Based on Moses' law and Elijah's prophecy, Jesus is affirmed as the Messiah.**

Exegesis of the Biblical References

The text is part of the whole wilderness journey experience of the Israelites after God freed them from slavery in Egypt. This is the third month of their journey in the wilderness traveling toward the Promised Land. After a long journey the Israelites reached the desert of Mt. Sinai and camped there while Moses went up to the mountain to meet God who called him. There, on top of the mountain Moses encountered God and received the instruction and God's plan to establish a covenant with them. But, God's covenant plan with Israel is conditional. It will require the people's decision to fully obey God and in return they will become God's chosen people, God's treasured possession. God's relationship with Israel is premised on a big "if": "If you obey my voice and keep my covenant", only then shall they be considered as God's special, treasured possession. Disobedience and rejection of God's laws and instructions will only result in the negation of this relationship with its own disastrous consequences. God's covenant then with the Israelites is sealed and proclaimed to the

people in the succeeding chapter through Moses who acted as the lawgiver. First, he presented to the people the 10 commandments—the basic instructions that will govern and guide the Israelites in their daily living as a community of God's liberated people. These laws along with the rest of the covenant laws are instructions and core teachings that will provide the framework for the establishment of a truly liberated community, distinct and set apart from all the other nations that surround them. Their life as a community will be a witness, a sign of an alternative way of life that should be lived by a people liberated and set free by God for generations to come and throughout their history.

Like Moses, Jesus and his disciples encountered God in the mountain. But eight days prior to that experience there were a series of events in which Jesus displayed marvelous works of healing. It is then followed by the confession of Peter that Jesus is "The Christ of God." The transfiguration account of Jesus who was standing with Moses and Elijah witnessed by his disciples serves as the final revelation of Jesus' true identity as the messiah. This is then succeeded by Jesus teachings on the cost of following him.

The 10 commandments that Moses received in Mt. Sinai has become the guiding principle that both judges and uplifts the actions of the Jewish people. For centuries, it has become the basis of the prophets like Elijah in proclaiming what is right and unacceptable in the eyes of God. All throughout the history of the Jews, the law or the Torah served as the foundation on who will receive God's blessing and punishment. Moreover, the authority of the Torah continues to define who is righteous, who is cursed even until the time of Jesus.

The presence of Moses and Elijah in the transfiguration account symbolizes the convergence and unification of the authority of the law and the message of God in Jesus as the messiah. Jesus now becomes the authority and model of true righteousness and in him comes the message that brings people to God. However, the transfiguration account of Jesus should not be interpreted as Jesus departing from the old faith nor the authority of the Torah, instead it serves as a reminder to believers not to ignore the abiding authority and value of the Old Testament because Jesus himself was nurtured by the old faith. He was nurtured in the traditions of the Torah and the Torah continues to provide guidance and wisdom that the church needs even today in discerning the truth, what is right and wrong and knowing what is really acceptable to God.

Meanwhile, the gospel of Jesus presents a rather opposite view and interpretation from the Law of Moses. Contrary to the assumptions of the old faith, Jesus highlights faith or loyalty to the God who gave the Torah as the source of God's grace and salvation. Salvation, not even righteousness can be experienced in the literal obedience to the law. It still provides the basic principles by which an alternative community of freedom and justice may be established by the followers of Jesus. Jesus however liberates the people from the chains of the old faith and laws that has made people assume that they can gain favor from God through their strict observance and literal obedience to their provisions when in fact, they are supposed to be undertaken only as a matter of joyful and thankful response of the people for what God has already done for them.

The Transfiguration of Jesus depicts transformation in the presence of Moses and Elijah whose images fade while Jesus remained, a transition from the old, enslaving assumptions of the law towards the gospel of Jesus which now embodies the very essence and spirit of such law. With Jesus embodying in himself the fullness of the law as a gift of God's grace, the community of disciples can still continue establishing the kind of alternative community of freedom and love which had been envisioned and the very goal of the law itself.

Companion Guide for the Teachers and Other Users

In the Transfiguration, Jesus let some disciples see a preview of his resurrection. Of course, they would not understand it but that occasion should help them prepare for his death and resurrection. The appearance of Moses and Elijah at Jesus' side and their subsequent disappearance leaving Jesus standing alone, symbolize the paradoxical nature of the Christian

faith: it emerges from the womb of Judaism and at the same time opposed to it in a most fundamental way.

The Hebrew Bible was adopted and made part of the Christian Scriptures, referred to as the Old/Older Testament. The church affirmed that the gospel of Jesus Christ stood out from the Jewish ground. The Law and the Prophets constitute its pre-history, so to speak. But the faith of the Old Testament is more than pre-history. It continues to illumine and guide the church towards breaking new grounds for the understanding of the gospel. It also helps set the boundaries of interpretation that would keep the church from falling into errors that would taint the purity of the gospel. The old faith in which Jesus was nurtured has served and continues to serve the church as the gospel's midwife, nurse, mentor and critic, companion and guardian.

On the other hand and at the same time, the gospel of Jesus Christ stood out opposite the Jewish faith. It subverts the Law of Moses by positing God's grace through faith rather than compliance to the law that brings salvation. The burden of saving shifts radically from the sinner to God. It must be stated, though, that the essence of the gospel was already anticipated by the Old Testament, notably Hosea and Jeremiah. A case can be made that it was already there hidden somewhere in the Law but got lost in the complex labyrinth of legalistic interpretations. Nevertheless, the gospel of Jesus Christ cuts through what has become a solid wall that has kept people away from God. God's final word is, "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" as Moses and Elijah fade away.

I. Objectives

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

1. identify Moses and Elijah;
2. describe Moses and Elijah during the Transfiguration; and
3. explain that both Moses and Elijah point to Jesus as the Messiah.

II. Concept: Based on Moses' law and Elijah's prophecy, Jesus is affirmed as the Messiah.

Materials: The Holy Bible (NRSV), hymnal, blanket, song chart, crayons, pencils, bond paper, empty pen

III. Learning Experiences

A. Opening Worship

1. Welcome time: Welcome the children warmly. Tap their shoulders and encourage them to greet their classmates, too.
2. Opening prayer: "Dear Jesus, thank you for making us be in this class. Inspire us to read, sing, do our exercises, and relate with our classmates. This is our prayer in Jesus' name. Amen."
3. Opening song: "Be Thou My Vision" (Hymnal of a Faith Journey # 275)

B. Getting Ready

1. Prepare the class to play the game "Sharing the Responsibility". The objective of the game is for each member of the group to contribute to the task or responsibility of filling up the bottle with water by using a spoon. Divide the class into two or three teams. Provide each group a bottle and a spoon. They will fill the bottle in 3 minutes. The group with more water in the bottle receives 10 claps as their appreciation.
2. Process the activity. Ask these questions.
 - a. How did you feel sharing in the task of filling the bottle?
 - b. To the group that filled the bottle with more water, what made you accomplish the task given to you?
 - c. To the group that filled the bottle with more water, what made you delay your compliance of the task?

- d. If everyone in the group is responsible and performs the tasks assigned, can we accomplish things easier and earlier? Can everyone become happy and satisfied?
- 4. Say: "Our lesson for today is about Moses, the lawgiver and Elijah, the prophet. These are the Bible characters who have done their responsibility to accomplish their task given to them."

C. Learning Time

1. Ask the class to read Luke 9:28-36.
2. Copy the pictures used in the N/K/YE lesson. Paste them separately on the blackboard. Put on the display board or flannel board a big mountain as the background.
3. Retell the story using a story map. As you tell the story (you may use the story presented in the N/K/YE level, let the pupils paste the pictures on the display board or flannel board to complete the map.

D. Deepening Activity/Sharing Time

Discuss the story. Ask these questions.

1. Where did Jesus and the disciples go? (On the mountain top) Why? (To pray)
2. What happened there? (While Jesus was praying, his clothes became white.)
3. Who did the disciples see beside Jesus? (Moses and Elijah)

Read each description and share your thoughts.

MOSES	ELIJAH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great leader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brave prophet
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The law-giver 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anointing the king
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Married to the daughter of Jethro 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trained Elisha
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proved that Jesus is the Messiah 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proved that Jesus is the messiah

4. What name means savior? (Messiah)
5. What did the voice from the cloud say about Jesus? ("This is my son whom I have chosen- listen to him.")

E. Discovering the Biblical Truth

Ask: "Do you agree affirm that Jesus is the Messiah? Why or why not?"

F. Applying the Biblical Truth

1. Teach the memory verse: "This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!" (Luke 9:35b)
2. For ME: Creative work: Free-hand Drawing of Jesus or Crayon Etching. Tell the class to follow these instructions.
 - a. Color the whole bond paper with any bright color.
 - b. Color again all the surfaces with black or dark color
 - c. Draw a picture of Jesus using an empty ballpen or any pointed object
 - d. Write on the top of the bond paper: "As Moses and Elijah did, I will prove to others that Jesus is the Messiah."

For ME/OE: Before asking the class to perform the activity, tell the class that Jesus is called Christ because he is the Messiah. Ask the class to answer all the number sentences in the first, third, and fifth columns. Let them get the equivalent letters of their answers and write them in the second, fourth, and sixth columns.

Answer Key

Number and Letter Equivalent

A	2	BC	4	E	6	GH	8	I	J	K	L	M
I	D	4	F	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
N	OP	QR	S	T	U	V	WX	Y	Z			
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

Exercise

Equation	Let	Equation	Let	Equation	Letter
$2 + 4 - 3 = 3$	(C)	$20 + 2 + 3 = 13$	(M)	$20 + 2 - 5 = 5$	(E)
$4 \times 2 = 8$	(H)	$25 + 5 + 2 = 15$	(O)	$10 + 5 - 3 = 12$	(L)
$5 \times 4 - 2 = 18$	(R)	$30 + 2 + 4 = 19$	(S)	$3 \times 2 + 3 = 9$	(I)
$18 + 2 + 0 = 9$	(I)	$8 + 2 + 1 = 5$	(E)	$4 \times 2 + 2 = 10$	(J)
$5 \times 5 - 6 = 19$	(S)	$20 + 10 - 11 =$	(S)	$1 \times 1 + 0 = 1$	(A)
$100 + 5 = 20$	(T)	$40 + 2 - 0 = 20$	(T)	$2 \times 2 + 4 = 8$	(H)
$4 + 1 \times = 20$	(T)	$2 + 4 + 2 = 8$	(H)	$50 + 2 - 5 = 20$	(T)
$48 + 6 = 8$	(H)	$3 + 1 + 1 = 5$	(E)	$5 \times 2 - 2 = 8$	(H)
$35 + 7 = 5$	(E)	$3 \times 5 - 3 = 12$	(L)	$2 \times 2 + 1 = 5$	(E)
$30 - 4 + 2 = 13$	(M)	$1 + 0 = 1$	(A)	$6 \times 2 + 4 = 16$	(P)
$11 + 4 + 3 = 5$	(E)	$6 \times 4 - 1 = 23$	(I)	$7 \times 3 - 3 = 18$	(R)
$2 + 9 + 8 = 19$	(S)	$3 \times 3 + 1 = 7$	(G)	$7 \times 2 + 1 = 15$	(O)
$11 \times 2 - 3 = 19$	(S)	$50 + 5 - 1 = 9$	(I)	$6 \times 2 + 4 = 16$	(P)
$72 + 8 = 9$	(I)	$3 \times 5 + 7 = 22$	(V)	$6 - 3 + 5 = 8$	(H)
$2 + 1 + 0 = 1$	(A)	$12 + 2 - 1 = 5$	(E)	$4 \times 2 - 3 = 5$	(E)
$32 + 4 = 8$	(H)	$5 \times 5 - 7 = 18$	(R)	$30 + 2 + 5 = 20$	(T)

3. Then have them copy the letters to form the phrases.

- a.
- b.
- c.

4. Discuss briefly that what Moses and Elijah did, they should do the same. They will prove to others that Jesus is the Messiah.

5. Additional work for OE. Present the following sentences. Tell the class to say them again using their own words.

- a. Moses and Elijah affirmed that Jesus is the Messiah.
- b. Jesus fulfilled the Law of God given to Moses.
- c. Jesus fulfilled the Message of God's salvation.
- d. We affirm that Jesus is the Messiah through our lives.

G. Closing Worship

- 1. Tell the class to recite the memory verse.
- 2. Offering
- 3. Closing song: "Go, Tell It to The People" (Tune: "Go Tell It to the Mountains")
 - Go, tell it to the people,
 - Malls and schools and everywhere
 - Go, tell it to the people
 - That Jesus Christ is Lord.
 - Go, prove it to the people
 - Life has changed from old to new
 - Go, prove it to the people.

That Jesus saved your life.

4. Closing prayer: "Dear God, thank you for your word. Thank you for Moses and Elijah who had been faithful to you to show to us that Jesus is sent by You to save the world. Help us too, to prove to others that Jesus is our Savior and Lord through our words and actions. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen."

